



Summer Festival | 2026

But you must continue in the things which you have learned - II Timothy 3:14



Choir Guidelines

Choir Festival (2026)

Deadlines

Registration Open by	01-Feb-2026
Regular Registration Close by	28-Feb-2026
Extended Registration Close by (significant fees applies)	08-Mar-2026
All Performances to pay regular registration fees by	28-Feb-2026
All Performances to pay extended registration fees by (significant fees applies)	08-Mar-2026
Cancellation with no penalty (penalties applies afterwards)	28-Feb-2026
Swap of registration with no penalty (penalties applies afterwards)	28-Feb-2026
Cancellation with 25% penalty of the full fees (applies on both regular and extended registration)	01-Mar-2026 to 21-Mar-2026
Cancellation with 50% penalty of the full fees (applies on both regular and extended registration)	22-Mar-2025 to 04-Apr-2026
Cancellation with 75% penalty of the full fees (applies on both regular and extended registration)	05-Apr-2026 to 18-Apr-2026
Cancellation with 100% penalty of the full fees (applies on both regular and extended registration)	19-Apr-2026 to 26-Apr-2026
Hymns & New Lyrics Submission	15-Mar-2026
Committee to acknowledge / request lyrics amendments	22-Mar-2026
Final lyrics revision & approval of hymns	29-Mar-2026

**“BUT YOU MUST CONTINUE IN THE THINGS
WHICH YOU HAVE LEARNED” (II TIMOTHY 3:14)**

Local Melbourne Churches Performance Dates

The following dates **may be subject to change** depending on number of registration and venue availability, so please plan your team based on the below:

Performance:

East region	30 May & 21 Jun 2026
West region	31 May & 13 Jun 2026

Interstate Churches Submission Date

Submission of recorded performances	31 May 2026
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Advanced Performance Submission Date

Advanced performances recording submissions	28 Jun 2026
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Fees & Payments

Regular Registration Fees (till 28-Feb-2026):

Melbourne Churches*

One-Time Bond	\$300.00
Choir Team	\$280.00
Ensemble	\$50.00
Individual Vocal/Instrumental	\$30.00

Interstate Churches**

Choir Team	\$140.00
Ensemble	\$30.00
Individual Vocal/Instrumental	\$20.00

Extended Registration Fees (01-Mar-2026 to 08-Mar-2026):

Melbourne Churches

One-Time Bond	\$300.00
Choir Team	\$450.00
Ensemble	\$90.00
Individual Vocal/Instrumental	\$50.00

Interstate Churches

Choir Team	\$250.00
Ensemble	\$60.00
Individual Vocal/Instrumental	\$40.00

* This is a discounted fee, and it will go towards the hire of the venue, sound equipment and choir awards

** This is a reduced fee and will be used to support the service and choir awards

Important Note:

Please refer to the churches' fees payment procedure document on how to pay the fees.

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Fees Coverage

Local Melbourne churches will be offered the following as part of the theatre performance fees for this year in the summer festival

- Performance will be on Professional Stage
- The Stage will have control basic lights
- The Stage will have a professional sound system
- Waiting Area for each to prepare
- Backstage Area for changing clothes, make-up & preparation
- Backdrops for Multi background(s) & Projector
- **FREE 90 TICKETS** (Performance Day)

Additional Tickets Packages

Melbourne Churches*

25 Tickets	\$30.00
60 Tickets	\$70.00
100 Tickets	\$120.00

Donations

You may choose to donate for summer festival using details below:

Account Name: Coptic Orthodox Church Diocese of Melbourne – Community Festival

BSB : 063-159

ACC : 10729454

Choir Terms and Conditions (T&Cs)

All participating churches **MUST** download, print, read the Choir Festival T&Cs (from SF website choir page), then get it signed and send it back to the SF Choir Sub-Committee as per the instruction given in the T&Cs document. **Your submission is not valid** till the SF Choir Sub-Committee receives the Choir T&Cs signed.

