Organist and Choir Director

Introduction

We are looking for a committed and energetic musician who will collaborate with the people of St. Peter & St. Paul's to build on our musical tradition and help us achieve our musical priorities, which are:

1. To develop music as mission and outreach to all, especially finding ways to engage with children and young people;

2. To enhance musical inclusivity by developing congregational singing alongside choral singing;

3. To extend the range of hymns, songs, and choir repertoire, through introducing more contemporary music.

Background

The parish church of Fakenham, St. Peter & St. Paul's sits in the centre of this north Norfolk market town. The worship across the parish has historically been focused on the Eucharist, with a regular monthly Service of the Word. The church has a strong musical tradition, and there are increasing opportunities to join with local initiatives in the community and schools. We believe there is plenty of scope to build musical mission and outreach with the right appointment.

A regular congregation of 50-60 usually attends our 10.00am service on Sunday mornings, with more at key services and festivals. Music is an important part of our life together as a church. Although our music has been centred on traditional hymns and the Anglican choral tradition, we are keen to embrace a much wider range of musical styles within our worship.

We sing hymns and mass settings as well as listening to anthems sung by the choir. Feedback from worshippers shows that music 'creates a beautiful atmosphere,' 'enhances my worship,' and 'encourages a sense of community.' There is an appetite to change some aspects of our musical offering so that we can maintain relevance for present and future generations, through experiencing new music and adopting more creative approaches.

The post of Organist and Choir Director became vacant following the resignation of the previous post-holder and departure in January 2025 after seven years.

We are keen to appoint a suitable candidate at the earliest opportunity.

Current Pattern of Worship at St. Peter & St. Paul's

The main weekly service is a Eucharist at 10.00am on the 1st,3rd and 4th Sundays.

The second Sunday is a Service of the Word, also at 10.00am.

Said services are held on 2nd Sundays at 8.00am and Thursdays at 9.30am

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The robed choir sings at the 10.00am service, except for the second Sunday, which is less formal. The service on the second Sunday tends to have more of an 'all age' focus.

We are keen to develop our services and the music within it. Our choir are enthusiastic and committed. The current group of twelve are dedicated but new members and development will be required.

Additional services are held at major festivals. They include Advent and Christmas Carol Services, Crib and Christingle services, and daily services through Holy Week including Sung Compline and a Maundy Thursday Eucharist.

Details of these services and other events are listed below. Our current music is best described as mainstream traditional Church of England. Hymns and songs are currently chosen from 'Hymns Old and New' or 'Hymns Ancient and Modern: New Standard.'

The choir usually sings an introit and anthem at the Eucharist and a mass setting written by our last organist.

Role and Ethos

The role of the Organist and Choir Director is to provide musical leadership that will enhance our mission as a church and enrich our worship, collaborating closely with the Rector, Churchwardens, and PCC.

The Organist and Choir Director makes a significant contribution to the worshipping life of St. Peter and St. Paul's through the leadership they exercise in our music ministry. This music ministry is a key element of our mission as a church. The PCC considers that this post has a Genuine Occupational Requirement that the post holder should be a practising Christian.

Accountability

The Organist and Choir Director will be appointed by the Rector and PCC of the Fakenham Parish Church and employed by the PCC. The Organist and Choir Director will be accountable to St. Peter and St. Paul's PCC through the Rector, with whom they are expected to have regular meetings and supervision.

The Organs

The main organ was set in place in 1926. It was overhauled and enhanced by the addition of the pedal trombone stop in 1985 and restored in 1990 by Holmes and Swift.

The main organ is located at east end of the north aisle, adjacent to the Nave altar. There is a second, smaller organ in the Chancel and we also have a Roland electronic keyboard.

Details on the National Pipe Organ Register can be found here:
https://npor.org.uk/survey/E00651

Weddings and Funerals

The Organist and Choir Director has first refusal on bookings for marriages, funerals, and other similar services. The current fees are £120.00 for marriages and £100 for funerals. The Rector may, in consultation with the Organist and Choir Director, allow some other competent person to play at such services if there is a genuine pastoral need (e.g. a relative is involved). No charge is payable to the Organist and Choir Director when they are unable or unwilling to play for these services or if recorded music is preferred to live music.

