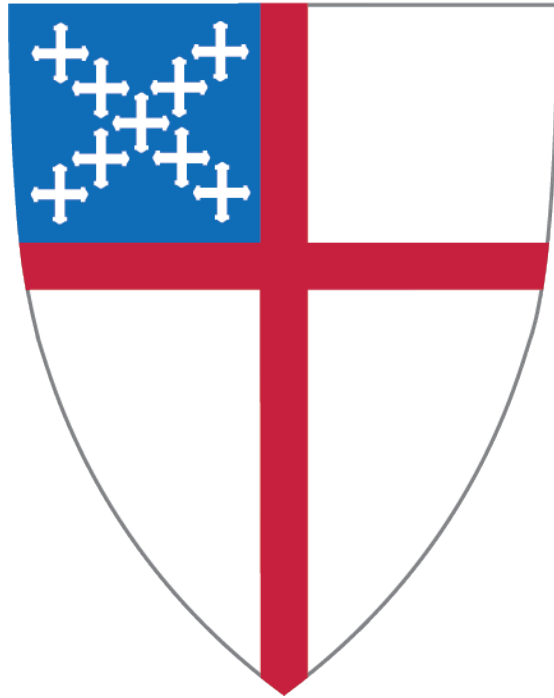


Christ Episcopal Church, Columbia, MD  
Chorister Handbook  
2019-2020



RSOM  
AMERICA

We bring you VOICE *for* LIFE

Christ Episcopal Church  
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Columbia, MD 20145  
(410) 381-9365  
[music@christchurchcolumbia.org](mailto:music@christchurchcolumbia.org)

The Rev'd Emmanuel Ato Mercer, *Rector*  
Adam Detzner, *Director of Music*

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Christ Episcopal Church Chorister Program uses the acclaimed Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) VOICE *for* LIFE curriculum. RSCM programs like ours are designed to cultivate a healthy vocal technique, a solid understanding of music theory, and a lifelong love of high-quality sacred music. A commitment to regular weekly rehearsal and participation in Sunday worship builds discipline and leadership skills in our Choristers.

As a sign of the Chorister's importance in the common life of our parish, Christ Church pays each Chorister a small stipend based on timeliness, attendance, and preparedness. As Choristers grow older and progress through the curriculum, their rate of pay increases. More importantly, they also take on the role of mentors and leaders for new recruits.

Christ Church's RSCM Program was launched in January 2019 after several months of planning and consensus building. By the end of the program in May, the Choristers grew to a group of seventeen outstanding young professionals. They have achieved a great deal - Christ Church looks forward to the continued success of our program.

Christ Church's Director of Music is Adam Detzner. He can be reached:

- by e-mail at [music@christchurchcolumbia.org](mailto:music@christchurchcolumbia.org);
- by phone at the main church office number (410) 381-9365;
- or, in cases of emergency, at his cell phone.

Adam is on campus Tuesdays and Thursdays from around 11:00 AM until rehearsal, as well as one additional day which varies week to week. (He is almost never in on Wednesdays). On Sundays, you can find him in the choir loft between services (from around 9:00 AM until rehearsal begins at 9:45). Should you ever need to meet with him in person, he can be available during these times.

## WHO MAY PARTICIPATE

We accept any and all children who are:

1. aged eight, or turning eight during the year, and above (boys must have unchanged voices);
2. able to read reasonably well for their age;
3. mature and well-behaved enough to be a part of a group;
4. focused and attentive enough to participate fully in one-hour rehearsals;
5. focused and attentive enough to participate fully and respectfully in ninety-minute church services.

We do not expect children (or their families) to be Episcopalians, Christians, or indeed to have any faith at all. Choristers are not required to take communion or say our prayers if they do not wish to do so. Please note, however, that Choristers will be required to learn a few prayers from memory as they progress through the curriculum, including the Choristers' Prayer, the Lord's Prayer, the Nicene Creed, and the General Thanksgiving.

Choristers interested in joining our program should schedule a meeting with the Director of Music before an evening rehearsal to assess their readiness to join. They should then stay and observe a rehearsal to see if it is right for them. We request that any new Chorister commit to remaining in the program until the end of the season.

## ENROLLING YOUR CHILD(REN)

A Google Form with detailed program information can be found at [www.christchurchcolumbia.org/rscm](http://www.christchurchcolumbia.org/rscm) under "Enrolling Your Child." Please give yourself ten to fifteen minutes to fill out this form. It allows us to keep several pieces of important information in one place, including, most critically, parent contact information and dietary restrictions.