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Age Group

Participants can be from the following age groups:

1. Angels
2. Primary (Grade 1-6)
3. Secondary (Year 7-12)
4. Youth (19 – 29 years old)
5. Adults 30+

Note: **Grade 1** age groups is floating. This means - as a church; you can choose for **Grade 1** to join either angels or primary choirs.

Entry Limit

Registration is limited to one choir team per age group from each church.

There are no limits for vocal, instrumental or ensemble performances participation per church; everyone is welcome. However, the committee advocates participants who have genuine interest.

Choir Committee Contacts

All communication should be directed to the committee's email address: choir@sfmelb.org.au

The committee will **NOT** respond to emails sent to personal addresses of committee members.

All inquiries must go through the church coordinator designated by each church.

Emails sent by individuals will **NOT** be **ATTENDED** to it, and only authorized church coordinators should communicate directly with the committee.

It is crucial that church coordinators include their names and church name in all email correspondence.

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General Instructions

1. Each church must provide the committee with **One Church Coordinator** contact details, who will be responsible for the co-ordination of all tasks between the committee and the church. **For no confusion, the committee will not be coordinating/communicating with multiple leaders or parents.**
2. Each church may provide up to 5 age coordinators – one for each age group; to help with registration and lyrics submission only. Any further communication beyond the lyric submission should be addressed only to the choir coordinator of the church. For no confusion, the church coordinator should be involved in all communications between the Committee and age coordinator(s).
3. Approved languages for choir festival are only **English, Arabic, Coptic and Fijian.**
4. The committee is encouraging the production of new hymns written and composed by our talented members. However, all lyric submissions- regardless of its source; **MUST be reviewed and approved** by the church priest. Lyrics submission with no priest signature won't be considered.

All Lyrics and Hymns submission MUST include the following:

Church name

Age group

Responsible leader name and contact details.

Choir team's Name – if any

And for each Hymn:

New lyrics author name

Hymn source

Music Composer

Vocal Soloist

Live Instrument Soloist

Important note: *Failure to communicate this info to the committee before the assigned due date may result in you not evaluating your efforts producing lyrics or music.*

If there is any concern about the submitted lyrics, the responsible priest will be contacted to discuss.
Lyrics amendments – if any; needs to be sent back by the deadline mentioned.

5. **Strictly, no acting is permitted.** Narration is allowed between hymns if the purpose is to link an idea in the performance.
6. During stage performances, it is important that all participating churches respect each other and remain silent. Marks will be deducted from the team causing distraction while choirs are performing.

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Competition Format**

There are four categories of performances that each church can participate in:

- **Choir Groups;** group NOT LESS THAN 5 members.
- **Individual vocal performances** (Normal Level, Advanced Level*)
Only one person at a time will have the chance to present his/her talent.
- **Instrumental performances** (Normal Level, Advanced Level*)
Only one person at a time will have the chance to present his/her talent.
- **Ensemble Performance:** a team of 4 to 9 members with mixed instrumental lines (may include vocal lines) to perform together.

*Based on Vocal/Instrumental performance score, participants may be invited to participate at an advanced level. Advanced performance is not added to the church overall score. However, the participants will receive individual recognition.

**Please read and understand the guidelines related to your performance carefully. Any performance that does not meet the guidelines will face a penalty. If you believe there is a need to change or deviate your performance from the guidelines, please discuss this first with the committee via email for instructions.

The performance timing will be as follows:

	Choir performances		Vocal or instrumental performances	Ensemble performances
	Angels age group	Other age groups		
Set-up and preparation	10 Mins	10 Mins	2 Mins	3 Mins
Performance time	10-15 Mins	15-20 Mins	3 Mins	7 Mins

*If you exceed the times above, a deduction might be applied

*Motto is NOT mandatory for Angel choirs. However, Angels' teams may choose motto as one of their selected hymns.

- ❖ The Summer Festival Motto should be presented **at the start of** your performance.
- ❖ The motto time is **not** included in your performance time, but it will be assessed as per attached assessment guidelines. (Except for angels' choir – Motto is not compulsory)
- ❖ Please stick to your submitted and approved lyrics unless otherwise have been advised by Committee Members.

