

St. John's, Shaughnessy Choral Director

We at St. John's, Shaughnessy, are committed to the excellence of music in our liturgical life. Even in a largely secular society, humans long to see and feel the presence of the divine. We believe that excellence in music can help us experience a narrowing of the gap between the imminent and the transcendent, bringing us closer to God. Such experiences of the beauty of holiness in our worship life not only refresh us as worshippers, but also inspire us to carry out God's mission in our daily lives.

The Parish of St. John, Shaughnessy, seeks a half-time Choral Director to support the continued growth and development of excellent choral music in the cathedral tradition. Our next Choral Director will have a deep appreciation of and commitment to the rich liturgical and musical tradition of the Anglican Church. They will be enthusiastic about striving for excellence and beauty with a committed and high-quality choir of paid singers and volunteers to support the worship life of the congregation, and they will be excited by the possibility of cultivating a youth choir in the RSCM tradition. Above all, the Choral Director will understand their role as a ministry and a vocation.

Our congregation continues to uphold one of the finest music traditions in Vancouver, and over the past eleven years we have re-established ourselves as a place of musical excellence. The church's rich acoustic enhances both choral singing and congregational participation. Our worship is formal and traditional, yet warm and inviting. Since Covid, a twelve-person choir consisting of volunteers and paid section leaders sings from the labyrinth at the back of the nave, but there is potential to relocate to the chancel or the choir loft. In addition to Sunday mornings, we also hold choral evensong several times a year, which we hope to increase to at least a regular monthly offering (September to June).

The four-manual Hallman organ at St. John's is one of the largest pipe organs in Vancouver. Its recent 50th anniversary saw a very successful fundraising campaign which allowed us to undertake a significant revitalization of the instrument. This fundraising campaign was led by our Principal Organist and Artist-in-Residence, who offers organ preludes and postludes and accompanies the hymns and service music. The Choral Director, if also an organist, will be welcome to share in these responsibilities as desired and mutually agreed upon. The Choral Director and Principal Organist will be expected to develop a close working relationship.

Remuneration for the position will be in accordance with experience and RCCO guidelines. The Choral Director will also be eligible for group benefits through the Anglican Church of Canada's Lay Employees plan. Teaching is encouraged and teaching privileges will be granted.

Interested candidates should submit a detailed curriculum vitae and a cover letter outlining how their interest and experience align with this position. Applications will be received until October 20, or until the post is filled. Please direct inquiries to the Rev. Terry Dirbas (terry.dirbas@sjs.net).

Title: Choral Director

Reports to: Rector

Scheduled hours/work week: 20 hours per week to include Sundays and evenings

Salary: Based on experience and RCCO recommended salaries

Benefits and vacation: in accordance with Anglican Church of Canada policies

Private Teaching: encouraged—teaching privileges will be granted

Primary Duties and Responsibilities:

1. The Choral Director will be expected to receive direction from and be directly responsible to the Rector, who by virtue of her office is charged with the responsibility of ordering and directing all services of worship including liturgy and music.
2. The Choral Director will be expected to select choral music that aligns with the liturgical occasion and with the skills and abilities of the choir. The Choral Director is responsible for selecting psalm settings, canticles, anthems, motets, and other choir music. Hymns will be selected in collaboration with the Rector.
3. In addition to Sunday morning worship, the Choral Director will be expected to plan music for monthly choral evensong (September through June); Ash Wednesday; Holy Week; Remembrance Day; Advent Lessons & Carols; and possibly other special occasions as mutually agreed upon with the Rector.
4. On occasion, the Choral Director may be asked to facilitate choral music for weddings or funerals, for which they will be compensated in accordance with RCCO guidelines. The Choral Director will have first right of refusal for conducting on these occasions. (If the Choral Director is also an organist, they may share responsibility for playing on such occasions as mutually agreed upon with the Principal Organist.)
5. The Choral Director will be expected to plan music for an entire term (September through Christmas, Epiphany through Trinity Sunday, etc.). Selections may, of course, be modified if circumstances change, but the creation of a music list that may be published and promoted is a requirement.
6. The Choral Director is encouraged to explore the possibility of establishing a high quality youth choir in the RSCM tradition, both as an offering to the wider community and as a vehicle for the growth of the parish. Grant money is likely available for the purchase of vestments and other startup costs.
7. The Choral Director will be expected to lead weekly rehearsals of the choir(s), with emphasis on excellence through the engagement and education of paid and volunteer singers, as well as fostering a sense of community and of joy among the choir as a whole.
8. The Choral Director will engage with the wider musical community in Vancouver, recruiting skilled volunteers through networking.
9. The Choral Director will oversee, with the assistance of volunteers, the maintenance of the music library and vestments.
10. The Choral Director will attend weekly staff meetings, as well as other meetings and workshops as requested by the Rector.

11. The Choral Director will manage the paid singers and their scheduling and will maintain a list of substitute singers.
12. The Choral Director will audition new members (paid and volunteer).
13. The Choral Director will develop, submit, manage, and adhere to a music budget in coordination with the Rector and the Trustees. The budget shall include maintenance of instruments; publicity and marketing for concerts and other programs; new or replacement music; and paid singers and substitutes.
14. The Choral Director will be expected to further their own spiritual and musical development and to participate in the greater musical life of the community and the national church through membership in professional organizations and through joint musical events with other churches.

Qualifications:

1. Excellent interpersonal skills with people of all ages, including the ability to work collaboratively with clergy and staff.
2. Demonstrated excellence in playing and proficiency on the organ are highly desirable, though not absolutely necessary. A passion for and excellence in choral conducting is a must, as are advanced keyboard skills appropriate to support choir rehearsals. (The parish also has a fine Yamaha grand piano, which has been “warmly voiced” for our acoustic.)
3. A keen and practical understanding and knowledge of the Anglican tradition of liturgy, worship, and music, including RSCM is highly desirable. At a minimum, candidates should have at least some familiarity with Anglican church music and demonstrate enthusiasm for learning.
4. An undergraduate degree in music or certification in church music. An advanced degree is preferred.
5. Enthusiasm for the possibility of developing new programs and ministries
6. Knowledge of vocal pedagogy, and experience in motivating and encouraging singers of various proficiencies.
7. Submission of a recent Criminal Records check with Vulnerable Sector check and participation in diocesan Safe Church Training