



Media Release

Contact: Bill Alexander, 218-729-8434

More information: [www.strikepoint.com](http://www.strikepoint.com)

Local Contact: Darcy Reich, 218-326-1477

## TOP HANDBELL ENSEMBLE TO APPEAR IN CONCERT

Strikepoint, one of the world's top handbell ensembles, will perform at **2:00 p.m.** on **Sunday, May 23** at Community Presbyterian Church (703 N. Pokegama Ave.) in Grand Rapids. There is no admission charge, but a \$10 donation is suggested.

Think of a handbell ensemble as a living piano, with each of eleven ringers responsible for up to nine notes. Audience members will see musical lines moving as chords move up from the bass or the highest bells join in on the melody. Treble ringers may hold as many as six bells in their hands at one time, while bass ringers use their whole bodies to move 13-pound bronze bells with grace and finesse.

Strikepoint rings on six octaves of bells (nearly the entire range of a piano keyboard) and frequently adds other instruments, from chimes to a penny whistle to African percussion. Concert selections and audience favorites include Bach's *Little Fugue*, Debussy's *Arabesque* and Disney Studios' *Under the Sea*.

The group, based at First United Methodist Church in Duluth, has been touring annually since 1985, with an international tour every 2-3 years. Bill Alexander, a nationally known handbell clinician and conductor, leads the directorless ensemble. Former Grand Rapids resident Libby Gaalaas is a member of the group.

Strikepoint is noted for capturing the enthusiasm of audiences with its dynamic style and accessible music. Concerts are designed to delight and stir listeners whether they know all or nothing about handbells. Among the comments frequently heard after programs, a favorite is, "If we'd known it was going to be like *this*, we would have made all our friends come."

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