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Main scoring criteria

	Breakdown	Percentage
Lyrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The flow of hymns in building a storyline in the performance • The hymns related to the festival theme <p>*Bonus: New hymns written by diocese of Melbourne’s participants/servants (on top of the assigned percentage)</p>	13%
Melody	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melody suitability for words and Age group <p>*Bonus: New composed music by diocese of Melbourne’s participants/servants (on top of the assigned percentage)</p>	10%
Music Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitability to deliver the meaning of the hymn, melody • Integration of musical instruments • Musical textures and dynamics <p>*Bonus: Live music with multiple instruments is encouraged if it adds value to the composition of the hymn. Marks will not be given on the number of instruments but based on their added value to the performance. (on top of the assigned percentage)</p> <p>*Copyright; the use of music pieces without copyright approval is not acceptable. Social media acquired music should be avoided.</p>	13%
Choir Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of the words, precise timing within the team • Melody Clarity • Harmony within the choir • The use of vocal lines in the choir • Keeping to tempo • Choir’s participation and focus • Leader’s role 	50%
Solo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice timbre • Clarity of the words • Keeping to tempo • Presence on the stage and confidence • Suitability of the voice timbre to the hymn 	14%

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General presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choir presentation; a unified uniform, simplicity of the choir visual appearance • Pamphlets can be used by the choir if not distracting (applicable for Stage performances) 	Recommended
Deductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping to performance assigned time (overtime) 	1-5min → 1% 5-10min → 2% 10min+ → 3%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late arrival to the stage (applicable for stage performances) 	1-5min → 1% 5-10min → 2% 10min+ → 3%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending relevant videos on time (applicable for video performances) 	1-2 days → 1% 2-5 days → 2% 5 days+ → 3%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior 	5% or Possible disqualification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guideline deviation without prior approval • Music Copyright violation 	3%

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Vocal / Instrumental Scoring Criteria

- ❖ The summer festival motto is **not required** to be presented prior to your performance.
- ❖ Your performance should not exceed assigned preparation/performance time. Please refer to competition format
- ❖ Submission of lyrics for vocal performances is not required. However, participants **must** ensure the chosen lyrics comply with our Coptic Orthodox Faith.
- ❖ Audio tracks may accompany vocal performances; however, **only the vocal performance will be evaluated**. Please ensure that accompanying tracks are **simple and supportive**, providing guidance without overpowering or covering the soloist.
- ❖ For **recorded performances**, although the accompanying audio track is **not evaluated**, it **must be captured within the recorded video**. Participants **must not** listen to the accompanying audio track via **headphones** while recording.
- ❖ Audio tracks **cannot** accompany instrumental performances.

Ensemble Scoring Criteria

A team of 4 to 9 members with mixed instrumental lines (may include vocals) to perform together for up to 7 minutes stage time with 3 minutes stage preparation.

- ❖ A minimum of 3 texture lines should be presented.
- ❖ If vocal lines are included, vocal performers should be 4 or less. The lyrics must be submitted for approval by the due date outlined in main guidelines.
- ❖ Key technical points each team should take into consideration:
 - Musical Structure
 - Melody: pitch, duration, tempo ...
 - Harmony: chord, progression, consonance/dissonance, key, tonality/ atonality
 - Music Dynamics
 - Instruments' Timbre match
 - Texture/musical lines

Performances should align with the Coptic Orthodox faith. **Strictly no songs, movie or series trailer music will be accepted** and will lead to disqualification of the performance. Classic music masterpieces are exceptional.

