



***Ringing beautiful, serene and energetic music  
with handbells***



**Mission Statement:** Alpha 4 is an ambassador for the art of interlocking four-in-hand ringing and performs with musical excellence both within and beyond the handbell community through public and private concerts. Furthermore, they assist less experienced handbell musicians develop their ringing, directing and organizational skills while providing individual and group instruction that is educational and entertaining. The group is dedicated to teaching and demonstrating the value of handbell ringing in churches, schools and communities by bringing the beauty of handbell ringing to Central Maryland through local performances and individual instruction for children and adults.



41 Bralan Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20877  
301-926-0790 [www.alpha4handbells.org](http://www.alpha4handbells.org)

## About the Artists

### **Kristy Farrell, Ringer and Webdesigner**



Kristy was born and raised in York, PA and wanted to be a musician from the first time she saw her brother perform in a concert band when she was five years old. She began her musical life playing clarinet and even majored in music for a brief stint in college. Following her graduation from Boston University, Kristy moved to Gaithersburg, became a graphic/web designer and joined her brother's church, which happened to have handbells. After watching the handbells for a couple of years and playing with the church orchestra, Kristy was asked to join the church handbell group as a substitute. A love of handbells was born, and she was excited to hear that a four-in-hand bell group was forming in the church. Kristy is also a co-founder of [Roadchix.com](http://Roadchix.com), which chronicles the adventures of her and her friend as they travel to one state each year to thoroughly explore the roadside attractions, factory tours, historic homes and unique sites that each state offers. Alpha 4 christened her marriage by ringing her down the aisle. Kristy is now currently working on her Master's degree to be a librarian while tending her active toddler and dog.

### **Pam Ion, Director, Arranger, Composer, Ringer**



As the director, arranger, a composer and a ringer in Alpha 4, Pam initiated the formation of Alpha 4 in June of 2001 following a concert and workshop led by Christine Anderson. Her first musical instrument, wooden spoons on pots and pan lids, began prior to age two. A true percussionist, Pam also plays bugle, guitar and now plays the piano, but that's not all, she wants to learn to play the baritone and cello too. As the first drummer for the Young Americans, she has played timpani and percussion for the Round House Theatre in Rockville, Maryland, Gilbert and Sullivan series in California, timpani with the Ohio State Orchestra, continues to play percussion in her church orchestra, is the lead percussionist for TACTICC, a theatrical group in Carroll County and the timpanist for the Greenbelt Arts Center. Pam has played in and directed handbell choirs as well as performed solos, duets, trios and quartets for over 27 years. In 2006, she purchased her own set of Malmark solo handbells with a few additional bells for four-in-hand, and took them to the 2007 S.E.E. Conference. A Jack-of-all-Trades and master of many, Pam wears numerous hats: master painter, radio broadcaster, journalist, military and civilian nurse, Deacon, educator, caterer, baker/chef, author, actress and several more, and has a Bachelor degree in Communicative Journalism, obtained her California Licensed Practical Nurse Certification and completed a Master's degree in Special Education, but 'mom' and 'wife' are her favorite hats. As the published author of 'Be a Doer, Not a Viewer' with Vantage Press, she plans to write a

second book. After serving her country for a over a decade in the United States Navy, she opted to become a full time 'mom.' When her husband, Chris, her knight in shining armor, retired from the United States Navy, they moved to Maryland with their two daughters, Kristen and Amber. Kristen is a drama and music teacher in Frederick County, a teacher with the Frederick County Children's Chorus, director of Music at Wards Chapel UMC and is the music/vocal director for TACTICC. Amber is a private vocal teacher who works for the Rockville Police Department. Music continues to be a huge part of the Ion family. Chris and Pam plan retire to a log cabin in the mountains one day.

