
CHRIST CHURCH

— Southgate —



Director of Music

Information Pack

Reverend Dr Chrichton Limbert Vicar
Reverend Hazel Miall *Associate Priest*
Reverend Paul Ellerby *Curate*

www.christchurch-southgate.org

Job Information Pack: Director of Music

Christ Church Southgate, North London, N14 7EG

Christ Church Southgate is seeking to appoint a Director of Music from September 2024. The Director of Music will be responsible for directing a highly accomplished church choir in the liberal Catholic tradition to a high standard, and for upholding a strong greater-church standard musical tradition. The Director of Music will be required to work collaboratively and creatively with the Vicar in directing all aspects of music-making in the Parish, and in developing the programme of choral services, as well as occasional concerts, recordings, and tours.

The successful candidate, as an integral part of the Parish community, will be: experienced in conducting choirs of adults and children; a skilled organist of ARCO standard or equivalent; a motivational figure who understands the voluntary character of the Choir's membership and the importance of recruitment and retention of singers; confident in managing and teaching children; committed to the safeguarding and welfare of both adults and children; respectful of people from all walks of life; and, able to demonstrate a knowledge and passion for Anglican liturgical worship and imagination for ambitious musical programming.

This is an exciting opportunity for a motivated church musician who wishes to direct an outstanding choir in the Anglican choral tradition. This post would particularly suit an early career professional who wishes to direct high-quality church music and gain experience of departmental management, or a more established musician who wishes to commit to a new and rewarding career opportunity. In truth, this is a post that can be as expansive and rewarding as the holder wishes to make it. It comes with large expectations, which are equally matched with big rewards and the opportunity to work with fun and dedicated people in a welcoming parish environment. As an Inclusive Church we welcome applicants from all walks of life.

Music at Christ Church Southgate

The Choir of Christ Church Southgate enjoys a reputation as one of north London's finest voluntary liturgical auditioned choirs. As a large choir of around 40 singers, both adults and children, the Choir sings at least twice a

week on most Sundays at both the 10am Sung Eucharist and 6.30pm Choral Evensong, as well as on major Feast Days. The Choir is divided into two sections: at the heart of the Church's musical output is the mixed Adult Choir of 20 singers, who sing for all the choral services and concerts. Augmenting the Adult Choir for two Sunday Eucharists a month and other special services is a thriving junior section of 16 choristers.

Music at the Church has been led for the past 11 years by Richard Brain. The Organist is Kate Macpherson; they are married and work together as the music department at Christ Church. They will be leaving at the end of August for Richard to take up the position of Director of Music at Haileybury College. Therefore, there will also be a vacancy for an Organist, which will be advertised separately once the Director of Music has been appointed.

Christ Church Southgate is passionate about sacred music, undertaking an ambitious programme of choral repertoire, and is one of the last choirs in the north London area to proudly keep alive the tradition of singing a full BCP Choral Evensong on a weekly basis. We provide a centre of excellence in Parish music for the singing of sacred repertoire to the highest standards within traditional Anglican liturgy. The turnover of repertoire is akin to a Cathedral or greater-church; the Choir perform a wide range of sacred music written over the last 500 years, including renaissance polyphony by Byrd, Palestrina, and Tallis, through to twentieth century and contemporary works by Chilcott, Dove, Duruflé, Howells, and Vaughan Williams.

The Choir has a significant public performance output in singing for concerts and recordings, and has an established reputation for high quality TV and radio work. In July 2022, the Choir led a live TV broadcast of Sung Mass from St Nicholas Basilica, Amsterdam, with the Dutch broadcaster NRO NCRV. The Choir was also interviewed and recorded Joanna Forbes L'Estrange's *The Mountains Shall Bring Peace* for European TV broadcasts during the lead up to the Coronation of HM King Charles III in 2023.

The Choir is also well regarded as a visiting choir and has sung at some of the UK's most prestigious Cathedrals and Abbeys, in addition to undertaking regular UK and international tours. The Choir regularly sings at Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral, and has also undertaken recent Cathedral visits and tours to Bristol, Hereford, Gloucester, Southwark, St David's and St George's Windsor. Recent European tour destinations have included Amsterdam and Venice, with a forthcoming tour to Germany in April 2024. Dates are currently in the diary in 2025 for visiting choir weekends at Wells and Winchester Cathedrals.

