

# Welcome!



## St. John's Choir

### Choir School and Adult Choir

2023-2024

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# CHOIR POLICIES

## What We Do

The St. John's Choir (Choir School and Adult Choir) is an all-age group of singers that has fun while learning about music reading, theory, vocal training, and the great sacred choral repertoire, old and new. With the worship of God at our core, we prepare anthems and larger works of music to be presented at the 10:30 a.m. service of worship at St. John's Church. We also sing for Evensong and concerts at St. John's, and for a number of special events at other venues.

The music we sing is primarily Anglican traditional choral music and classic repertoire written from the Middle Ages through the present day. Occasionally we sing music that is Gospel or other styles, but you'll not find a praise band or song leader in this tradition.

**St. John's Choir School** (ages 7 ½-18) is affiliated with the [Royal School of Church Music](#), an international organization of choirs that sing in the English choir school tradition. Alongside professional and amateur adult singers, we learn adult-level choral music, and we look beyond the words and music to communicate a message. Choir School members are provided training by professional voice and theory teachers, and attend an annual intensive choir camp in Ivoryton, CT.

To promote a professional atmosphere, Choir School members are paid a modest stipend. Levels of achievement are granted to our singers as they progress in their singing ability and spiritual/musical connection. An increase in stipend accompanies these levels, and older children who have been part of the program for many years are granted leadership roles within the choir.

A **Primary Choir** for children aged 3-7 is available to prepare our youngest singers for Choir School membership.

The semi-professional **Adult Choir** is open to experienced choral singers by interview. Inquiries from prospective singers are welcome at any time; no religious affiliation is necessary. Did you sing in choir in high school and/or college? This might be the group for you! If you're a parent of one of our Choir School members, this is a great opportunity to make music together. The St. John's Adult Choir meets three Wednesday evenings per month and sings each Sunday from September to June. Every other week there is an optional choir dinner before rehearsal at 6:00 pm.

# General Schedule

## CHOIR SCHOOL

**Wednesdays**, every week, alternating between:

5:00-7:30 p.m., with dinner (three times/month)

5:00-6:30 p.m., no dinner, with music theory classes

Once-monthly Friday rehearsals, no dinner, 5:00-6:30 p.m.

**Sundays**, every other week (roughly):

9:00-9:45 a.m. rehearsal

10:30 a.m. service

## PRIMARY CHOIR

**Sundays after church for 20 minutes**, select periods during the year, leading to a presentation in the 10:30 service.

## ADULT CHOIR

**Wednesdays**, three weeks per month

6:00 p.m. optional choir dinner

6:30-8:45 p.m. rehearsal

**Sundays**, every week

9:15-10:00 a.m. rehearsal

10:30 a.m. service

# Special Events 2023-2024

## *Major Events:*

### **Choral Evensong**

Experience the beautiful, ancient custom of closing the day with graceful readings, prayer and music  
**Sunday, October 22, 2023, 5:00 p.m. – Choir School and Adult Choir**

### **Candlelight Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols**

The St. John's Adult and Choir Schools

Scott Lamlein, choirmaster; Floyd Higgins, organ

In the tradition of King's College, Cambridge, prepare your soul for the Christmas miracle with carols for choir and organ.

**Sunday, December 10, 2023, 3:00 p.m.**

### **Choral Music for the Soul**

Dan Forrest's *Requiem for the Living* with orchestra and organ

**Saturday, April 27, 2024, 3:00 p.m.**

## *Additional Events:*

Christmas at St. John's!

- Christmas Pageant, **Sunday, December 17, 2023**

- Christmas Eve, **December 24, 2023,**

**Choir School at 4:00 p.m. service,**

**Adult Choir and String Quartet at 9:30 p.m. service**

Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Services, **March 24-31, 2024**

### **And... Choir School Camp!**

Sleep-away at Incarnation Center, Ivoryton: **July 29-August 3, 2024** (this date is tentative)

# Choir Policies and Attendance

A warm welcome to all new and returning choir singers and choir families! These policies are intended to help acquaint all with the operations of the music ministry at St. John's, and to be a useful source of information for anyone involved in the choir program. It is both an honor and a privilege for us to participate in this vibrant music ministry. ***Please read all of these policies carefully and sign your agreement to them at the end.***

## Choirs:

The **St. John's Choirs** together form the main worship choir of St. John's, providing music for all major worship services and special events.