Music as outreach

The church hosts several musical performances each year from groups such as the Fakenham Choral Society, the Fellowship Band of the Salvation Army and other vocal groups. These are keenly supported, as have been Saturday morning music events, highlighting a variety of musical genres and giving local musicians a chance to perform. We are keen to develop this and would encourage the Organist and Choir Director to be actively involved in helping to programme, plan and/or participate in this.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

1. To play the organ and piano and direct all musical content at services as outlined in the list below;

2. To organise suitable deputies for services within agreed holiday; to organise and pay for suitable deputies outside agreed holiday (there is currently no deputy organist);

3. To lead the recruitment, training, and direction of the regular choir and any new voices; to have sole day-to-day charge of the choir under the overall direction and supervision of the Rector;

4. To lead a weekly choir rehearsal (currently held from 5.15pm to 6.15pm on Thursdays, but this can be reviewed) and Sundays from 9.15am.

5. To plan and prepare appropriate hymns, introits and anthems for Sunday and other services in consultation with the Rector or other nominated person;

6. To co-operate with the Rector and other staff members in the planning of regular worship and worship at major festivals;

7. To attend regular meetings to facilitate the planning of worship and other activities related to music and the choir.

The Organist and Choir Director may from time to time be invited to attend PCC and related committee meetings but will not be a voting member;

8. To develop the musical life of St. Peter & St. Paul's in ways that foster the worship of the congregation and support the mission and ministry of the church. For an appropriate candidate, this could involve drawing young people and/or children into our church music through links with local schools and other organisations, but this is not essential to the post;

9. To collaborate with the Rector, Ministry Team, PCC, and other visiting musicians to develop music in worship and other contexts across the parish;

10. To advise the PCC on the state of the organ; to arrange the regular tuning of the organs; to advise the PCC when works to the organs are necessary; to ensure the proper care and maintenance of the organs;

11. To be responsible for the music library and to take responsibility for the purchase of new music to develop the repertoire, consulting with the Rector and PCC;

12. To consult with the Parish Administrator to ensure the accurate and timely recording of information needed for copyright returns;

13. To be responsible for ensuring the highest standards of protection of children and vulnerable adults, in accordance with Church of England policy, by collaborating with the Rector and Safeguarding Officer; to undertake regular safeguarding training as required. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

This list of responsibilities is not intended to be exhaustive and is subject to review in consultation with the Rector.

Person Specification

The PCC considers that this post has a Genuine Occupational Requirement that the post holder should be a practising Christian.

Competency	**Essential**	**Desirable**
Personal Skills and Experience		
Knowledge of Church of England Safeguarding requirements	X	
Confident and competent singer	X	
Appropriate musical ability on the organ and other keyboard instruments	X	
Experience of using a wider range of musical instruments within worship		X
Experience of teaching / training / mentoring other musicians and singers (children and adults)	X	
Familiarity with a wide range of church music appropriate to the worshipping life of St. Peter & St. Paul's	X	
Experience of working with and developing volunteers		X
Understanding of the liturgy and worshipping life of the Church of England	X	
Ability to value church and choral traditions without being bound by them	X	
Willing to expand the contemporary repertoire of a choir and congregation	X	
Ability to develop congregational singing	X	
Experience of using music in outreach and mission		X
Experience of developing music activities with young people and/or children		X
A good communicator, able to engage with people of all ages	X	
Administrative and record-keeping skills appropriate to the responsibilities of the post	X	
Familiarity with copyright law applicable to church music		X
A collaborator, able to work with church members and others	X	
Personal Qualities		
Self-motivated person who can demonstrate initiative and drive in themselves and others to serve God	X	
Approachable and friendly in their manner with an ability to develop relationships with people of all ages and backgrounds	X	
A desire to serve the Church in the Diocese of Norwich and be enthusiastic about enabling mission, ministry, and the development of our parish	X	
Ability to work within a broad and inclusive theological ethos	X	
Ability to adapt to change and bring others along with them		X
Flexible in their approach to work	X	
Qualifications		
Recognised and appropriate qualification(s) in music	X	

Principles

Anyone working in our parish as an employee or volunteer makes a commitment to:

• treat individuals with respect;

• recognise and respect their abilities and potential for development;

• promote their rights to make their own decisions and choices, unless it is unsafe;

• ensure their welfare and safety;

• promote social justice, social responsibility and respect for others;

• maintain confidentiality, never passing on personal information, except to the person to whom they are responsible, unless there are safeguarding issues of concern (for example, allegations of abuse);

• always report Safeguarding issues of concern to the Parish Safeguarding Officer/Incumbent.

