Staff of Christ’s Church

The Rev. Canon Susan C. Harriss, Rector
The Rev. Colin M. Chapman, Curate (until September 14th)
The Rev. Dn. Dorothée R. Caulfield, Deacon and Parish Secretary
Tami Burks, Director of Children’s Christian Education
Don Chadeayne, Sexton
Vickie Cox, Finance Office
Crispian Thorne, Verger
Lisa Pearson, Director of Christ’s Church Nursery School
The Rev. Edward Johnston, Rector Emeritus

Music Staff

Ruaraidh Sutherland, Organist & Director of Music
Abigail Cross, Staff-singer
Jon Garrow, Staff-singer
Simon Riker, Staff-singer
Megan Schubert, Staff-singer
Hugo Vera, Staff-singer

Glyn Ziemacki, Choir Librarian

Music Committee

Glyn Ziemacki, (Chair)
Judi Allen, John Clark, Lisl Dunlop (Vestry Liason),
Cynthia Howard (Secretary), Sally Lee, James Thresher

All information on the music program is located at www.ccrye.org
Christ’s Church Choir Handbook

Table of Contents

Page 4 Welcome
Our Purpose
Page 5 Our Choirs
Page 6 Weekly Choir Schedule
Page 7 Attendance Policy
Page 8 Choir Commitment
Page 9 Practice
Page 10 Royal School of Church Music
Page 11 Dress and Behavior Guidelines
Page 12 Structure of the Christ’s Church Choristers
Page 13 Chorister Prizes
Page 14 Choir Diary
WELCOME!

Music continues to be an integral part of life at Christ’s Church, Rye, where Anglican worship has been offered since the late 17th Century, making us one of the oldest Episcopal congregations in the USA. This handbook is intended to help choristers, parents, and supporters become acquainted with the operation and routine of the music department and answer any questions that you may have.

Should you wish to contact the Organist and Director of Music, Ruairidh Sutherland, directly, you are welcome to use the following:

music@ccrye.org
(914) 967-1749 ext. 229

OUR PURPOSE

All our choristers

Welcome to all choir singers and choir families. This handbook is intended to help acquaint all with the operations of the music ministry at Christ’s Church and as a useful source of information for anyone involved in the choir program at Christ's Church.

THIS HANDBOOK IS TO BE TAKEN HOME AND READ CAREFULLY.

It is both an honor and privilege for us to participate in this vibrant music ministry.
OUR CHOIRS

The Christ’s Church Singers is the ‘occasional’ choir, drawn from our other ensembles, along with members of the congregation that can’t commit to the full schedule. They sing at special services and over the summer months.

The Christ’s Church Cherub Choir (boys and girls ages 4-7) exists to instill a love and excitement for singing sacred music in the hearts and minds of young children, and to prepare them to eventually join the ranks of Christ’s Church Choristers. They sing several times a year, principally at Christmas and Easter.

The Choristers of Christ’s Church Choir (boys and girls ages 8-13) sing at the majority of services with the adult choir, in addition to leading worship several times a year on their own. Trained to the highest standards and treated as professional musicians, the Choristers are an integral part of the music ministry of Christ’s Church.

The Adults of Christ’s Church Choir, formed of professional singers, volunteers from the parish, and teenagers (often former choristers), sing at the majority of our liturgies. They are an experienced and dedicated group, who rejoice in their fellowship and ministry.
**WEEKLY CHOIR SCHEDULE**

*Wednesday:*  
*Facilities open from 3:00 PM*  
Probationer Choristers 3:30-5:00  
Junior Choristers 4:00-5:45  
Senior Choristers 4:30-6:15  
*Evensong sung at 5:30 PM on 1st Wednesday of the month*

**Thursday:**  
*Facilities open at 7.00 PM*  
Adult Choir 7.30 PM - 9.00 PM

**Sunday:**  
*Vesting and preparation from 8.30 AM*  
Full Choristers 8:50 AM  
Adults 9:00 AM call for 10:00 AM  
Cherub Choir 11.15 AM – 11.45 AM (as scheduled)

Choristers have a bi-weekly, individual 30 minute lesson with the Director of Music, to be scheduled on **Tuesdays, Thursdays, or Fridays**.

