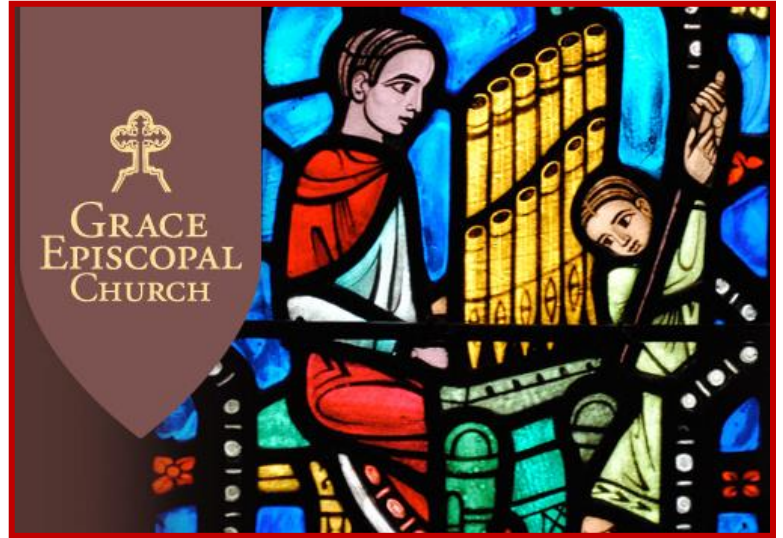


*Announcing . . .*  
**THE GRACE CHURCH CHORISTERS**

*How would you like to . . .*

- Sing the world's greatest music in a magnificent old church?
- make new friends?
- take trips to interesting places?
- spend a week singing at a camp on a beautiful lake?
- get help with your homework?
- learn to play the piano?



*If your answer is YES to these questions, then Grace Church Choristers is the place for you!!*



## HISTORY

For nearly one thousand years, children (primarily boys until the last fifty years!) have sung daily services in the great cathedrals and collegiate chapels of England. The boy sopranos, or trebles, provided the “top line” of the choir while the lower parts (alto, tenor, and bass) were sung by lay clerks, or grown men from the college or community. While these choral programs are taken somewhat for granted in England, similar choirs for children and youth are not as common in our own country.

## DEFINITION

The Grace Church Choristers seeks to offer a sound musical education to boys and girls from the greater Providence community. The choir is open to boys and girls in grades 2 through 12. The choir is committed to musical excellence, self-discipline, and social development. The choir rehearses at least twice weekly, and sings twice per month at the Sunday Holy Eucharist at Grace Church, an Episcopal Church in Providence, RI. The choristers will sing music of the greatest composers of sacred music, such as Palestrina, Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Bruckner, and Britten. The chorister program will offer a musical education which will include music theory, music history, and vocal training. In addition, the choristers will learn about the liturgy and history of the church.



While all choristers and their families are WELCOME to participate fully in the life of Grace Church, membership is not required, nor do you have to be Episcopalian. (If baptism or confirmation *is desired* for your child, we can assist you in making that happen here at Grace.)

## REQUIREMENTS

Auditions are held in the spring (May/June) and require no preparation. Auditions may also be held any time by appointment. Prior musical experience is not necessary for admission to the choir, though applicants in sixth grade or beyond should have some prior musical training (piano, school choir, etc.) Each child (along with a parent or guardian) will meet with the Director for a brief personal interview followed by a short musical aptitude and ear test. The most important requirement for entrance to the choir is an unwavering commitment of time: steadfast attendance at services and rehearsals.

## SKILL LEVELS

Choristers are divided into four skill levels: Probationer (beginner – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade), Novice, Junior Chorister, and Senior Chorister.

To progress, certain skill levels, both musical and otherwise, must be achieved. Appropriate ribbons and medals are awarded and worn by the chorister over his or her vestment (choir robe) to show the current standing.

Probationer: Cassock only

Novice: Cassock, Surplice, and Light Blue Ribbon with Medal

Junior Chorister: Cassock, Surplice, and Dark Blue Ribbon with Medal

Senior Chorister: Cassock, Surplice, and Red Ribbon with Medal

In addition, a Head Chorister and Deputy Head Chorister are chosen each year to assist the Director with choir leadership.





## REHEARSAL AND SERVICE SCHEDULE

There is one full mandatory rehearsal at Grace Church on Friday evening, which includes a light supper. The Choristers rehearse with the Adult Choir following church on the Sundays they sing, for approximately 20 to 30 minutes. The choir sings approximately two Sundays per month (early September through early June) at the 10 AM Service at Grace. There is an 8:45 AM rehearsal on Sunday mornings preceding the service. Please contact the Director for current weekly rehearsal schedules.

## CHOIR CAMP

The Choristers (not Probationers) enjoy a week of Choir Camp, held at Incarnation Camp in Ivoryton, CT. This beautiful camp setting is owned by the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, and includes a



gorgeous lake. The camp is fully accredited and insured. In addition to rehearsing and preparing for the fall season of singing, choristers enjoy swimming, water slide, hiking, campfires and lots of good food! The camp is staffed by the Director, a Music Assistant, and qualified, trained counselors. Camp dates for 2019 are August 12-16.