The **Choir School** is made up of children ages 7 1/2 – 18 with unchanged voices. The choristers are trained to the highest standards, treated as professional musicians, and paid a modest stipend for their services to the church as part of the Royal School of Music tradition. Changed-voice children become part of the Adult Choir, and those with transitioning voices can participate in both.

The **Adult Choir** is an experienced and dedicated group of professional singers and volunteers who travel from a wide area, and who rejoice in their fellowship and ministry. The Adult Choir includes some more advanced members of the Choir School. Both choirs sing as individual groups and together, as needed by the program and schedule.

**Technology-free program:** Choir rehearsals and services/performances are all part of a technology-free program. In order to maintain focus and attention, use of phones and other devices is not allowed. Choir School members are encouraged to leave phones at home, or in their cubbies; the director will confiscate devices as needed and/or take away choir privileges. **Adults:** A reminder that the church service and rehearsals are non-electronic zones, and your role-modeling as choir singers extends into coffee hour, dinners, and down time in between. Bottom line – leave 'em home, or don't let me see 'em or hear 'em. Use these times to really connect with people, face to face. You'll be glad you did!

## CHOIR COMMITMENT

A music program such as that at St. John's cannot function without the goodwill of volunteers and the support of families. The clergy and Director of Music are grateful for all that singers and families offer in supporting the rehearsal and performance schedule, without which maintaining high standards of music would be difficult. We could not continue to stretch and motivate each other otherwise.

Due to the enormous amount of music covered each week, **it is hard for a singer not to fall behind even after missing only one rehearsal.** 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 committing to the choir program, the singer must choose to place their commitment to the choir above other extracurricular activities.

**Attendance:** The success of this program and its individual members is contingent upon regular, on-time attendance. Please take it seriously. 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.

Two weeks notice is required for excused absences, except through illness. Tardiness counts as ½ an unexcused absence. Plan to arrive 10 minutes early so that you can begin on time (arrival at the appointed time = late). Occasionally schools or other activities present last-minute conflicts with the choir schedule. It is expected that “choir comes first” in these cases.

If you miss two consecutive rehearsals, you must have a conversation with the director about whether you should sing on upcoming Sundays. (It will depend on level of difficulty of the music involved.)

**Weekly Email:** You’ll generally hear from me via email weekly – a schedule reminder email goes out every Friday with details of the service and rehearsal days ahead, and any other news and notes (as well as the *meme of the week*). Occasional other messages are sent with changes to the schedule and outside events involving our singers. **Please take these messages seriously, and read in full.** Every message contains important info.

**Email Signature:** My outgoing messages to you always end with an exhaustive list of links, so you can simply go back to any email from me to get the info needed. **Learning links** take you to YouTube playlists that I have prepared where you can listen to examples of each piece we will be learning. This is not only very helpful, but the music is beautiful! Hook it up in the car and enjoy. **Calendar links** take you to various versions of the church’s online calendar, which we keep up-to-date and live. Because our schedule is somewhat changeable, please refer back often. **Dinner Preparer Signup, Rehearsal Plan with Anthem Dates, and YouTube Videos** of past services are all included for your interest and enrichment.

**Weather Cancellation:** In the event of inclement weather, severe weather decisions will be made by 12:00 noon on the rehearsal day, or by 8:00 a.m. on Sunday. The Director of Music will have the most recent information concerning a decision, and will contact all choir members via email.

**Camp Commitment:** If camp is attended, a commitment to the choir of at least one year is expected. St. John’s investment in this camp experience encourages building of a serious, solid group, thus it is reserved for serious singers who truly want to be part of the Choir School.

