



Parish Church of St Nicholas of Myra
Church Street, Brighton
BN1 3LJ

www.stnicholasbrighton.org.uk

Vacancy: Organist and Director of Music, St Nicholas of Myra, Brighton

About St Nicholas

St Nicholas' is the historic parish church of Brighton, and is located in the centre of our large and diverse city within its ancient and beautiful churchyard. The present parish is geographically small, comprising around 2,500 residents. It includes Brighton Station, many city-centre businesses, a Church of England Primary School (shared with the benefice of St Paul and St Michael), as well as residential housing. The church has a medieval foundation and was rebuilt in the nineteenth century. It contains a Norman font of national importance; a fifteenth century Rood screen; an excellent collection of Kempe glass and wall paintings by William Somers-Clarke.

St Nicholas' congregation is both gathered and local, reflecting the diversity of Brighton and Hove. The average Sunday attendance is around 90 across two celebrations of the Eucharist. The tradition of the parish is confidently Catholic Anglican, and committed to full inclusivity: St Nicholas' is a member of Inclusive Church and OneBodyOneFaith. The 10.30 a.m. Parish Eucharist follows Common Worship Order 1 and lasts around 70 minutes. Incense is used at this service and at other sung celebrations.

Music at St Nicholas

The parish choir currently comprises a group of around 6-10 singers. Each Sunday there is a cantor who leads the singing of the psalm (plainsong or Anglican chant) and a gospel acclamation, and the choir sing a Communion anthem, ranging in style from classical polyphony to spirituals or other contemporary pieces. On major festivals the number of singers is larger and the choir sing more complex pieces (as at the annual Carol Service). The choir is a mixed ability group which is open to anyone who wishes to sing, while also containing some skilled musicians. The choir is not robed.

Mass settings change by season and include Thorne, Rizza, Murray, Jones/Inwood, and many of the presidential prayers are sung, the choir leading the responses. Sunday rehearsals take place before mass within the body of the church. There are four hymns at the Parish Eucharist, and the style is eclectic, ranging from traditional hymnody to Iona/Taize, worship songs and modern hymns. The choir hymn book is Anglican Old and New, but other sources are used. Congregational singing is strong – strong enough for good a cappella singing - and musical appreciation within the congregation is high. Both the organ and piano are used liturgically.

St Nicholas' organ is a three manual digital instrument by Eminent, installed in 2012. There is a new Petrof grand piano, purchased earlier this year. Both instruments are available to other musicians using St Nicholas', not least those who perform at our Wednesday afternoon recitals – concerts which attract professional and semi-professional musicians from across the South-East of England, and occasionally further afield.

There is significant scope for the development of music at St Nicholas', to consolidate the confidence and skill of the present choristers and attract new singers from both the congregation and local area. We anticipate that the successful applicant will engage strategically and enthusiastically with our locality to build up the musical life of the parish church, including the parish school. We would love to see children from our school and local neighbourhood represented in the choir.

JOB DESCRIPTION – ORGANIST AND DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Job Title: Organist and Director of Music

Employer: The Parochial Church Council (PCC), St Nicholas of Myra, Brighton

Reporting to: The Incumbent

Location: St Nicholas Church, Church Street, Brighton

DBS Disclosure: Yes (Enhanced)

Salary: £5328 per year, paid monthly.

Hours: Normally 4 hours per week: Sunday 9.00am-12.00pm, plus one hour administration as required. Additional hours required for major festival services detailed below.

Additional services: When agreed, additional fees payable as below and in Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Holiday entitlement: 5 Sundays per year, or pro rata where the employee joins or leaves during the calendar year.

Overview

The Organist and Director of Music plays the organ at services; recruits, trains and directs the choir, and maintains a high standard of music making for the benefit of all at St Nicholas'. In this significant role, the postholder will work to ensure that music is experienced and valued by the whole congregation as an essential and vibrant aspect of St Nicholas' ministry, infusing our mission as a church with joy and spiritual nourishment.

Main duties and responsibilities:

Organ

Play the organ at the 10.30am Parish Eucharist each Sunday.

Play for all major festival services as follows:

- The Advent Carol Service
- The St Nicholas Patronal Festival
- The Christmas Carol Service
- Up to two Christmas Eve Crib/Carol services

The First Eucharist of Christmas ('Midnight Mass')
The Sung Eucharist of Christmas Day, when this does not fall on a Sunday
The Maundy Thursday Eucharist of the Lord's Supper
The Good Friday Liturgy
The Easter Vigil
The Eucharist of All Souls Day
The Eucharist of Ash Wednesday
Up to four Sunday evening services per annum
Up to three occasional school services per year in church

Arrange for cover by a suitable organist to play in your absence, and arrange for this organist to submit an invoice for payment to the Church at the agreed rate (currently £70).

Oversee the maintenance of the organ and other instruments.

Be available to play for Weddings, funerals and similar services where possible. You are entitled to receive payment of additional fees for playing at these services, at a rate set by the PCC each year. In 2024, the rate is £130 per wedding/funeral.

Choir

Develop and deliver a strategic vision for the ministry of music at St Nicholas, taking responsibility for choir recruitment and retention.

Direct the choir in weekly rehearsals during choir term (currently Sundays 9.15-10.15 a.m.).

Arrange and conduct additional choir practices for the above extra services.

Administration

Prepare a quarterly music list in liaison with the Vicar.

Oversee the maintenance of the parish church music library in cooperation with other choir members.

Undertake other relevant administration (including music licensing) as required.

The postholder will abide by the parish safeguarding policies at all times and will undertake Church of England safeguarding training.

Person Specification

Essential

Sympathy for the aims and purposes of St Nicholas' parish church, and the Church of England more broadly
Willingness and enthusiasm to inhabit the role as a ministry for the offering of music as a sacred gift within community, to inspire Christian faith and give nourishment for the spiritual journey
Skilled church organist with wide repertoire of sacred music and improvisational skills
Comprehensive knowledge of Anglican liturgy

Skilled choir trainer and director
Experience of recruiting and nurturing senior and junior choristers
Ability to oversee the maintenance of the instruments at St Nicholas
Ability to plan and organise music for rehearsal and performance in a timely fashion for all regular services
Ability to plan and organise training for choristers
Experience and skills in devising, implementing and reviewing a vision and strategy for music in a parish church
Ability to liaise appropriately with the Incumbent and other members of the ministry team, to enhance the worship and ministry of the parish church
Ability to supervise a supporting team within the choir
Skilled communicator with children and young people
Excellent interpersonal skills in working with amateur singers of varying ability
Ability to work within approved budgets for the purchase and maintenance of music and incidental items

Desirable

Knowledge and experience of liturgy within a Catholic Anglican context
Ability to support and encourage a range of musical expressions of worship across the churches in the parish
Experience of developing and agreeing music lists with clergy
A willingness to engage in the wider musical life of the parish church (including in-house recitals and other concerts) and of the local area

Special requirements

This role is subject to an enhanced DBS check.
Occasional flexibility over hours

Appointment Process

Interested candidates are invited to send a Curriculum Vitae and covering letter stating their interest in and suitability for the post to the Vicar, Fr Dominic Keech, at frdominickeech@gmx.co.uk. The closing date for applications is 9 August 2024. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview before September, by arrangement. In addition to a formal interview, candidates will be invited to prepare a music list in advance; play the organ, and rehearse and direct the current choir in singing a psalm, an anthem and a hymn.

It is hoped that the successful candidate will be available to begin in post as soon as possible after appointment.

For further information, or an informal conversation about this post, please contact Fr Dominic Keech at the email address above, or on 01273 770324.