

Organist & Choir Director for St Mary & St Eanswythe Folkestone - Job Profile

The Parish

This coastal town of Folkestone has seen a lot of money invested in its regeneration over the last few years, and in the Arts in particular. The Creative Foundation sponsors the Triennial – a 3-year cycle celebrating both performative and visual arts of the highest standard. Folkestone's Creative Quarter is in our parish, and there is a close co-operative relationship between our church and both the Creative Foundation and the Folkestone Fringe. Folkestone is also home to many fine musicians who, due to the fine acoustics and wonderful ambience of our church building, are often keen to perform here. One of our closest community relationships is with Bayle Music, who arrange monthly concerts of international standard in our church, and the annual Sacconi three-day music festival.

We also have a close relationship with our two Church of England Primary Academies, St Eanswythe and St Mary. St Eanswythe is adjacent to the church so often use the church for Collective Worship and Services. St Mary is further away, but we are working on them using the church more often.

St Mary & St Eanswythe Church

Originally the Parish Church of Folkestone, its chancel was dedicated 800 years ago in the monastic priory here. However, we are the direct inheritors of the priory founded by the Anglo-Saxon Saint and Princess, Eanswythe around 650CE, and whose relics are housed in our church. Since her relics were confirmed by a scientific team last year as the oldest single remains of an English Saint, interest in our church as a place of Pilgrimage has soared, and we are keen to build on this.

The church building and worship were significantly reshaped by its Victorian Rector Matthew Woodward under whose leadership it became a Tractarian icon. The worshipping tradition developed from those times has a staunchly Anglican catholicity, however, and its music reflects this.

Choir, Music and Instruments

We have a small but enthusiastic RSCM affiliated robed mixed-voice adult choir which sings occasional plainsong and a weekly anthem. Singers are drawn from a range of musical and non-musical backgrounds. Sight reading ability is variable, but all full choir members are able to read music to a greater or lesser extent.

Our Sunday Eucharist is at 10.30am, with a rehearsal beforehand. The choir also sings for occasional evening Sung Eucharists, Choral Evensongs and Saints' days as well as additional services around Christmas and Easter.

Our repertoire encompasses many short anthems in the core choral repertoire, from Tallis' *If ye love me* to Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus*, from plainsong to the English Romantic school of the 20th century, and beyond to contemporary pieces published by the RSCM. There is a well-stocked music library containing most of the traditional choral anthems and settings from a variety of periods and styles

Our usual Eucharistic setting is Salisbury, and Merbecke during Lent and Advent; although at one time Sumsion, Stanford in B flat and Darke in F were rotated so most of the choir will be familiar with all these.

Until five years ago the choir sang psalms from a book of alternative chants written by Rod Spencer, then the organist. Since then, the RSCM Parish Psalter was used until March last year but has not yet been reinstated.

Evensong has not been sung for about three years, but Stanford in C and B flat, Smith and Aylward have been used in the past.

For congregational hymns we usually use the *New English Hymnal* but occasionally the choir uses *One Hundred Hymns for Today* and *Hymns Old and New*. At Christmas, carol settings are mostly from *Carols for Choirs* – white, green, and orange books, with some independent pieces.

Our organ dates from 1894, rebuilt in the 1930s by Hill, Norman and Beard. It's a fine 3-manual, 40 stop organ with full Swell chorus and a solo reed. More information can be found at <https://stmaryandsteanswythe.org/choir-and-organ>. We also have a Baby Grand Piano, which the schools use, and a full-size concert-grade Yamaha C7 Grand Piano, used for concerts. There is an electric piano in the choir vestry which is used for rehearsals before services.

Money, and what we're looking for

First, to be clear, our budget is tight so the advertised range of £4,000-£4,500pa plus fees is non-negotiable, although the post will be subject to an annual pay review.

Other benefits are 5 weeks paid holiday each year, the full use of the church organ for practice or tuition, and fees for occasional offices and extra services.

For this, we would expect you to

- Select, prepare and perform suitable music for Sunday morning services and 9 extra services each year: Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Advent Carols, 9 Lessons & Carols, Christmas Eve Crib service (no choir), Midnight Mass, and Christmas Day.
- Take into account in your selection the range of musical abilities in the choir, and the needs of the congregation in inspiring them to worship.
- Rehearse the choir from one hour before services start, with extra rehearsals for Easter and Christmas.
- Play the organ at these services, and make the best use of our lovely instrument.
- Play the organ for weddings, funerals and special services for outside bodies, if you are available, with the charge of additional fees.
- Recruit, train and direct the choir.
- Work with the Priest-in-charge to recruit from the wider community and from our schools.
- Co-operate with the Priest-in-charge in the planning of worship.
- Ensure the proper care and maintenance of the church organ.
- Arrange for a deputy to cover holidays (we have a good list of cover organists).

We estimate that these duties average out at about 3 hours per week, offering an hourly rate of £25-£29.

Perhaps what is most important to us is the enthusiasm and desire to lead and inspire our choir to excel, and to have fun doing it. We want you to build on the present choir's very varied strengths, develop them and help them attract new members. We want you to build on our musical tradition and help shape our musical future, increasing our repertoire, skills, capacity and opportunities. Ultimately, we want you and the choir to help inspire our whole community in its worship.

If you are successful in this, and new opportunities arise for additional performances or services, or if we managed to recruit children, we would seek to re-negotiate a small rise in hours and pay with you (for example, if a regular service of evensong was re-instated).

Application Process

Please submit your letter of application, including qualifications and experience, to the Revd Dr John Walker at rev.dr.john.walker@gmail.com by the end of **Friday 19 November**. Shortlisting will take place 20 November. Interviews and Auditions will take place **on Saturday 27 November**. For auditions you will rehearse the choir in an anthem and psalm which we will choose, and you will play an organ piece of around 10 minutes, of your choice.

Appointment will be subject to an Enhanced DBS check.

We'd like to appoint for 1st January 2022 if possible.