Services which fall on Sunday afternoons and on weekdays have their own rehearsal times.

Please refer to the **Important Choir Dates** on pages 14 and 16.

**Voice Classes** will be offered periodically on Saturdays to allow a make-up time for missed rehearsals, and to provide additional help in musical preparation for special events. Signing up ahead of time is required.
ATTENDANCE POLICY

General

- All singers are expected to strive for perfect attendance; however, an 80% attendance record over the year is considered the minimum. Should choristers (child or adult) fall below this, a meeting will be called to discuss their commitment to the program.
- A three week notice period is required for absence, unless through illness.

Punctuality

- Singers should plan to arrive **10 minutes** before each rehearsal time.
- Arriving on time is an individual responsibility, but one that contributes to the success and spirit of the entire ensemble. Parents should negotiate conflicts, taking into consideration the choir schedule and attendance standards.
- In cases of perpetual lateness, singers may be asked to leave the choir.

Severe weather conditions

- In the event of inclement weather, severe weather decisions will be made by 2:00 pm of the rehearsal day. The receptionist of the church office will have the most recent information concerning a decision.

Recruiting

- The success of our choirs is dependent on a solid group of participants. Please invite your Christ’s Church and community friends to join the choir.
CHOIR COMMITMENT

A music program such as that at Christ’s Church cannot function without the goodwill of volunteers (who organize transport to and from rehearsals) and the support of families who arrange their calendars. The Director of Music is grateful for all that members of the program offer in supporting the current rehearsal and performance schedule, without which the Choristers would just be another children’s choir and the maintenance of the current high standard of music would be difficult. We could not continue to stretch and motivate each other otherwise.

Due to the enormous amount of music covered in just one month, it is hard for a singer not to fall behind even after missing only one rehearsal. Parents should help their child adhere to these rules – please don’t put your child in a difficult position by failing to note a possible conflict in advance. It is understood that required job or academic obligations may require the singer to be absent from a rehearsal or an event. However, please understand that in making the commitment to the choir program the singer must choose to place their commitment to the choir above other extracurricular activities.
PRACTICE

Due to the amount of music covered in the course of each year, members of the Adult choir will be expected to learn some of their music outside of rehearsal times.

Note-bashing is tedious, boring and unnecessary for the greater part of what we do. It also takes a great deal of time away from important matters of style and interpretation. It is essential that preparation is done at home in order for the music-making to be of the highest quality.

If you have a problem with this, please speak directly to Ruaraidh.

Classes will take place throughout the year to address matters of theory.
ROYAL SCHOOL OF CHURCH MUSIC (RSCM)

“The RSCM supports a world-wide network of 8,500 churches, schools and individuals. We are committed to achieving the best use of good music in worship – whatever the resources, whatever the styles. Through education, training, publications, advice and encouragement, we aim to support church music today and to invest in church music for the future.”

RSCM America website

Individual and group classes for adults and teenagers are offered for those wishing to undertake the highly sought-after and internationally recognized external Silver and Gold RSCM examinations.

If you wish to know more about requirements, please speak directly to Ruairaidh.
DRESS AND BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

- Choir members are asked to show discretion in their Sunday best
- Dark socks/stockings (absolutely no other colors will be accepted)
- Black shows (which can be kept at church)

Any informal clothing should not be evident when wearing vestments.

Program members should always remember that they are the public face of worship, and attire must be appropriate to their duty as leaders.

We also want visitors to take away a good report of our worship and disposition.

For any outside events or choir tours/trips, smart clothing is required.

Choir Room and Church (rehearsal and general)

- No talking during rehearsal
- For important questions, raise your hand.
- Do your absolute best at all times.
- No food or drink (water excepted, although please be careful)
- Make sure you have the correct music before rehearsal begins.
- Always have your music, hymnal, and pencil with you.
- Arrive on time at the beginning of rehearsal, after breaks, and between sectional rehearsals.
- Put music away after end of rehearsal
- Leave all backpacks (and other things) in the hallway.

