



St. George's Cathedral Adult Choir Handbook



Kingston, Ontario

St. George's Cathedral Adult Choir Handbook

Welcome

St. George's Cathedral has a long history of choral excellence, and we are delighted that you are participating. You are now part of a friendly and dedicated group of musicians who sing a variety of repertoire ranging from Renaissance to Contemporary.

When you first join the choir, there will be a lot of **new music** for you to learn. It is normal to feel as though you are **jumping onto a moving train**. Be patient; you will soon get up to speed.

Thursday Rehearsals

Rehearsal is from **6:30 to 8:30 pm**. Plan to arrive at least **5 to 10 minutes before rehearsal** in order to be ready to **start on time**. In winter, please **leave your boots in the hall** outside the choir room. Please come to rehearsal even if you must arrive late or leave early.

Check the whiteboard, which lists the music you will need for the rehearsal. The music you need will **usually be in your box**. Sometimes there is **additional music on the table**.

Attendance

Regular attendance at rehearsals is vital to building an effective ensemble. Strive to **make rehearsal a habit in your life** as quickly as possible. Some absences, however, are unavoidable. If you know that you will be away on a certain date, write your name in the **sign-out book** on the desk. If your absence is **unexpected** and you did not use the sign-out sheet, **let the choir director know by email** as soon as you can (organist@stgeorgescathedral.ca). As an alternative, telephone 613-548-4617 x23.

You may sing on Sunday if you attended the **Thursday rehearsal, and/or the rehearsal on the previous Thursday**. If you missed both, you are welcome to sit with the congregation and participate in the worship.

Music

You will be assigned a **box number** for all your music. The **number is printed above** your box. Sheet music should be **handed in immediately** after it has been sung. If you know in advance that you will not be singing at a particular service, check your music list and **hand in the music in advance**. The librarian works hard to manage our large inventory of music and we must all do our best to help and make the job easier. If you **take your music home to study**, remember to **bring it back** before the next rehearsal or service.

However, **Congregational Mass settings are to be kept in your folder**, so do not hand them in (Community Mass, German Mass, New Life Mass, Merbecke, New Plainsong Mass).

Schedule

The schedule of services and other events for each term will be **sent by email and the Facebook group** to all choristers. On receipt, please **note all special events in your personal calendar**. If for some reason you are not sure of the schedule, it is also **available on the Cathedral website**.

Services

The choir's primary responsibility is to sing at these services: **Choral Eucharist** (two versions: modern language, and traditional language), **Morning Prayer** (occasionally), **Choral Evensong** (once a month from September to May), and occasional **diocesan services** (such as ordinations). From time to time, the choir may be invited to sing at **weddings, funerals or other special occasions**. Please participate as you are able.

During the Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter seasons, there are additional opportunities to sing. During Advent there is the candlelight **Advent Carol Service**, the Service of **Christmas Lessons and Carols**, and the **Christmas Eve** service. In Lent, there are choral services on **Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday**, and **Holy Saturday**, as well as **Easter Day**.

Clothing

The wardrobe attendant will fit you with a **red cassock and white surplice**. Please do not launder or alter your cassock without checking with the attendant first, as some do not tolerate laundering. **Do not wear perfume or other scented products** at any time, as many people are sensitive to strong scents.

For services, please wear **dark-coloured shoes** (no winter boots or sock feet). **Do not wear your white surplice for the pre-service rehearsal**; only during the service. Following the service, please ensure your cassock and surplice are **returned to the correct location, on your assigned hangers**. Academic hoods may be worn for non-Eucharistic services (Morning Prayer, Choral Evensong, etc.).

Sunday Warmup

Plan to arrive by **9:30 am** to give yourself enough time to get ready for the 9:45am warmup. **Put on your cassock** (no surplice), **Check the whiteboard**, and **gather your music for the service**. Take a **bulletin** containing the Order of Service for Sunday, which is usually **on the desk**. Rehearsal is usually held in the **choir stalls** of the Cathedral. Be dressed, seated with all your music, and **ready to sing by 9:45 am**. Bring handbags and any **valuables with you**. **During the service, valuables may be left in the choir room**, which is locked during that time.

The Service

You are **leading the congregation** in the singing, the spoken responses, and in the worship. When you are not singing or speaking as a group, be respectful of those around you and **remain silent and still**. If you do not **leave your cell phone in the choir room**, please be sure to **turn it off** and leave it in your pocket. It is very distracting to other choristers and to members of the congregation if you are occupied with a hand-held device during the service.

Even if you are not an Anglican, or even a Christian, it is important to **participate fully in the service**, joining in all the congregational responses. You will gain so much more from the experience by doing so.

While you are participating in the service, you must always be **mindful of what music you are singing next**, and make sure you have it ready before you need it. If, during a service, you aren't sure what you are supposed to sing next, **check with your neighbour**. Follow along in the green prayer book.

The following is the sequence of events in a Choral Eucharist and indicates what you will be singing. The text in **red** is your guide to what happens next and what you need to be thinking about.

- Processional hymn
- Opening sentences
 - **Get the Kyrie and/or Gloria ready**
- Sing the *Kyrie* and or *Gloria*
- Sit for Children's focus and the first reading
 - **Get the psalm or psalm refrain ready**
- Psalm
- Second reading
 - **Get the Sequence hymn ready**
- Sequence hymn
 - **Turn to face the Gospel reader for the reading. Say the responses printed in leaflet**

- The sermon
 - Get the Offertory hymn or anthem ready
 - If you wish to make an offering, a collection bag will be passed around during the sermon
 - After the sermon, stand when the celebrant stands
- Offertory hymn or anthem
 - Remain standing afterward
- Prayer over the gifts, Sursum Corda (lift up your hearts)
 - Get the *Sanctus and Benedictus* ready
- Sing *Sanctus and Benedictus*
 - Sit or kneel
- Eucharistic Prayer
- Lord's Prayer
 - Get *Agnus Dei* ready
- *Agnus Dei*
 - Remain standing afterward
- Communion
 - Go to the communion rail at either the nave altar (choristers in the first row) or the Lady Chapel (choristers in the second row) and kneel or stand
 - If you do not wish to receive bread and/or wine, cross your arms over your chest to receive a blessing
 - Return to the choir stall and get the Communion hymn ready
- Communion hymn
 - Remain seated to sing the Communion hymn
 - Get the Communion motet ready
- Communion motet
 - Sing beautifully!
- Closing prayers and blessing
 - Get the closing hymn ready
- Closing hymn

When the final hymn ends, place all your music on the desk in front of you and imitate the crucifer: the crucifer **lifts the cross** (you **lift your music**); the crucifer

(and you) **turns to face the high altar, bows, then turns toward the congregation.** Follow the crucifer the short way out to the Stuart Room and **keep silent** until after the final dismissal prayer. If you wish to **listen to the organ postlude, remove your surplice** before going out to sit with the congregation

After the Service

Go to the choir room and **return your sheet music** on the table in the center of the choir room. Put other music (hymnal, psalter, folder and any books) **back into your box. Hang up your cassock and surplice** on the hangers with your name on them.

There are **refreshments at the back of the Cathedral** following the service. Please attend, as you are able, to meet other members of the congregation.

Contact Information

If you have questions or comments at any time, please contact the choir director, Michael Capon, by telephone at 613-548-4617x23 or by email at organist@stgeorgescathedral.ca.

Cathedral website: stgeorgescathedral.ca

Facebook group: facebook.com/groups/cathedralchoir

Authors: Michael Capon, Sonia Gluppe, Nancy Legacey

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