**Choir School Stipends:** Choir School members are paid a modest per-appearance stipend based on their level of achievement, as listed below. Checks are issued quarterly and expire after 60 days. Please deposit/cash stipend checks immediately, as outstanding checks are a hardship on our financial staff. *Any check that is outstanding after 60 days is absorbed back into the program budget.*

Per appearance stipend amounts, based on choir rank:

- Novice: \$1.50
- Singer (White level): \$2.50
- Junior (Light blue): \$3.00
- Senior (Dark blue): \$3.50
- Full Chorister (Red): \$4.00
- Head Chorister/Prefect: \$5.00



**Choir Parents:** Parents are expected to serve as full rehearsal “Choir Parent” two to three times per year. This role is very simple. It involves helping to set up and clean up choir dinner, as well as making sure all choir members get picked up by a parent at the conclusion of rehearsal. When it’s your turn to be the choir parent for Wednesday evenings, your role is critical. So, if for some reason you cannot fulfill these duties on your assigned evening (or even must be late), you must find a parent to switch with you, in advance. **We are also looking for parents who are willing to cook the dinner on occasion.**

**Choir Parent Schedule for Wednesdays:**

- 5:00pm As rehearsal begins, start up the dishwasher per instructions so it is ready for later.
- 5:30pm: Set the tables for dinner (water glasses and pitchers of water), and the serving table (plates/utensils/napkins).
- 5:45pm: Receive the delivery of food or pizza and ready it with serving utensils (if another parent is cooking instead, help out with the final preparations).
- 6:00pm: Help supervise dinner.
- 6:30pm: Clean up tables, wash and put away dishes.

**Observation:** Parents are also encouraged to attend occasional rehearsals (after your child has become accustomed to being on their own), and as many services of worship and concerts as possible. Your support of your children in this effort teaches them far more than we can in rehearsal. Come, worship and enjoy. St. John’s will not ever pressure you to become a greater part of this community, but those options are always available to you.

**Security:** St. John’s is a safe place, and our Sexton, Dwight Latif, is in the building keeping an eye on things during our rehearsal times. People from the neighborhood do occasionally come into the building looking for money or other help. It is most helpful for you to simply tell them to return during office hours (9-4 M-Th, 9-2 Friday) and speak to the clergy. Giving people handouts is not helpful to our overall safety plan.

**Donations/Support:** While the choral program at St. John’s is offered free of charge, we do hope you’ll consider supporting the church financially with a donation or annual pledge in any amount that feels comfortable. None of the benefits of this program could exist without the donations that we receive annually. You can donate at the church website [www.sjparish.net](http://www.sjparish.net), fill out a pledge card, or speak with Scott or the clergy.

**DRESS BASICS**

**General:** Choir members are expected to use good sense and discretion with their “Sunday best.” Please wear dark shoes and socks, and not tennis shoes/sneakers. Vestments should be worn properly and buttoned to the top. Jewelry or ties should not be visible outside choir robes. 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.

**Use Sense, not Scents:** We’re in a tight space with lots of people, especially on Sundays – please avoid perfume and cologne. It may smell good to you, but could easily overwhelm your seating partners.

## BEHAVIOR IN CHURCH AND REHEARSAL

- No talking during rehearsal or service.
- For important questions, raise your hand.
- Do your absolute best at all times.
- No electronic devices during any choir activities (including breaks) (see above).
- 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, and after breaks.
- Put music away after end of rehearsal; clean out your folder after all services. if you miss a Sunday, be proactive about turning in the music you missed. Forgotten music left in your folder may seem trivial to you, but is a very time-consuming task for the librarian.
- Be equally kind to all people, and adults, be a positive example for the Choir School children.
- Leave negative energy and complaints outside; be a positive influence on your fellow singers, even outside of rehearsal/service. If something really bothers you, talk with Mr. Lamlein in private.

Choir School children are strictly forbidden from going beyond the vicinity of the rehearsal area unless under direct adult supervision.

### Singers' Covenant

*Multiple signatures on one booklet for choir siblings/families.*

**I/we have read these policies, and agree to adhere to and uphold all of the above.**

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Singer Signature(s)

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Singer Printed Name (s)

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Parent/Guardian Printed Name

## **The Choristers' Prayer**

*Bless, O Lord, us thy servants  
Who minister in thy temple.  
Grant that what we sing with our lips  
We may believe in our hearts;  
And what we believe in our hearts  
We may show forth in our lives;  
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*