Mobile Phone Use

- Mobile phones are not allowed in rehearsals and services.
- Mobile phone use is also discouraged during break times.
STRUCTURE OF THE CHRIST’S CHURCH CHORISTERS *

Probationer
Once a chorister is accepted into the choir, they normally start as a probationer. They learn the basics of how the voice works, of breathing and vocal technique. They begin to learn how to sight-read, are introduced to the theory of music and singing in other languages. Following the probationary period (between four and eight months), Probationers are formally awarded their cotta during a special service.

Junior Chorister
Junior choristers take around 1-2 years to complete the syllabus. During this time they work on more advanced vocal technique and music theory; they will also be expected to show knowledge of the Bible and the Episcopal faith. Opportunities for leadership roles and taking more responsibility for younger singers will also be offered.

Senior Chorister
Senior choristers show excellence in all that they undertake. The syllabus usually takes 1-2 years to complete, and they should show excellence in sight-reading, musical knowledge (including musical history) and in church history. At least one Head Chorister is appointed who acts for the Director of Music in supervising the younger singers.

Further examinations
Choristers will be encouraged to undertake external examinations with the Royal School of Church Music at Silver and Gold level, the two highest levels offered. Encouragement will also be given to attend RSCM courses in New York (girls) and Montreal (boys).
CHORISTER PRIZES

On Choir Recognition Sunday, various prizes are awarded, including the following:

THE CHOIRMASTER’S PRIZE
Greatest accruing of points throughout the year

THE DEACON’S PRIZE
Awarded to the chorister in their first year who has made the most significant progress

THE RECTOR’S PRIZE
Highest attendance throughout the choir year
CHRIST’S CHURCH CHOIR  
CHOIR DIARY for 2014-15

SEPTEMBER
Wednesday 3rd  Chorister’s practices resume
Thursday 4th  Adult’s practices resume
SUNDAY 7th  Adults
Wednesday 10th  Chorister Open House 4-5:30
SUNDAY 14th  Full Choir
SUNDAY 21st  Full Choir  Cherub practice
Wednesday 27th  Memorial Service (times TBC)
SUNDAY 28th  Adults  Cherub practice

OCTOBER
Wednesday 1st  Choristers sing Evensong at 5:30 MP J&S ONLY
SUNDAY 5th  Choristers, Sopranos/Altos  Cherub practice
SUNDAY 12th  Adults
SUNDAY 19th  Eucharist: Tenors/Basses  Cherub practice
Choral Evensong: Full Choir (practice 2:30)
SUNDAY 26th  Adults  Cherub practice

NOVEMBER
SUNDAY 2nd  Eucharist: Full Choir  Cherub practice
Requiem: Adults (rehearsal 3:30)
Wednesday 5th  Choristers sing Evensong at 5:30 PM J&S ONLY
SUNDAY 9th  Full Choir  Cherub practice
SUNDAY 16th  Adults  Cherub practice
SUNDAY 23rd  Full Choir (Choral Eucharist)  Cherub practice
Wed 26 / Thur 27  No practices
SUNDAY 31st  No Choir (Happy Thanksgiving, continued...)

DECEMBER
Wednesday 3rd  Choristers sing Evensong at 5:30 PM J&S ONLY
SUNDAY 7th  Rye England Sunday: Full Choir  Cherub practice
SUNDAY 14th  Adults
SUNDAY 21st  Eucharist: Scratch choir (sign-up sheet)
Pageant: Choristers (practice 3:30)
WEDNESDAY 22nd  Christmas Eve (usual rehearsals suspended)
3 PM Eucharist: Cherubs/CCSingers (practice 2:30 PM)
6 PM Eucharist: Full Choir (practice 4:30 PM)
11 PM Eucharist (Choral): Senior Chor./Adults (p: 9:30 PM)
Thursday 25th  Christmas Day (usual rehearsals suspended)
Come-as-you-are choir practice (9:30 AM) for Morning Prayer with Carols
SUNDAY 28th  No Choir
Wed 31 / Thur 1  No practices