## TRIPS

The choir will travel on a regular basis, primarily in the tri-state area to hear other choirs and participate in choir festivals. Most of these would be day trips, with only occasional overnights. Approximately every three or four years, the choir will tour the cathedrals of England, singing daily services and sight-seeing. Currently a trip is planned to England and Scotland for the summer of 2020.

## COST

Grace Church offers a warm welcome to all who come to this place. In that spirit, we want the chorister program to be available to any boy or girl who is willing to make the commitment of time and steadfast attendance.

Scholarships are available to cover the cost of vestments, uniform ties, tutoring, snacks, AND choir camp. In the year of an England trip, scholarships will be available for that as well. At the time of acceptance into the choir, application must be made in writing for partial or full scholarship assistance. *We work on the Honor System: If a family can afford all or part of these costs, we ask that they pay their way so that more funding is available to those in need.*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BY PARENTS:

*My child likes to sing but has never had any music lessons. Can he still audition?*

Absolutely. A love of music and willingness to learn is more than adequate. If your child is in the sixth grade or above, it is helpful if they have some musical background (piano lessons, school band, etc).

*Our family goes to church sometimes, but it's not an Episcopal church. Does that matter?*

No. Families of all faith backgrounds are welcome. In fact, even if your family doesn't go to church at all, your child can still audition for the chorister program.

*If my child gets into the program, do we (his parents) have to come to church on Sunday?*

It isn't a requirement that parents come to church, but remember: this is a church choir and most performances will be in the context of a church service. It will be important for you to show interest in your child's development by coming to some services and hearing him or her sing.

*We can't afford the cost of the Choir Camp. Can my child still participate?*

Absolutely. Simply let the Director know (in writing) that you need scholarship money for part or all of the chorister program.

*What if we need to miss a Sunday because we like to go away some weekends?*

A full year (September through June) schedule is issued in early August. Families are expected to plan around the chorister schedule. Because the Choristers sing only twice monthly, families are strongly encouraged to be here on those Sundays, and plan trips, etc for Sundays the Choristers aren't scheduled to sing. In addition, choristers may miss one Sunday in the fall and one Sunday in the spring, except on Red Letter Days (important days in the life of the church when we want everyone here!)

*We missed the auditions in the spring. Can we audition during the choir year?*

Mid-year auditions are accepted on a case-by-case basis. Contact the Director.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BY POTENTIAL CHORISTERS:

*This program sounds like a lot of work. Is it any fun?*

Yes, this program requires a lot of work. However, the rewards are really great! Not only do you become a much better musician, you learn personal discipline, and teamwork. And we certainly have FUN as well! Choir camp, trips to hear other singers, and trips to participate in Choir Festivals all help to make the work worthwhile!

*I'm involved in lots of activities after school. Do I still have time to be a chorister?*

Maybe not. Learning to handle a schedule is something even many adults don't do well! Coming to the weekly rehearsals is not optional, and choristers may not be excused for long periods of time to participate in other activities. Talk with your parents and decide if this is an activity for which you are willing to make time.

*I don't really like going to church. Is that the only place the choir sings?*

No, it's not the only place, but it is the MAIN place we sing. And singing in a choir makes church feel very different. You are a LEADER in church when you're in the choir. And your voice helps to inspire all those people who come to church on Sunday morning.

*Do I have to wear a uniform to sing in the choir?*

For the weekday rehearsals, your school clothes are fine. On Sundays, choristers are asked to wear white shirts with a collar, navy pants or skirts, a tie, dark socks or stockings, and black shoes. The church will provide the ties, and will help with the cost of the rest of the uniform if needed. We wear our vestments (or choir robes) on top of the uniform.

*Why do we wear choir robes?*

Because we are worship leaders, we don't want to draw attention to the individual but to the choir as a group so we dress alike. The vestments consist of a long black cassock with a shorter white surplice over it. In addition, we wear fancy white collars around our neck and our chorister ribbons and medals. When a chorister is fully vested, it's an impressive sight.

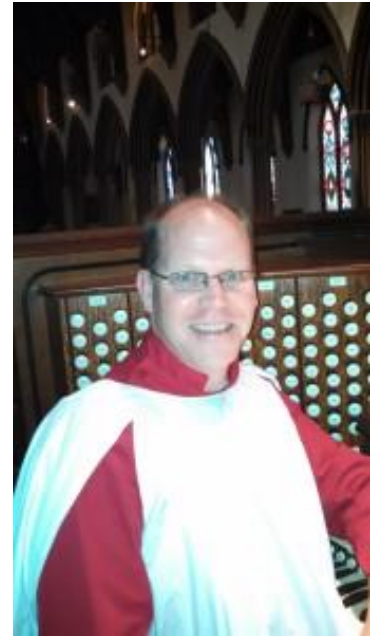




*About the Director . . .*

Vincent Edwards became the Director of Music at Grace Church in September 2015. Vince has served parishes in Connecticut and New York, most recently St. Paul's on the Green in Norwalk, CT. His choirs have performed and sung services in New York City and throughout England and Scotland.

In addition to directing the Grace Church Choir, Vince is the founder and director of the Grace Church Choristers, a choir for boys and girls from grades 2 through 12. Vince holds degrees from Bethel College (Music and Religion) and Yale University (Choral Conducting and Organ Performance).



*Contact Information*

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