### **Nita Roff, Ringer**



Born and raised in Statesville, North Carolina, Nita says, "Bells are music to my soul." Whether she is singing, playing the piano or ringing handbells, music continues to be an important part of her life. She began ringing handbells and acting in church plays at an early teenager and continues to do both. As a member of First Baptist Church of Gaithersburg, she is most comfortable playing the upper third and fourth octaves (six-in-hand) in the Sanctuary Handbell Choir. When she's not playing handbells, she's singing in either the Sanctuary Choir or with the National Christian Choir where she also serves as the Robe Chairman. While at the University of North Carolina, she met and married Tom. It was Tom's job that led them to where they reside in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Her oldest daughter, Sheryl, is a senior at Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, WV, majoring in Commercial Recreation. Her youngest daughter, Alyssa, is a sophomore at Buffalo University majoring in Urban Planning. Both daughters have grown up ringing handbells as well. Not only is she a full-time 'mom', but she also is a Credentialing Analyst. Her second home away from home is her church where she serves as a Deacon, Sanctuary Choir Social Chair Committee member, Music Makers Children's Choir Director and Kindergarten Sunday School Director. Her faith in God and love of music, along with two energetic daughters, keep her very busy. It's no wonder she's been playing handbells for over 20 years. For Nita, ringing handbells is a peaceful, tranquil and fun break from her daily duties and activities. She says, "Thank you God for the Beauty of Bells and for Alpha 4."



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**Laura Staley, Ringer**



Laura was born in Kansas City, MO and then grew up in Maracay, Venezuela, Miami, FL, Chicago, IL and Rochester, NY. As a child, Laura took piano lessons and enjoyed them, and was part of the school band where she played mallet instruments - xylophone, marimba and bells. After graduating from college, a job moved her to Rockville, MD where she met and married the man of her dreams, Larry Staley. In 1987, she showed up to an organizational meeting for a new handbell group at church and heard a giant "click" in her head - she had found her musical niche. Since then, she has played with handbell choirs, in duets and trios, and as a solo ringer. Laura and Larry enjoy performing Larry's arrangements of hymns and patriotic songs with handbells, voice and piano parts. Alpha 4 convinced her that she could do anything she set her mind to on the handbells while providing her with fun and laughter and fresh challenges year round. Professionally Laura works as an instructional designer, creating leadership and supervisory classes. In her personal life, she teaches marriage enrichment classes with Larry and works toward her ongoing effort to master gluten-free, dairy-free and sugar-free cooking.

**Kathy Stauffer, Ringer**



Born in Ohio and raised in Toronto, Canada, Kathy's music career began with piano lessons at the age of eight. Kathy went on to include playing the viola in her high school orchestra. As an adult, Kathy was intrigued each time the Sanctuary Handbells rang in service. When a space became available for an additional ringer, Kathy found the courage to volunteer to be the new ringer. That was 10 years ago and she's been thankful since then for the joy of ringing bells. Courage should be her middle name. As the music and worship assistant at her church in Gaithersburg, Kathy is completely immersed in music. When Alpha 4 was forming in 2001 and with absolutely no hesitation, Kathy leaped on board and is now known as the steam engine in the group that loves to go full speed ahead. Kathy resides in Darnestown with her husband and best friend, Doug. Alive, alert, and enthusiastic, Kathy enjoys time with their three daughters, handwork, Community Bible Study, playing with her three grandsons, and anything to do with the computer. Their oldest daughter, Jen, lives in Brunswick with her husband, Mbiyu and three sons. Quinne is a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher in Olney, MD and happily married to Gary Jackson. Their youngest daughter, Hilary, is a junior at Hood College in Frederick, MD majoring in Bio Chemistry with aspirations of contributing to the medical field. Kathy is happy serving Christ in her family, her church, and the community. She is encouraged and uplifted through handbell ringing and the sisterhood of Alpha 4.



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## About Alpha 4 and the Alpha 4 Duo

[s.org](http://www.alpha4handbells.org)

Alpha 4 is a four-in-hand handbell group from Gaithersburg, Maryland that demonstrates the interlocking handbell technique which allows each member to play with two to three bells in each hand, meaning that each person is holding and ringing anywhere from four to six bells at any given time. This energetic group includes Kristy Farrell, Nita Roff, Laura Staley, Kathy Stauffer and Pam Ion, who is the group's director and arranger/composer and often a ringer.

Formed in 2001, Alpha 4 meets weekly year round and is made up of dedicated and versatile ringers who are also faithful prayer warriors and the best of friends.

Alpha 4 enjoys trying new and different techniques. In addition to ringing interlocking handbells, members also play what is referred to as "on the table" ensemble ringing. This means that the four ringers share and play several octaves of bells during one musical selection. The members alternate and also ring duets, trios, and solos.

