

Rendezvous on the Spokane! Class Instructor Bios

Diane Barnes began ringing 43 years ago as a founding member of Geneva Lutheran Church's Bell Choir. When asked if she wanted to be part of a bell choir, she answered with a question—What is a Bell? Diane learned what a bell was, how to play a bell and over the years honed her ringing skills where she is confident that she can make beautiful sounds with a bell and beautiful music with handbells. She began directing choirs in 1989, sharing her love and knowledge of bells with youth and adults. Diane currently directs the Grace Notes at Ascension Lutheran Church, Medford, OR and serves as the Events Coordinator of AREA 10 and served as AREA Chair and Oregon State Chair. Diane also organizes the annual Siskiyou Summit Handbell Conference held in Ashland, OR.

Robin Ethridge has lived in the Pacific Northwest since 2007. She joined Bells of the Sound in Seattle in 2010 and has loved ringing around the world at various advanced ringing events since – Distinctly Bronze West, Virtuoso, Area 10 All Star Choir, 2 International Symposia. She also enjoys playing auxiliary percussion any chance she can get.

Shelley Giaier has been ringing and directing church and community handbell choirs for almost 40 years in Michigan, Iowa, New Jersey and now in Oregon. Currently, she directs the *Bells of Sunriver* (Sunriver Christian Fellowship, Sunriver, Oregon) and the *Bells of Praise* at Bend United Methodist Church in Bend, Oregon. She is the current Chair of Area 10.

Ellie Hodder is a well-known teacher and clinician. She is passionate about learning and spreading that good news. If we can learn—and we all can—then we are capable of creating great music. Ellie has served as a clinician for many events for children and youth, adults and seniors along the west coast where she is known for her skills as a “teaching director”. She has taught handchime choirs in independent living senior communities for about a dozen years and created Symphonius Sounds Senior Handchime Festival so senior chimers from around the area could have a day of music-making together. She has founded numerous events in order to create opportunities for all handbell musicians to learn and get to know each other. Among these are the Pacific Northwest Handbell Directors/Musicians Forum (annual learning event with a read ‘n’ ring), Pacific Ringers, a non-audition community handbell ensemble whose motto is “We Love Handbells and It Shows!” Ellie lives in Portland, Oregon with her husband, Benn. *“Music is the ultimate practice of community; engaging the audience, with each musician contributing their notes to the whole, making a masterpiece in the moment. I am privileged to work with students of all skill levels spanning a 90-plus year age difference. For me, there is no greater joy than to lead within the group and assist every musician to the finish line TOGETHER.”*

Diane Hould serves as Handbell Choir Director at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Shelby, MT, where she also serves as chair of the worship committee and accompanies worship. Diane has been involved with ringing and directing handbells for close to 25 years. She has taught at state and area festivals, as well as rung in the National All-Star Choir and Distinctly Bronze. Diane served as MT state chair for several years before moving through the ranks and serving as Area 10 chair. After a hiatus, she has returned to the Area board and is serving as Membership Chair. Diane holds a degree in vocal education from Montana State University. She has sung for over 10 years with the Great Falls Symphonic Choir and is an active vocal soloist in her community. She has served as a co-director of the youth performing group Strings n Things and is passionate about giving youth the lifelong skills gained through performing.

Julie Hunziker has been ringing bells for 30 years, having had limited musical experience beforehand. She considers herself a handbell addict and a bell tree aficionado, having taught numerous bell tree classes in both Area 10 and Area 12. The beautiful Yakima Valley is home, although she was raised in the Seattle and Tacoma areas and previously called Phoenix, AZ and Redding, CA home. She currently directs/facilitates a small ensemble, Bells of Grace, at her church and happily subs for choirs in the area. When not involved with bells, Julie enjoys gardening and spending time with fellow Master Gardeners, glamping with her husband, as well as traveling.

Phyllis Tincher has been solo ringing since 1997 and has directed adult and youth handbell choirs since 1993. Currently she directs a women's handbell group at her church, Crossroads Community Church, Nampa, Idaho. She has served as guest conductor at festivals and taught many classes at handbell conferences and workshops. Phyllis was Area 10 Chair 2000-2002 and editor of the Campanologist for many years. She has organized the annual HMA-sponsored Snake River Handbell Conference in Nampa, Idaho since 2015.

Joann Wallenburn first rang a handbell in 1999, joining the Colonial Baptist Church choir in Cary, NC, in the shadows of the Raleigh Ringers. She was immediately introduced to how high the bar can be! She readily admits she's not there yet, but she continues to work to improve. When she and her husband decided to move to rural Montana for their retirement, she was determined to start a handbell choir if there wasn't one already. Alas, Seeley Lake, MT did not have a choir. She obtained a one-year loan of 3-octaves of chimes from Area 10 to explore the ability of a small community to support a choir. After a successful first season, she purchased a 3-octave set of Malmark bells and obtained a community grant to purchase Malmark chimes. Fast forward 11 years and the Seeley-Swan Mountain Bells now ring 4.5 octaves of bells, along with the chimes. Best laid plans... because she was forced to direct the local choir, she travels 110 miles round trip each week to ring with a choir in the nearest "big city". Joann has dipped her toe into the solo ringing waters and has also taken up belltree ringing during COVID isolation. She currently serves as the Communications Chair for Area 10.