As an employee of the Fakenham PCC, you can expect that we will do our best to ensure that we provide a supportive, inclusive and positive environment that ensures you enjoy your work, and that you are treated with respect and courtesy and provided with training.

Safeguarding

The Church takes the safety of everyone within it very seriously and expects that everyone will work within Church of England safeguarding policy. In particular, the church expects anyone who becomes aware of a safeguarding risk or of actual abuse to report it immediately.

The following checks are required:

• A Confidential Declaration Form must be submitted to the Rector or relevant local Incumbent on application;

• The Organist and Choir Director may undertake teaching children and young people. As this is deemed to be a Regulated Activity, the Organist and Choir Director will be required to have an Enhanced DBS check;

• Two references must have been received. Referees must have been known in a professional capacity for no less than three years and should indicate that they have no concerns regarding the applicant's conduct around children and young people.

Terms and Conditions

The detailed terms and conditions will be contained in the successful applicant's Contract of Employment.

The initial salary will be based on experience and the RSCM rates for a 'Small Town Church.'

Payment will be monthly in arrears by direct transfer.

Remuneration will be reviewed annually, starting on the 1 January following the successful completion of the six-month term of probation. Any work undertaken beyond the responsibilities listed here will be paid in addition and rates will be agreed in advance.

Subject to compliance with all reasonable requests regarding security and care of the church building, the Organist and Choir Director may use the organ for private practice when the church is not otherwise in use. Subject to compliance with church safeguarding policies, the Organist and Choir Director will be allowed to use the organ in church to give private lessons, provided the times of those lessons have been previously agreed with the Rector. No charge shall be made for such use by the Organist and Choir Director. If the Organist and Choir Director students wish to use the organ for private practice, the PCC will endeavour to reach a reasonable agreement with the student to do so.

The start date will be negotiated between the successful applicant and the Rector. The appointment is subject to a six-month probationary period, at the end of which there will be an appraisal. Thereafter an appraisal will take place annually. Until the probationary period has been successfully completed, one month's notice of termination of employment will be required on either side; thereafter three months' notice on either side will be required.

Holiday entitlement is 6 weeks per year.

The Organist and Choir Director is not required to pay for deputies during agreed holiday. Holiday leave must be agreed not less than one month in advance with the Rector and cannot ordinarily be taken during major festivals.

The Rector will meet regularly with the Director of Music to review duties and responsibilities and to discuss development, common concerns and opportunities for training.

Applications

Applications need to be received by 5pm on Friday 28 February and should be sent to: Email: admin@fakenhamparishchurch.org.uk

Post: The Reverend Tracy Jessop, The Rectory 21 Gladstone Road, Fakenham NR21 9BZ

Applications should include:

• A completed Application Form, demonstrating how you meet the person specification. This is how we will assess you application.

• A completed Confidential Declaration Form.

Please include name and full contact details of two referees on your application form. Referees must have known you for at least 3 years. In addition, one of your referees must be the incumbent of your current or most recent church post.

Electronic applications are preferred. There is no need to send a hard copy if you have applied by e-mail.

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Applications will be considered on receipt and shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an interview and audition on the morning of Sat 8 March 2025.

The audition will include playing the organ and conducting a short choir rehearsal. The successful candidate will be required to provide certificates of appropriate qualifications.

If you would like an informal conversation about the role to help you decide whether to apply, please contact The Reverend Tracy Jessop by e-mail: rector@fakenhamparishchurch.org.uk or ring 01328 862268

Schedule of services and events to be covered by the Organist and Choir Director or suitable deputy:

• Main service 10.00am on each Sunday; (1st, 3rd, 4th Sundays are currently Eucharist services)

• Choral Evensong on Second Sunday (currently at 6.30pm, but we may wish to move to an earlier time)

• Ash Wednesday;

• Maundy Thursday Eucharist and Vigil;

• Good Friday;

• Patronal Festival (Sunday closest to 29 June);

• All Souls' Day Commemoration of the Departed (Sunday closest around 4pm) ;

• Confirmation Services;

• Christmas Carol Service;

• Crib Services and Christingle;

• Midnight Mass;

• Christmas Morning 9.30am;

• Up to four additional services and events per year of which one month's notice will be given by the Rector.