Open Position: Director of Music and Organist

Application deadline: May 15th, 2018
Anticipated start date: Fall 2018

Visit this position description online at http://stpaulschestnuthill.org/music-search/

Opportunity

Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church in Chestnut Hill is a historically significant parish on the northwest edge of the City of Philadelphia, in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. Drawing vitality and purpose from its roots in an affluent suburb and its proximity to lower income and more diverse neighborhoods, Saint Paul’s has evolved and grown over 160 years as an inclusive community of faith, committed to proclaiming the Gospel through worship, service, and ministry.

Music has been, in living memory, a notable strength and deeply valued component of worship at Saint Paul’s. The current Director of Music leaves after a ten-year tenure, during which he has forwarded the quality and reputation of all aspects of the music program to nationally recognized levels of excellence. We are seeking a successor who can sustain and build further on this strong foundation.

At the heart of parish worship is an exquisite neo-Gothic sanctuary, rich in carved woodwork and stained glass, recently enhanced by the addition of a labyrinth at the west end. Four Sunday services take place weekly, with an average total attendance of 241. As well as music, many opportunities for mission, ministry, formation of children, youth, and adults, and family fellowship, form the basis of community life at Saint Paul’s.

About Music at Saint Paul’s

Mission

- To offer sacred music of the highest quality at worship services, in the praise of God;
- To sustain the future of church music through active education of children and adults in liturgy and sacred music repertoire (especially but not exclusively that of the Anglican tradition), as well as development of the skills and understanding required to perform them;
To uphold the preservation of Saint Paul’s unique Aeolian-Skinner Organ as a central component of the program;

To utilize all the spaces, instruments, resources, and musicians at Saint Paul’s for music programs and events in ways which contribute to the mission of Saint Paul’s Church and benefit the wider community.

The Music Guild provides support for the Director of Music to accomplish this mission as delegated to him/her by the Rector. Members of the Guild are open to direction and new ideas, providing counsel when requested, offering administrative and organizational support, and assistance to secure the sustainability of Music at Saint Paul’s through promotion and fundraising.

The 45-voice Adult Choir currently includes 8-10 professional staff singers who support experienced volunteers to provide music in the Anglican choral tradition for weekly services of Holy Eucharist at 10:30 a.m., twice-monthly Choral Evensong, and seasonal services such as Lessons & Carols and Requiem Mass at All Souls. The choir functions at a very high level of musicianship and commitment, and has a deep and varied repertoire (see Music List 2017-2018). Recent choral residencies have taken place at Saint Paul’s Cathedral in London (see Choir Trip 2017), Washington National Cathedral, and the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City. A choral residency at Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin, and Canterbury Cathedral is planned for 2020. A Choral Scholar program for high school youth adds 4 aspiring musicians to the choir. The Chorister program currently includes 30 youngsters aged 8 and older, who receive choral training based on the RSCM curriculum.

Saint Paul’s is blessed with a 110-rank Aeolian-Skinner organ, the last instrument to be finished by famed tonal director Donald G. Harrison. The Ann Stookey Fund for Music at Saint Paul’s provides an endowment for support and maintenance of the organ, and a renovation and restoration project is in the planning stages. Other instruments include a restored 1908 Steinway piano in the church, a grand piano for rehearsal, and an upright piano. The Organ Scholar position at Saint Paul’s has been typically filled by an undergraduate student in the Organ Department at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

The spaces available for music program activities include a rehearsal room equipped with a grand piano, choir desks and music boxes, a choir library, vesting rooms, and an office for the Director of Music in the Parish Office building. The Music Library is extensive, including some 1,100 titles, and has been carefully maintained, curated, and expanded over many years.

Past and present Directors of Music at Saint Paul’s have provided leadership and vision for the use of the church to benefit the wider music community. The Bach Festival of Philadelphia had its beginnings at Saint Paul’s in 1976. Other professional groups, including The Mendelssohn Club, Vox Ama Deus, and Tempesta di Mare make regular use of the facility. Music at Saint Paul’s hosts and promotes various concerts and organ recitals, notably its Five Fridays concert series that benefits the parish’s outreach partners.
Qualifications and Desired Skills

First and foremost, we seek a person who is passionate about sacred music and its role in worship, who upholds high personal standards as a musician, and who is able to contribute energy and vision to the overall mission of the parish. We expect the successful candidate to have an active spiritual life, to be thoroughly versed in Episcopal liturgy and the Anglican music repertoire, to be recognized as an exceptional church organist, and to be an experienced and inspirational leader of choral programs for adults and children. He/she will be expected to participate collegially in the parish leadership team of clergy and lay staff members, and to provide direction for the Music Guild.

Specifically, we require
- An advanced degree in church music, organ performance or equivalent,
- Significant experience in a full-time church music position,
- Recognized excellence in organ performance, including playing of hymns and Anglican service music, advanced improvisation skills, and familiarity with a wide repertoire.
- Demonstrated choral conducting abilities, and comfort working with both professionals and volunteers, and singers of all ages.
- Proven success with development of programs for children and youth.

Essential Responsibilities

Music in liturgy
- Select repertoire, plan and implement all aspects of music for worship, and share liturgical planning in collaboration with clergy;
- Oversee the music and music leadership for the 9 a.m. Eucharist, utilizing new hymns or chants that are theologically sound and have musical merit.

Organ
- Serve as Organist at principal Sunday services, other special services, weddings and funerals, in conjunction with Organ Scholar;
- Supervise schedule and provide mentoring of the Organ Scholar;
- Arrange for substitute organists as required;
- Arrange for regular maintenance and tuning of the organ;
- Manage organ renovations as agreed with the Music Guild;

Choirs
- Lead the Adult Choir in rehearsal and at worship, recruit volunteers, hire and manage staff singers, manage the schedule, maintain the Choir Library;
- Lead Chorister rehearsals and oversee their training;
- Continue to build choral programs for children and youth;
Parish
- Implement the mission of Music at Saint Paul’s and provide direction for the Music Guild;
- Educate and encourage members of the parish in singing and appreciation of music in worship
- Collaborate with staff and parish committees to coordinate music activities with other parish functions;
- Oversee and maintain all instruments, equipment, and spaces pertaining to music

Wider community
- Direct and coordinate music events, and promote visibility of the music program in Chestnut Hill and beyond;
- Establish professional connections within the Philadelphia and national church music communities, and with the Diocese of Pennsylvania;

Administration
- Participate in staff meetings and parish planning activities as required by the Rector;
- Participate in Music Guild and any other parish committee meetings that may require coordination with music programming;
- Provide information for parish communications and public advertising;
- Oversee and manage the parish’s music budget;

Personal and professional
- Continue to practice and develop organ performance skills;
- Undertake professional development opportunities as needed and available;
- Maintain professional connections through membership of associations, participation in conferences and workshops;
- Attend to personal spiritual health and growth.

Compensation and benefits
Salary commensurate with experience.
Benefits including medical and dental insurance, professional development.

Search process
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Applications should include a cover letter, a resumé, and a list of three reference contacts. Please email these as separate attachments, to the Director of Music Search Committee at musicsearch@stpaulschestnuthill.org. Music samples may be requested at a later date, please do not send at this time.