14
**JANUARY**  
| SUNDAY 4<sup>th</sup> | Adults | *(Ruairidh and Benedicte will offer Messiaen’s La Nativite at 4pm today)* |
| SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup> | Full Choir | Cherub practice |
| Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> to SUNDAY 18<sup>th</sup> | **Full Choir** trip to All Saints Cathedral, Albany |
| Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> | Cherub Festival at Cathedral of St John the Divine |
| SUNDAY 25<sup>th</sup> | Adults | Cherub practice |

**FEBRUARY**  
One Wednesday practice during February will be led by K. Dienes-Williams.  
| SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup> | Full Choir | Cherub practice |
| Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> | Choristers sing Evensong at 5:30 *J&S ONLY* |
| SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup> | Full Choir | Cherub practice |
| SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup> | Adults | Cherub practice |
| Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> | Ash Wednesday *Usual practice and pick up times*  
5 PM Eucharist: **Choristers** *(practice 4:30 PM)*  
7:30 PM Eucharist *(Choral): Adults* *(practice 6:00 PM)* |
| SUNDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> | Adults |
| Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> to SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup> | **Full Choir** trip to Boston, MA |

**MARCH**  
| Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> | Choristers sing Evensong at 5:30 *J&S ONLY* |
| SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup> | **Choristers, Sopranos/Altos**  
We will be joined by the choir school of Trinity, Asbury Park, NY |
| SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup> | Tenors/Basses | Cherub practice |
| SUNDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> | Eucharist: **Choristers** | Cherub practice |
| | Concert with RPC at 4pm: **Adults** *(call time: 3 PM)* |
| SUNDAY 29<sup>th</sup> | Palm Sunday  
9 AM Eucharist: **Choristers/CCSingers/Cerubs** *(practice 8 AM)*  
11 AM Eucharist: **Adults** *(practice 10 AM)*  
**Adult** choir Holy Week *practice 12-1* |

**APRIL**  
| Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> | No Choral Evensong (regular practices) |
| Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> | Maundy Thursday:  
7:30 PM Eucharist: **Adults** *(practice 6:00 PM)* |
| Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> | Good Friday:  
10 AM Service for Families: **Choristers** *(practice 9:30 AM)*  
12 PM Liturgy for the Day: **Adults** *(practice 11:15 AM)* |
| Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> | Vigil: 7:30 Vigil Eucharist: **Full Choir** *(practice 6:30 PM)* |
| SUNDAY 5<sup>th</sup> | Easter Day  
9 AM Eucharist: **Choristers/CCSingers/Cerubs** *(practice 8 AM)*  
11 AM Eucharist: **Senior Chor & Adults** *(practice 10:30 AM)* |
| Wed 8 /Thur 9 | No practices |
| SUNDAY 12<sup>th</sup> | **No Choir** |
| SUNDAY 19<sup>th</sup> | Eucharist: **Christ's Church Singers** *(Cherubs?)*  
**Evensong at St Mary’s, NYC: Full Choir** *(practice 2:30 PM)* |
| SUNDAY 26<sup>th</sup> | Adults |
MAY
SUNDAY 3rd
Wednesday 6th
SUNDAY 10th
Thursday 14th
SUNDAY 17th
SUNDAY 25th
SUNDAY 31st
JUNE
Wednesday 3rd
Thursday 4th
Sunday 7th

Full Choir
Choristers sing Evensong at 5:30
Mother’s Day: Full Choir (Cherub?)
Ascension Day (usual rehearsal suspended)
Eucharist: Choristers
Evensong: Adults (practice 6:00)
Evensong: Adults (practice 2:00 PM)
Evensong will be sung on May 18 at Trinity Church, Ossining, by the combined adult choirs of Christ’s Church and Trinity
No Choir
Eucharist: Adults
Evensong: Full Choir (practice 2:30 PM)
Choristers sing Evensong at 5:30
Last Evensong of the academic year
Last adult practice of the academic year
Full Choir
Potential Christmas CD recording in early June. Watch this space!