There are no costs or fees for participation in the Chorister Program. We welcome any donations to defray the costs of vestments, workbooks, and food.

## WEEKLY REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Christ Church offers a choice of two weeknight rehearsals, on Tuesdays and Thursdays:

4:30-5:00 PM	VOICE <i>for</i> LIFE workbook help and assessments (or “checks”) and Healthy snack in the Lower Level of New Brick (optional)
5:00-6:00 PM	Rehearsal in the choir loft of New Brick. Individual/small-group vocal coaching sessions in the Lower Level of New Brick.
6:00-6:30 PM	VOICE <i>for</i> LIFE workbook help and assessments (or “checks”) (Dinner instead after the first Tuesday and Thursday rehearsals of the month)

Choristers must attend one of these two rehearsals each week but may attend both if they wish. If a Chorister usually comes one day but cannot attend due to illness or outside commitments, they are welcome to come on the other day instead.

In addition to the dedicated workbook time before and after rehearsal, Choristers should feel free to work on their books at home. Choristers should bring their VOICE *for* LIFE workbooks back and forth between home and rehearsal.

Choristers must be seated in the choir loft with their binders and a pencil at 5:00 PM. They are fined 5¢ per minute that they are late. Rehearsal begins promptly at 5:00 PM and ends promptly at 6:00 PM. Any Choristers arriving late must enter silently and make every effort to avoid disrupting rehearsal. If a Chorister is ten or more minutes late to rehearsal, they will not be paid for the day.

Parents should drop off and pick up their Choristers at the turn-around outside the Lower Level of New Brick. **Parents must make arrangements to pick up their children by 6:30 PM at the very latest.** When picking up, please make contact with Adam or a volunteer so we know your Choristers have departed safely.

In the case of inclement weather, Chorister rehearsal will be cancelled if Howard County Public Schools cancel evening activities for the day. The Director of Music will be in touch with parents as soon as possible if rehearsal must be cancelled for any other reason.

## VOCAL COACHING SESSIONS

Christ Church has hired a professional singer to work with Choristers individually (or in small groups), with a goal of meeting with each Chorister at least once every two weeks. These sessions, typically five to eight minutes in length, allow our Choristers to get the attention they need for their individual vocal needs and allow us to keep a closer eye on their progress. Sessions take place in the Lower Level of New Brick in the Sunday School room to the right of the kitchen - Choristers leave rehearsal with a volunteer chaperone, who then remains in the room during the session.

Our Vocal Coach is Jennifer Piazza-Pick, a doctoral student in voice at the University of Maryland. She is a marvelous singer and an excellent teacher - our Choristers love her! You can read more about Jennifer on the Christ Church web site's staff page at <https://www.christchurchcolumbia.org/our-staff>.

## SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

The Choristers will sing at Christ Church's **10:30 AM service of Holy Eucharist** on the **first Sunday of each month**. They must be vested and seated with their binders and a pencil at 9:45 AM.

The Choristers will sing at Christ Church's **5:00 PM service of Choral Evensong** on the **third Sunday of each month**. They must be vested and seated with their binders and a pencil at 4:15 PM.

To sing on a given Sunday, Choristers must have attended one rehearsal in three of the four previous weeks. Choristers who have missed two or more weeks of rehearsal in the previous four weeks may still attend worship and sing the hymns but may not participate in the Offertory Anthem or the Psalm.

At all services, as in rehearsal, they are fined 5¢ per minute that they are late and 25¢ if they are without a pencil when rehearsal begins. Any Choristers arriving late must enter silently and make every effort to avoid disrupting worship, entering the Choir Loft by way of the hospitality (elevator) room. If a Chorister is ten or more minutes late to rehearsal, they will not be paid for the day, and they may not participate in the Offertory Anthem or the Psalm.

The Choristers will also sing at additional special services like Lessons and Carols, Christmas Eve, and Holy Week and Easter, as described in the Master Schedule below.

**Please refer to the 2019-2020 Master Schedule in this document for exceptions to the schedule above.**

**Please let the Director of Music know of any planned absences as soon as possible.**

## CHORISTER PAY

Choristers earn a small stipend based on their level in the VOICE *for* LIFE program. They are paid “per call” (i.e. for each rehearsal and service) at the following rates:

Probationers:	50¢
Novices (Cassocks):	\$1
Light Blue:	\$2
Dark Blue:	\$3
Red:	\$4
Yellow:	\$5

Choristers are fined 5¢ for every minute they are late, and 25¢ if they are without a pencil at the beginning of rehearsal. (We have plenty of pencils – they need only ask if they are missing one). If a Chorister is ten or more minutes late to rehearsal or worship, they will not be paid for the day.

