

Resident Group to Ring in the Holidays With Music

The Village Ringers will present a Christmas concert on Dec. 5 at New Covenant United Methodist Church.

By MICHAEL FORTUNA
Daily Sun Staff Writer

Christmas and handbells go hand in hand with the Village Ringers. This year, the group under the direction of Bonnie Fisher will throw in a few new traditions.

“Christmas and Candlelight” will take place at 7 p.m. Dec. 5 at New Covenant United Methodist Church, 3470 Woodridge Drive, The Villages.

In a first, the group will feature Gary Powell playing the organ on a few songs. To add to the atmosphere, the venue will feature candles flickering throughout the room, and the group will use the large LED screen as a backdrop.

“I think it’s really going to be beautiful,” said Fisher, of the Village of Piedmont. “I hope the audience comes away with joy and an appreciation to the different things bells can do. They do more than ring.”

The 14-member handbell



Photos by Michael Fortuna | Daily Sun

Cathy Ferrand Bullock, of the Village of St. Catherine, rings the bells during the Village Ringers’ rehearsal Nov. 17 at New Covenant United Methodist Church. The group is preparing for its upcoming concert, “Christmas and Candlelight,” to be held Dec. 5.

“CHRISTMAS AND CANDLELIGHT”

When: 7 p.m. Dec. 5

Where: New Covenant United Methodist Church, 3470 Woodridge Drive, The Villages

Tickets: ncumcfl.com/tickets, \$20 online or at the door

For more: village.ringers.com

choir will play such songs as “Worship to the Newborn King,” “We Need a Little Christmas,” “Five Renaissance Christmas Carols,” “O Come All Ye Faithful” and “Sing We Now of Christmas,” as well as some tunes the audience can sing along to.

“It’s Christmas,” Fisher said, laughing. “In most cases, the tunes are recognizable. People associate bell-ringing with Christmas.”

Joining the regular Ringers are the Village Ringers Too, directed by Cathy Ferrand Bullock. This group will play three songs during the

concert — “Sussex Carol,” “We Three Kings” and “Hanukkah, Hanukkah.”

“I like Christmas and Hanukkah music,” said Bullock, of the Village of St. Catherine. “The pieces are fun. They let the ringers use a variety of techniques.”

The Village Ringers Too came to life in January, acting as an intermediate group for those who had taken the beginner group’s lessons. It now has 12 members.

“It’s going very well,” Bullock said. “They’re ringing well as an ensemble.”

Bullock, who also plays

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Bonnie Fisher, of the Village of Piedmont, conducts the Village Ringers during their rehearsal Nov. 17 at New Covenant United Methodist Church.

in the Ringers, has been playing handbells since the early 1980s up in New York state, then jumped back into the music in 2001, adding directing to her roster seven years later.

"You work together to make music happen," Bullock said. "We're part of a centuries-old tradition. I love that. We try to come up with new techniques and sounds."

Amy Metzger, who joined the Ringers about a year ago, can be found mainly in the bass bell section, usually playing the larger E4 and F4 bells. As for any favorites from the upcoming concert, Metzger pointed to all of them.

During her high school years, Metzger mainly played the clarinet and bassoon. She fell in love with the handbells at her local church. She's been

ringing those instruments at church during a span of 30 years.

She was attending New Covenant's services when she met Fisher. Metzger had been looking for a handbell choir to join that would let her learn some challenging music, and the Village Ringers checked off that box.

"Bonnie's direction has been fabulous," said Metzger, of the Village of Citrus Grove. "The people here are all very nice."

Tickets for the concert are \$20, available at ncumcfl.com/tickets, or at the door. For information about the group, visit villageringers.com.

Staff writer Michael Fortuna can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5273, or michael.fortuna@thevillagesmedia.com.