

Worship Arts Ministry

- **2024 Levite Award: First Orchestra**
- **2024 Levite Award: Worship Choir**

This award (one for each of our primary worship leadership ensembles) is presented to a representative from the Worship Choir and the First Orchestra who best demonstrate the Old Testament role of Levites as presented in I Chronicles 23. In particular, their role as worship leaders, musicians and keepers of the tabernacle (God's presence) as it traveled until it finally rested in the temple (our modern-day worship space) and temple worship was codified and established by David who instructed his son Solomon in how to conduct the worship of God's people.

Among the duties of Levites, **they were:**

1. **...to minister to the Lord.** This is the chief goal of all Levites. The honor of ministering TO the Lord was assigned to only those whose hearts were pure and just before God.
2. **...to serve and assist the priests.** As in today, although we do not expect God's people to serve its leaders, the leaders (ministers, etc.) look to modern-day Levites to assist those leader-ministers in their duties as worship leaders. As much "handling" of worship elements was involved, they were seen as servants of God who assisted the priests of God as the priests interceded between man and God.
3. **...Mature.** In the bible only those of a certain mature age were worthy as Levites, first it was 30, then David changed the age to 20. (Even David knew that "the next generation" needed to be involved so there would always be Levites in the service of Temple worship.
4. **...Recognized by others as leaders** worthy of the high duties of temple worship
5. **...To look after the work of the house of the Lord,** including its maintenance and appearance.
6. **...Respected as officers and judges among the people of Israel.** They were already seen as wise individuals but in the Old Testament time when they were instituted, to be an officer or judge was to be a high honor reserved for only those respected by their peers.
7. **...Gatekeepers,** as in both guarding the temple entrances from vandals but also spiritually guarding the temple from those who were not sincere in their worship.
8. **...The musicians.** The instrumentalists, the singers and the leaders of worship. Those specifically charged with worship music worked hard to hone their skills as worthy music-leaders in worship. They did this to honor God and encourage others in worship.
9. **...To handle, prepare and purify the holy things of temple worship** including burning incense of the Lord, etc. Not only were they physically, specifically and uniquely charged with literally touching and handling the props of worship, they were skilled in preparing animal sacrifices.
10. **...Gatherers and preparers of the worship elements** as in making showbread, fine flour for the grain offerings, unleavened cakes etc.
11. **...Counted.** Yes, just as we count those involved in worship leadership (and even register on modern computers), David is very careful in counting how many Levites are needed for the duties of Temple worship.
12. **...Organized and disciplined.** Among David's many gifts was the gift of administration. He understood that duties were to be clearly defined, overseen by leaders and disciplined in their execution. David did not tolerate insincere servants of God, and with God's guidance, dealt severely with those who did not measure up the high expectations for those in service to God.
13. **...Model citizens of God's kingdom.** They were to "stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord...." They were seen before others and expected to demonstrate how to worship God.

How does this translate into the Worship Arts Ministry identifying two individuals to receive this award? See the next page for that transition.

Modern-day Levites

As servant-leaders, a term that has come to be associated with followers of Christ, and in the context of worship leadership in the 21st century, some traits unique to the Old Testament Levites also emerge for our Worship Arts Ministry musicians and artists.

Who is a modern-day Levite? They have the following traits, obvious to all around them. **They are...**

1. **...Fiercely loyal Christians.** There is no hesitation in knowing that they are “sold out,” “born again” believers in Christ and anyone who comes in contact with them knows it instantly. Their prayer life is obvious and their spiritual life is apparent to all.
2. **...Musicians who know that God has gifted them** with some degree of musicianship and are enthusiastically willing and ready to use that gift as a worship leader. This does not mean they are music majors, or professional musicians, or even exceptional or gifted musicians. It means they have the *gift of music in their spirit*, want to use that gift—no matter how small or great they think it is—and will do all they can at every opportunity to improve it. They do this by regular attendance to rehearsals so they can not only improve their own gift but contribute their gift to the greater ensemble in which they serve.
3. **...Supporters of fellow musician/worship leaders.** Their helpful spirit is obvious to everyone as they do all they can to lift up the spirits of a fellow worship leading musician; help with their music, even giving their copy of music if needed; explain terms and symbols on the musical page; and in general, reach beyond their own personal musical needs to the needs of others around them.
4. **...Hospitable.** They are welcomers of outsiders/newcomers to our ministry. They are the ones you see guiding new persons to their seat, getting them music, explaining what the sequence of the rehearsal is and what to expect, introducing them to others.
5. **...Regular in their attendance.** Barring sickness, travel, or work, these individuals can be counted on each week in their place of service. They know that others are counting on them and their absence will dampen the greater work of the worship leaders in our church. You rarely hear an excuse for their absence because they value their role among the others with whom they serve.
6. **...Supporters of the ministry of the local church.** They attend Bible Study, worship (obviously) and may be—but not necessarily—involved in at least one other ministry of the church. They are selective in their service—balancing their faithfulness to God as a servant with their obligations to their family, which is also a part of their Christian service. *(As in they aren’t burned out by doing too much but are careful in their service so that other areas of their life are not misplaced sacrifices.)*
7. **...Appreciative of the seriousness of worship in the life of the Christian church** and make a point of doing their best in their role as worship leaders. This goes beyond being *physically present* at every opportunity, but also *mentally present* in their role as worship leader.
8. **...Model singer or instrumentalist.** This means when they step in front of others in worship, they look engaged, seek to blend in with their fellow worship leaders both in appearance (robes, black garb, etc.) demeanor, and spirit. Anyone who sees them knows this modern-day Levite *wants* to be doing what they are doing and *believe that where they are doing it is what God wants for them.*
9. **...Helpful.** Instead of focusing only on getting their materials ready, they reach out to help others as they can. For singers, this means helping with music, helping others find their place in the seating chart, volunteering when possible for specific tasks, etc. For instrumentalists, it means helping others get a music stand (and chair, if needed), making copies of music if parts are missing, helping others get their hymns ready, etc.
10. **...Engaged worshipers.** When performing, they are fully engaged as performers, executing their skill in the service of the Lord. When not performing (sermon, etc.), they are alert (awake!), avoiding their phone, and fully engaged as worshipers. *Anyone who sees them knows they are there for more than just to make their music.*
11. **...Supporters of the music staff and church ministers.** They are clearly “on the team” and support the leaders God has sent to lead them, the ministries within the church and are in love with their church.

Revised: PGH, January 2024

Current and Past Recipients of the
Worship Arts Ministry
Levite Award

2017

Choir: Robyn Chase

Orchestra: Ty Peace

2018

Choir: Angel Fail

Orchestra: Joel Swanson

2019

Choir: Tannis Blackwell

Orchestra: Jim Nash

2010-2021 – Pandemic Years

2022

Choir: David Cotey

Orchestra: Ty Peace

2023

Choir: Marcia Ruff

Orchestra: Kathy Grubbs

2024

Choir: Jim Duren, Steve Chasteen

Orchestra: Valorie McDonald, MaKay Swanson