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Interstate Performances Guidelines

Choir

- ❖ All choir participants must be **clearly visible within the camera frame**, including the **team conductor, live musicians, and any other servants involved**. If any participating member is not visible in the recorded video, the relevant component of the performance will not be scored.
- ❖ Setting up a stage-like area with either the church alter or just white background is required for all performances.
- ❖ The church must submit one video with the full performance for each of the age group choir. Please ensure the video is labelled with the name of the church and the age group. **A video per each hymn is not accepted.**
- ❖ For fair judgment of your performance, please use stage equipment setup not media-controlled setup. The ability to add effects or edit recorded audio in any way is not acceptable and may result in disqualification of the video presented

Individual Performances

- ❖ Video recordings in a casual setup are not acceptable. Participants must be well dressed and present their talent while standing, not sitting or lying on a couch or bed. The recording environment must be appropriate, and locations such as shopping malls or similar public spaces are not permitted.
- ❖ Please ensure that each video is **clearly labelled** with the **church name** and **participant's name**, exactly as listed on the registration form.
- ❖ Committee members are happy to provide help over the phone if needed. Kindly advise your recording date one week in advance, so the SF choir committee can make themselves available to help with the setup for your recording.
- ❖ The performance should be filmed solely for the summer festival. No previous recorded performance from church/team's library would be accepted.

Please refer to **General video recommendations for video-recorded performances** section for further recommendation

General video recommendations for video recorded performances

- ❖ For sound clarity, it is highly recommended to capture the audio via an audio system and insert camera audio input. Not directly using smart phone microphones.
- ❖ Choose a quiet time and place to record as background noise will be heard in the background and will reduce the sound quality of the video.
- ❖ Try to choose a location with no tiles, marble or laminated wooden floors as this will cause echoing in the sound of the video. Carpet flooring is highly recommended.
- ❖ Choir members **should not** move while shooting the video. Keep the same distance away from audio input device throughout the whole recording.
- ❖ The recorded video must be sent as raw recording, without any video or audio editing.

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Performance Day important instructions

- ❖ The SF choir committee ask that you kindly make yourself available on time - recommended to arrive 30mins prior to your first performance.
- ❖ Kindly be punctual. Come on time, prepare on time, perform on time, and leave stage on time. Every minute delayed means deduction of your score.
- ❖ There will be no access to the venue for final on-stage rehearsal and so audio systems will only be available on performance days. Please submit any special audio requirements, if applicable, so the committee can accommodate them **at least two weeks prior** to the scheduled performance date.
- ❖ On the performance day, you are all welcome to meet with the committee members within break time. However, the committee members **should not** be approached during or between performances.
- ❖ We are all servants, here to serve God’s children, and should strive to be positive role models. Aggressive behavior toward any church members or members of the judging committee will **not be tolerated**. Such behavior may result in score deductions or possible disqualification.
- ❖ Six pamphlets of the performance should be provided to the committee on the day (softcopy is enough for recorded performances). Pamphlets must have a cover page that includes church name, age group, responsible leader contact details, name of new lyrics author, name of music player/composer, and name of soloist of each hymn.

N.B, if any info you have previously missed to communicate to the committee (like new lyrics owner, songwriter, music composer, songs in order etc.) kindly include it in your pamphlets submitted on the day of performance.

- ❖ Once a performance is called for preparation, a timer will appear on the side screen, indicating the remaining time before you must begin.
- ❖ A side screen will be available for Power Point presentation, in case needed.
- ❖ A deduction of points **will** occur if anything happens by any one of your team members that may lead to any disturbance on the day. For example, noise or distraction while others are performing, aggression, not following instruction from servants, as well as late attendance or performance time/ preparation time exceeded etc

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A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

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Handwriting practice lines consisting of 30 horizontal dotted lines.

Anthem 2026

(Our doctrine, from the start,
established by God himself,
preached by the apostles,
and our fathers kept it safe.) **2x**

a strong tree of faith,
its roots trace back to history,
pure and watered by God's words
(Rites and also liturgy) **2x**

firm,
firm in my faith and doctrine
Our church is fatherly
Orthodox as my forefathers
Heroes of the Coptic church.

Mark, Athanasious, Dioscoros,
heroes and pillars of faith,
though heresies arise,
still we're steadfast in our faith.

Rooted in your church,
be firm in what you've learned.

Contact us on:

Website: www.sfmelb.org.au

Email: info@sfmelb.org.au

Facebook: SummerFestivalMelbourne

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