The Choir performs an annual concert for its patronal festival on the Feast of Christ the King. This concert is often accompanied by an orchestra and past performances have included Bach *Mass in B Minor* and *Christmas Oratorio*,

Handel *Messiah*, Haydn *Creation*, Mozart *Requiem* and Vivaldi *Gloria*. A popular event in the cultural calendar of Southgate, there is wide scope for ambitious programming for this event. The Parish enjoys a longstanding relationship with professional violinist Liz Partridge, who is the artistic collaborator for these concerts and leads the orchestra.

The Choir has been active in making many recordings over the last decade. This has included music videos for social media and two CDs, *The Heavenly Architect* and *Christmas at Christ Church Southgate*. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Choir remained active as a virtual ensemble. If you wish to hear recordings of the Choir, please visit our website: www.christchurch-southgate.org or our YouTube page: [@ChristChurchN14](https://www.youtube.com/@ChristChurchN14).

Choir Membership

The lifeblood of the Choir's membership is based on its talented voluntary singers, both in the Adult Choir and the Chorister section. The successful candidate will recognise this, and be skilled in motivation and building a strong collaborative atmosphere that inspires the dedicated people around them. It is essential that the Director of Music can work successfully with both adults and children.

The Choir's dedication to the music it sings is matched by its friendliness and camaraderie across its wide age-range, making it a happy and supportive place to sing. There is a church bar where choir members go to relax after singing, and parties and social events take place regularly throughout the year within the Parish.

The Adult and Choristers sections sing in various formations allowing for much flexibility. In addition to full choir services, the choir can sing as ATB, Treble only and Soprano only formations, or as SATB quartets or half-forces.

The Choir enjoys great depth with its membership, with a good balance of numbers in the Adult Choir spread across all four voice parts. Most members sing for all services, but a number sing a reduced half-services schedule. The Choir also has a strong deputy singers list, which is an invaluable source of support providing cover for regular members when they are away or additional singers for large scale services. All Adult Choir members are auditioned.

In addition to the voluntary singers, the Choir also runs a successful choral scholarship programme for singers aged 16-25. In recent years the trend has been to appoint postgraduate singers. Thanks to benefactors, there is secure funding in place for the scholarship programme, and it is now planned for the Choir to offer three scholarships a year at £1300p.a.

The success of the Chorister section is of particular importance to the Church. A strong Chorister section is rewarding for all involved, and helps bring families into this family-friendly church. Rehearsing every Friday in term time, the Choristers sing for a reduced number of services, generally focusing on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month, in addition to other special services including Christingle, Nine Lessons and Carols and Mothering Sunday. There is room for flexibility in the Choristers' schedule and this is within the Director of Music's discretion. Historically, there have been good links with local schools and the new Director of Music should seek to renew these links for recruitment.

Led by a senior Chorister Chaperone, there are several parents and choir members who are DBS checked chorister chaperones. Chorister singing lessons are currently provided.

The Organ and Piano

Christ Church Southgate is home to a fine 45 stop three-manual organ, built by J W Walker and Sons in 1870. The instrument was rebuilt and significantly enlarged in 1947, with some remedial work in future years, and was restored with new keyboards and pedalboard in 2016. A plan is in place for further organ repair work, and the new Director of Music will oversee the completion of this plan.

The specification of the organ can be found on the NPOR website: <https://www.npor.org.uk/survey/R00869>.

The Church also has an excellent Reid Sohn grand piano. The Church is regularly used as an ABRSM exam venue. Recent practice has also seen the piano used to accompany congregational-only services, rather than the organ. This has proved popular with the congregation and helps with finding holiday cover for the Director of Music.

The Director of Music would be welcome to use the organ and piano for private instrumental tuition, coordinated via the Parish Administrator.

Appointment of the Director of Music

We are looking for an able and accomplished church musician to act as our principal conductor and choir trainer. The department structure is such that the Director of Music is assisted by an Organist for approximately two-thirds of services and some Friday night choir practices. The Director of Music must both play and conduct alone for approximately a third of services. For these services, *a cappella* music is often selected. Experience in choral direction is therefore essential and candidates must also be able to competently play the

organ for services. However, major accompaniments have traditionally been undertaken by the Organist.

At present, Kate Macpherson is the Organist at Christ Church, accompanying most services and occasionally also deputising for Richard as choir director. With Kate also leaving Christ Church in August 2024, the new Director of Music will be involved in appointing a new Organist. They will be an important part in the shaping of the responsibilities of that post in agreement with the Vicar, Churchwardens and Treasurer.

The Director of Music position at Christ Church would suit an ambitious musician who is enthusiastic to expand their repertoire and undertake new challenges. There will be valuable leadership experience in the running of a large liturgical choir of adults and children and to work in an extremely rewarding environment working with fun and dedicated people in a welcoming parish environment.