

St Paul's, Bedford - Organist



Overview

This is an exciting opportunity for a gifted and enthusiastic organist to support the music of a busy, inclusive, major parish church with a history of a strong choral tradition. We seek in our new Organist someone who is:

- an excellent organist
- skilled in accompanying and working with an amateur choir, and in encouraging musical activities
- supportive of the growth of the choir
- keen to work collaboratively with the Vicar and choir members
- A committed Christian and sympathetic to our generous and inclusive catholic ethos
- liturgically aware, committed and flexible

Context

St Paul's Bedford is a thriving, inclusive church set in the town centre of Bedford. St Paul's Church is recognised nationally as one of the *Major Churches* and plays a threefold role within the community: as the Civic and County Church of Bedfordshire; as a centre of excellence of worship and music for a widely dispersed congregation, and as a focus of ministry to its own diverse parish. The church is of a Liberal Catholic tradition and a member of the Major Churches Network, Cathedrals Plus and Inclusive Church. The Sunday Eucharist is celebrated in the form of a High Mass; full vestments are worn and incense is used. *We value excellence in traditional music and liturgy while welcoming to the new.*

Bedford has a lively music scene and the Church has an ongoing commitment towards the encouragement of music making through its wider community links: lunchtime concerts, recitals, a flourishing link with many school choirs and community music groups through the Christmas Tree Festival, and regularly hosting one off musical events.

Bedford is quickly and easily accessible, both by train on the East Midland Line from St Pancras (fast East Midland trains 40mins, Thameslink 60mins); and by car from the M1 and A1. There are also good bus and coach links.

The Present Pattern of Worship is as follows:

Sunday Services

10.15 Parish Eucharist: congregational Mass settings, with choir anthem and motet, hymns and acclamations.

We also wish to reintroduce:

10.15 Choral Eucharist (on 3rd Sunday) usually, with a full choral setting

5.30 Choral Evensong (Sunday, usually once per month) Choral setting, with sung psalms, anthem and hymns.

Seasonal services

St Pauls observes the major festivals of the Church, including those that do not fall on Sundays, when the choir is expected to sing. Those at which the Organist is expected to play are as follows:

Day	Time	Type of Service
The First Sunday of Advent	5.30pm	Advent Carol Service
Weekend in Advent	4pm	Christingle Service
Weekend in Advent	4pm	Festival of Lessons and Carols
Christmas Eve	4pm	Crib Service
Christmas Eve	11pm	Midnight Mass, preceded by Choir carols
Christmas Morning	10.15	Sung/All Age Eucharist
Patronal Festival	evening	Sung/Choral Eucharist (if not falling on a Sunday)
Candlemas Sunday	5.30pm	Epiphany/Candlemas Service
Ash Wednesday	7.30pm	Eucharist with the Imposition of Ashes
Palm Sunday	5.30pm	Passiontide/Easter Meditation
Maundy Thursday	7.30pm	Eucharist with Stripping of the Altars
Good Friday	2pm	Liturgy of Good Friday
Holy Saturday	8pm	Paschal Vigil and Eucharist (with or without Confirmation)
Ascension Day	7.30pm	Sung/Choral Eucharist
Corpus Christi	7.30pm	Sung/Choral Eucharist

Confirmation Eucharist		usually 7.30pm weekday as required by the Bishop (in consultation with the Vicar)
The High Sheriff's Justice Service	3pm	usually on a Sunday in late September
All Soulside Service	5.30pm	usually Sunday Sung/Choral Eucharist

On special occasions such as the Advent Carol Service and Christmas Festival of Lessons and Carols the choir is larger. Our core hymn books are Common Praise and the New English Hymnal, which we augment with material from other sources.

Music is central to our worshipping life. The congregation at St Paul's values high quality organ and choral music as an aid to worship as well as the opportunity to participate fully in musical aspects of the liturgy. There is a rich provision for the seasonal services.

Role Description

Main duties

1. To play the organ at Sunday services
2. To play the organ at seasonal services
3. To play the organ at other public services when reasonably requested to do so by the Vicar.
4. To supply details of organ music in a timely manner for approval by the Vicar and in liaison with the Parish Administrator.
5. To play the organ for occasional offices e.g. weddings and funerals (for which a fee is payable on each occasion) or to arrange a competent deputy if unable to play
6. To support the choral singing of St Paul's
7. When requested to do so by the Vicar, to attend occasional meetings of the PCC
8. To be responsible for the supervision of the care and maintenance of the Church's organ in conjunction with the Vicar and Churchwardens where authorisation for expenditure on maintenance or repair is required.
9. To ensure compliance with relation to copying and copyright of organ music
10. To comply with Health and Safety requirements
11. To be responsible for the organisation of monthly organ recitals (usually 9 per year)
12. To attend regular meetings with the Vicar and Churchwardens for the planning and review of music

More information about St Paul's may be found on our website
<https://www.stpaulschurchbedford.org.uk/>

Key Relationships

The Organist is accountable to the Vicar as his/ her line manager and is also expected to work closely with the Churchwardens and PCC. In the event of a vacancy he/she will be accountable to the Churchwardens.