Choristers progress through the curriculum at their own pace by

1. completing the VOICE *for* LIFE workbook corresponding to their level and
  2. meeting a set of musical and behavioral standards for each level. We refer to these standards as “checks.”
- These standards are assessed during the half hours preceding and following rehearsal, and also during private vocal coaching sessions. Some of these standards refer to individual tests (e.g. clapping certain rhythms, singing certain intervals, reciting a prayer from memory), while some measure long-term accomplishments (e.g. focus and attentiveness, timeliness, good posture, positive energy, and being supportive of one another). These checks are recorded on a cardstock document which Choristers keep in their binders.

Choristers typically move up one level per year. Some move faster, some slower - there is no one “right” pace.

Choristers are paid twice a year: after worship at Christmas Eve and at Pentecost. (Choristers who cannot attend these services can collect their pay sometime thereafter). Included with the pay is a description of the number of rehearsals they attended and at what level, and the total number of minutes they were late, as a way of explaining their total pay. Choristers should not compare their pay to that of their colleagues.

## BEHAVIOR AND DRESS

We treat our Choristers as professionals and so expect them to be professional. This means: remaining focused for the entirety of rehearsals and services; raising their hands to ask or answer questions; being supportive of one another; always trying their best; and cheerfully and immediately following all directions.

Choristers with phones or other electronic devices should silence them or power them off before rehearsal and worship.

In rehearsal and in worship, Choristers should wear clothing that covers their shoulders. Choristers should not wear jewelry or other clothing that may be noisy (e.g. squeaking shoes). Though we do not expect Choristers to be practicing Christians or Episcopalians, they should recognize that Christ Church's sanctuary is a sacred place and dress accordingly.

In the fall of this year, we will be purchasing new vestments for the Choristers, thanks to generous donations from the Women of Christ Church and an anonymous donor. These vestments are quite expensive – Choristers should take good care of them, neatly hanging them in the Choir Library in the tower after worship. As Choristers earn RSCM ribbons and medals, these should be kept with their vestments.

## PARENT VOLUNTEERS

We ask all parents to offer a few dates when they can chaperone rehearsal (and/or help set up dinner on dinner days). Per Diocese of Maryland "Safe Church" guidelines, there must always be two adults in the room when working with any children. This means that we need at least three volunteers at each rehearsal: one with the Director of Music in the choir loft; one with the Vocal Coach in the Lower Level; and one additional volunteer "on hand" to help with situations like bathroom needs or medical issues (e.g., bloody noses). **If we only have two volunteers, it will not be possible to offer individual vocal coaching sessions at that rehearsal; if we only have one volunteer, we will not be able to hold rehearsal.**

**All parents who want to volunteer, or think they may someday want to volunteer, must complete the "Safe Church" training mandated by the Diocese of Maryland.** This training is free and can be completed online, though if possible parents should attend an in-person training. These sessions are offered periodically throughout the year and throughout the diocese. More information can be found at <https://episcopalmaryland.org/required-workshops/>.

Parents enrolling their children in our program for the 2019-2020 program year must come to an informational meeting on August 25<sup>th</sup> at noon (after the 10:30 service). Choristers are also welcome to attend. **Please bring your calendars so you can sign up for a few rehearsal dates to chaperone.** If you are unable to attend this meeting, we can find a time to meet with you individually.

## 2019-2020 MASTER SCHEDULE

### September 2019 (Rehearsals begin)

Rehearsals: Tuesday, 9/10 and Thursday, 9/12 (dinner following)  
Tuesday, 9/17 and Thursday, 9/19  
Tuesday, 9/24 and Thursday, 9/26

### October 2019

Rehearsals: Tuesday, 10/1 and Thursday, 10/3 (dinner following)  
**Worship: Sunday, 10/6: 10:30 AM, Holy Eucharist (9:45 AM call)**  
Rehearsals: Tuesday, 10/8 and Thursday, 10/10  
Tuesday, 10/15 and Thursday, 10/17  
**Worship: Sunday, 10/20: No Choral Evensong (Day of the Annual Meeting)**  
Rehearsals: Tuesday, 10/22 and Thursday, 10/24  
Tuesday, 10/29. No rehearsal Thursday, 10/31 (Halloween)