Alpha 4 has performed for the Presidential Christmas Pageant of Peace, several Historical Societies, weddings, senior living facilities, nursing homes, programs in area shopping malls and various church worship services. They currently have a demo CD which is used for potential wedding clients.

Their repertoire includes classical, seasonal, patriotic and folk tunes, hymns, medleys, and both sacred and secular music.

They often bring in a variety of percussion instruments to add a different dimension in their ringing. Additionally, the Alpha 4 Duo is a subset of Alpha 4 and consists of two members of Alpha 4 who perform when a smaller group is needed.

Alpha 4 is a member of the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers and rings with Malmark handbells owned by Pam Ion.

For scheduling, contact Laura Staley, Marketing Director, by e-mail at [laura@alpha4handbells.org](mailto:laura@alpha4handbells.org) or Pam Ion, Director, by email at [pam@alpha4handbells.org](mailto:pam@alpha4handbells.org), or by leaving a message on the Alpha 4 telephone number of 301-926-0790.



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## 2002 – Present Alpha 4 and Alpha 4 Duo Performances

January 24, 2010 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
Grace United Methodist Church  
Worship Service

January 17, 2010 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
First Baptist Church of Gaithersburg  
Communion Service

December 20, 2009 Eldersburg, Maryland  
*Alpha 4 Duo* at Ward's Chapel Service

December 6, 2009 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
First Baptist Church of Gaithersburg  
Communion Music

December 5, 2009 Frederick, Maryland  
*Alpha 4 Duo*  
Frederick Cellars Holiday Affair

December 5, 2009 Frederick Maryland  
*Alpha 4 Duo* at C. Burr Artz Public Library  
Holiday Music and Christmas Carols

September 19, 2009 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
*Alpha 4 Duo* at Celebrate Gaithersburg  
Folk and patriotic

September 12, 2009 Frederick Maryland  
Alzheimer's Candlelight Vigil

April 14, 2009 Frederick, Maryland  
Bell & History Days Finale

April 14, 2009 Frederick Maryland  
Bell & History Days Opening at Schifferstadt

February 7, 2009 Frederick Maryland  
First Saturday Gallery Walk  
Fire and Ice theme

December 24, 2008 Gaithersburg Maryland  
First Baptist Church of Gaithersburg  
Christmas Eve Service

December 20, 2008 Frederick Maryland  
*Alpha 4 Duo*  
Museums by Candlelight

December 13, 2008 Columbia, Maryland  
Bain Senior Center  
Christmas, patriotic, classical and sacred

December 6, 2008 Urbana, Maryland  
*Alpha 4 Duo*  
Joyful Jingles at Urbana Library

December 6, 2008 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
*Alpha 4 Duo*  
Lakeforest Mall Holiday Music Concert

November 8, 2008 Frederick, Maryland  
First Saturday Gallery Walk  
Classical and Patriotic

April 5, 2008 Emmitsburg, Maryland  
Bell & History Days Finale Concert

April 5, 2008 Frederick, Maryland  
Bell & History Days  
Schifferstadt Museum

March 28, 2008 Ellicott City, Maryland  
Daughters of the American Revolution  
Patriotic Music Performance

March 16, 2008 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
First Baptist Church Worship Service

December 24, 2007 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
*Alpha 4 Duo* First Baptist Church  
Christmas Eve Service

December 15, 2007 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
First Baptist Church  
Let Heaven and Nature Sing Cantata

November 18, 2007 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
First Baptist Church Worship Service

July 25-29, 2007 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Solo/Ensemble Extravaganza  
National S.E.E. Conference

May 11, 2007 Mitchellville, Maryland  
Newton White Mansion  
Bonner/Millar outdoor wedding

April 8, 2007 Frederick, Maryland  
Bell & History Finale Concert  
All Saints' Episcopal Church

March 31, 2007 Frederick, Maryland  
C. Burr Artz Library

March 31, 2007 Frederick, Maryland  
Bell & History Days  
Schifferstadt Museum

December 15, 2006 Urbana, Maryland  
*Alpha 4 Duo*  
NIH Oral and Infection Department

December 10, 2006 Frederick, Maryland  
*Alpha 4 Duo*  
Frederick Library

December 9, 2006 Frederick, Maryland  
First Saturday Gallery Walk  
Market and Patrick Streets

December 9, 2006 Urbana, Maryland  
*Alpha 4 Duo* Urbana Library

November 12, 2006 Clarksburg, Maryland  
Greenridge Baptist Church Worship Service