Person specification

Essential

The Organist must

- be an excellent and experienced organist in performing and accompanying choirs (ARCO or equivalent qualification as a minimum)
- have a good understanding of liturgy and of the role of music in worship
- be able to work sympathetically within the ethos and values of our church and our church tradition
- be experienced in traditional Anglican church music but interested and willing to explore other musical styles within the church's worship
- be collaborative, seeing the value of bringing the best out of choir and congregation
- able to work collaboratively in a team, and to maintain good relationships with the Vicar and other ministers, with church officers and staff, singers and musical colleagues, volunteers and members of the congregation
- be an advocate of the value of St Paul's musical tradition to the local community,
- be computer literate
- be prepared to work within and committed to the Church of England, Diocesan and St Paul's Safeguarding policies, procedures and training, and be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check as required.
- be a committed Christian although it is not essential that the Organist is a practising Anglican. However, the successful candidate must be sympathetic to the catholic Anglican tradition and its overall mission as it is expressed at St Paul's. An understanding of the relationship between music, liturgy and faith are essential.

Desirable

The Organist should

- be a highly experienced and skilled organist (FRCO or equivalent)
- be open to exploring fresh ways of enhancing the music in the liturgy
- be keen to embrace the musical gifts present in the congregation
- be keen to support St Paul's as a venue for concerts and other musical events
- be able to bring a good sense of humour to the post

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

The Choir

We have a small core of committed and experienced singers, presently of upper voices, and are keen to expand on the number of lower voices and to build up numbers. In recent years the choir have sung at a number of English cathedrals.

Three Choral Scholarships are offered to young people and usually appointed each year. The scholarship can serve as a solid foundation for those looking to seek choral scholarships at a university or college,

Each Scholar is expected to be present at all rehearsals and services during term time, as well as major Feast Days. It is hoped the Scholars will have a thorough involvement in the music making and life of the church.

The Organ

We have a fine three manual instrument situated above the north quire aisle and north transept which was rebuilt in 2011. The 1900 Norman & Beard pipework was used as the tonal basis of the instrument, the work being not treated as a restoration, but more of a new organ with its heart remaining in 1900. Work included a new layout with new soundboards, revoicing of the chorus reeds, three new replacement Mixtures and a Tuba. The console is elevated on a gallery, over the south choir stalls.

The specification of the organ is available from the National Pipe Organ Register <https://www.npor.org.uk/survey/R01942>

St Paul's also has a Blüthner grand piano, and a small upright piano in the Trinity Chapel. The Alexander Room (choir vestry) has an upright piano used for rehearsals and a well-stocked music library.

Practice & private teaching

The organ is available for practice when the church is not otherwise being used.

At times when the church is not otherwise being used, the Organist may use the church and its instruments for private teaching, complying at all times with our Safeguarding Policy.

Summary of key Terms and Conditions

Contract A contract of employment will be drawn up between the Organist and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Pauls.

Key contact The Organist will be accountable to the Vicar

Holidays The Organist is entitled to eight Sundays off each year. The PCC will meet the cost of deputising fees for these Sundays. Deputies must be suitable and fully competent for the duties required.

Remuneration The Organist will be paid an initial salary of £8,000 paid monthly in arrears by bank transfer. There will be opportunities to earn further income from fees by playing for occasional offices.

Appointment to this post is subject to a satisfactory Safeguarding - Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) - check

Full terms and conditions of service are set out in the contract.

Note:

The job description is an operational document that does not form part of the contract of employment. It may be that from time to time the Organist is expected to perform tasks that may not be expressly stated in the job description but are nonetheless necessary in the performance of the duties of the post. St Paul's PCC reserves the right to amend the job description as may from time to time be necessary to meet changing needs.

The contract will be for an initial six month probationary period, before entering into a permanent contract.

For an informal conversation, please contact the Vicar, the Reverend Canon Kevin Goss
01234 364638 or 340163 or email: vicarbedford@btinternet.com

Closing date: 5.00pm on Monday 17th June, 2024

Applicants should complete the attached application form and also provide a covering letter explaining why they believe they are suited to this post. In line with Church of England Safeguarding policy, they are also required to complete a Confidential Declaration Form.

Interviews and auditions: Saturday 29th June 2024

Shortlisted candidates will have the opportunity of an interview. They will be asked to play the organ (including a short, solo voluntary and other tests) and demonstrate a working knowledge of the church calendar