### November 2019 (Daylight savings time ends Sunday, 11/3)

**Worship: Sunday, 11/3 (All Saints): 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist (9:45 AM call)**  
Rehearsals: Tuesday, 11/5 and Thursday, 11/7 (dinner following)  
Tuesday, 11/12 and Thursday, 11/14  
**Worship: Sunday, 11/17: 5 PM, Choral Evensong (4:15 PM call)**  
Rehearsals: Tuesday, 11/19 and Thursday, 11/21  
No rehearsals Tuesday, 11/26 and Thursday 11/28 (Thanksgiving Holiday)

### December 2019

**Worship: Sunday, 12/1 (Advent I): 10:30 AM, Holy Eucharist (9:45 AM call)**  
Rehearsals: Tuesday, 12/3 and Thursday, 12/5 (dinner following)  
Tuesday, 12/9 and Thursday, 12/11  
**Worship: Sunday, 12/15: 6 PM, Lessons and Carols Service (5:30 PM call)**  
Tuesday, 12/17 and Thursday, 12/19  
**Worship: Christmas Eve, 12/24: 4 PM, (3:15 PM call)**

**No rehearsals or worship services 12/25 – January 13.**

### January 2020 (Rehearsals resume)

Rehearsals: Tuesday, 1/14 and Thursday, 1/16 (dinner following)  
Tuesday, 1/21 and Thursday, 1/23  
Tuesday, 1/28 and Thursday, 1/30

### February 2020

**Worship: Sunday, 2/2 (The Presentation): 10:30 AM, Holy Eucharist (9:45 AM call)**  
Rehearsals: Tuesday, 2/4 and Thursday, 2/6 (dinner following)  
Tuesday, 2/11 and Thursday, 2/13  
**Worship: Sunday, 2/16: 5 PM, Choral Evensong (4:15 PM call)**  
Rehearsals: Tuesday, 2/18 and Thursday, 2/20  
Tuesday, 2/25 and Thursday, 2/27

## March 2020

**Worship:** **Sunday, 3/1 (Lent I): 10:30 AM, Holy Eucharist (9:45 AM call)**  
Rehearsals: Tuesday, 3/3 and Thursday, 3/5 (dinner following)  
Tuesday, 3/10 and Thursday, 3/12

**Worship:** **Sunday, 3/15: 5 PM, Choral Evensong (4:15 PM call)**  
Rehearsals: Tuesday, 3/17 and Thursday, 3/19  
Tuesday, 3/24 and Thursday, 3/26  
Tuesday, 3/31 (dinner following)

## April 2020

Rehearsal: Thursday, 4/2 (dinner following)

**Worship:** **Sunday, 4/5: (Palm Sunday) 10:30 AM, Holy Eucharist (9:45 AM call)**  
Rehearsals: No rehearsals Tuesday, 4/7 or Thursday, 4/9 (Holy Week observances)

**Worship:** **Sunday, 4/12 (Easter Day): 9 AM Service (8:15 AM call)**  
Rehearsals: No rehearsals Tuesday, 4/14 or Thursday, 4/16  
Tuesday, 4/21 and Thursday, 4/23  
Tuesday, 4/28 and Thursday, 4/30

## May 2020

**Worship:** **Sunday, 5/3 (Easter IV): 10:30 AM, Holy Eucharist (9:45 AM call)**  
Rehearsals: Tuesday, 5/5 and Thursday, 5/7 (dinner following)  
Tuesday, 5/12 and Thursday, 5/14

**Worship:** **Sunday, 5/17: 5 PM, Choral Evensong (4:15 PM call)**  
Rehearsals: Tuesday, 5/19 and Thursday, 5/21  
Tuesday, 5/26 and Thursday, 5/28

**Worship:** **Sunday, 5/31 (Day of Pentecost): 10 AM Service (9:15 AM call)**

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NOTES





# CHRIST CHURCH, COLUMBIA

## CHOIR COVENANT

(Modeled after that of St. Mary's, Arlington)

A parent or guardian has read and understood the contents of this handbook and discussed with their Chorister child(ren) the expectations therein.

We the signed participants agree:

- to communicate and cooperate in the best interest of the Chorister;
- to support the ministry of the choir and its individual Choristers;
- to participate fully in rehearsals and services as scheduled by the choirmaster;
- to notify the choirmaster in advance of absences whenever possible;
- and to meet the following five expectations in every service and rehearsal:

1. Be professional.
2. Be on time.
3. Raise your hand when asking a question.
4. Be supportive of one another.
5. Be fearless, always trying your best and learning from your mistakes.

Chorister: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Music: Adam Detzner \_\_\_\_\_

Rector: The Rev'd Emmanuel Mercer \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_