August 20, 2006 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
First Baptist Church Worship Service

May 28, 2006 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
Stauffer/Jackson Wedding Music  
First Baptist Church, Gaithersburg

April 1, 2006 Frederick, Maryland  
Bell & History Days  
Schifferstadt Museum

March 11, 2006 Richmond, Virginia  
*Alpha 4 Duo*  
James River Ringer's Festival

January 15, 2006 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
First Baptist Church of Gaithersburg  
'He That Cometh In Peace' Premiere

December 3, 2005 Frederick, Maryland  
First Saturday Gallery Walk  
Historical Society of Frederick County

December 3, 2005 Frederick, Maryland  
*Alpha 4 Duo* - Museums By Candlelight  
Mt. Olivet Cemetery Chapel

December 9, 2005 Bethesda, Maryland  
*Alpha 4 Duo* - National Institute of Health  
Holiday party

December 13, 2005 Washington, DC  
Presidential Christmas Pageant of Peace  
Ellipse across from the White House

December 17, 2005 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
First Baptist Church of Gaithersburg  
Christmas Concert

April 10, 2005 Dickerson, Maryland  
Forest Grove UMC  
Worship Service Music

November 6, 2004 York, Pennsylvania  
Staley/Farrell Wedding  
Wedding Service Music

February 15, 2003 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
Asbury Methodist Village  
Wilson Health Care Center

October 11, 2003 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
Asbury Methodist Village  
Wilson Health Care Center

May 18, 2002 Gaithersburg, Maryland  
Lakeforest Mall  
Patriotic Music Performance



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## Alpha 4 and Alpha 4 Duo Quotes

"Enjoyed the bell sounds and I was fascinated to see how two people 'play' all those bells. Thank you for sharing our day so beautifully." *Pat K, Urbana Library*

"I would like to express my appreciation for your handbell group that played on Sunday (2/08). It was lovely, delicate, and spiritual music." *Pastor Joe Smith, First Baptist Church of Gaithersburg*

"I'm writing to say a big "THANK YOU" for your services at the Bonner/Millar wedding in May. Everything was beautiful, despite the short rainfall during the ceremony. Thank you for your willingness to be flexible with the date and the bride's wishes. I hope to work with Alpha 4 Handbells again (5/07)." *Vaneisha Brown, Planner of 'Your Happily Ever After Event Planning' [Vaneisha@yourhappilyeverafter.com](mailto:Vaneisha@yourhappilyeverafter.com)*

"I wanted to tell you how much the visitors enjoyed your performance! You made the 2005 Christmas Pageant of Peace music program a successful one! (12/05)" *Ranger Jenny Feeney, President's Park, White House Liaison*

"Just a note to say thank you to everyone who participated in Bell and History Days, including the Saturday morning bell-ringers, Alpha 4, who worked so hard to make the return of Bell and History Days to our community a success (4/06)." *Joanne M. Ivancic, Executive Director, Frederick County Landmarks Foundation, Inc.*

"You two sounded great and the bells were simply magical! What a fantastic beginning to a great day at Joyful Jingles." *Rob R. and Marie Slaby Urbana Library*

"We were delighted to have you at our Holiday Party, and everyone was so impressed with the bell ringing. You and Kristy really made the party special. Thank you so much for taking time away from your job and busy schedules to share your fabulous talents with us (12/05 & 12/06)." *Sharon Wahl, NIH Lab Chief of Oral Infection and Immunity Branch*

"Forest Grove United Methodist Church was blessed by the presence and performance of Alpha 4. This was a wonderful new experience for the Forest Grove congregation. The ringers brought a new dimension to our worship that prompted several people within our congregation to begin considering starting a small bell choir at Forest Grove. We are excited about this new movement of the Spirit in our midst! Please accept my heartfelt thanks for the gift that the ringers brought to us in their music. The joy they have in their ministry is apparent to all that see and hear them. What a wonderful way to spread God's love through the graces and talents we are given! May God continue to bless these wonderful musicians in their ministry! We were blessed beyond measure by their presence in our community. Wow! What a wonderful menu of choices (4/05)." *Pastor Bill Maisch, Forest Grove UMC*

"The bells were wonderful! What a treat to hear at work!" *Michele Perry, Urbana Library*

