



COWLEY ST JOHN
TWO CHURCHES
ONE COMMUNITY



DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

The church of St Mary & St John, part of the parish of Cowley St John, Oxford, seeks to appoint a dynamic Director of Music to lead its music ministry in the church and, in a wholly new initiative, its Church of England primary school. We are currently setting out on an exciting phase of renewal of both our ministry and our church fabric, and look for a new Director of Music keen not just to launch the school initiative, but also to reassess and reinvigorate our current Sunday choral and congregational music (described below). We are open to changes that have musical and theological integrity, build upon our strong Anglo Catholic tradition, make the most appropriate use of choir abilities, and maximise congregational participation.

- £6,000 p.a.
- One service per Sunday + feast days
- Small but very competent choir
- Well-qualified and experienced deputies are available.
- Friendly congregation

Core Duties of the Post:

Sunday Sung Eucharist. 10.45 (with pre-service practice for choir). Organ voluntaries (seasonally appropriate) from 10.35. Congregational hymns (including improvisation where liturgically required), service music, and psalms; choral anthem (suited to singers' ability); post-service organ voluntary.

Feast Days and Solemnities. These sung services are usually in the evening (7.00 or 7.30), with musicians' rehearsals as required: Christmas Carol Service, Christmas Midnight Mass, Christmas Morning, Epiphany, Annunciation, Ash Wednesday, Mass of the Last Supper (Maundy Thursday), Good Friday (3 Hours vigil, with hymns, followed by Mass of the Pre-Sanctified), Easter Vigil, Ascension Day, Corpus Christi, All Souls.

Music Assembly at St Mary & St John Primary School. For this new initiative, we expect the successful candidate to plan and lead a half-hour assembly, two Mondays per month during the school terms, for the school's 360 children. The content should be explicitly Christian, introducing young people to the joys of music as worship and praise, perhaps with extension to involving those who wish to in an occasional 10.45 eucharist at St Mary & St John Church. Planning will have the full support and input of the Vicar and Head Teacher.

Additional Duties (paid), Holidays and Substitutes, Reporting

Funerals & Weddings are highly variable in number, but there are currently approximately 12 of these per year, on average. The Director of Music will have right of first refusal for these, to be paid (additional to salary) at RSCM

rates; if the Director cannot, or does not wish to take a service, it will be his/her responsibility to recruit an adequate substitute organist (RSCM rates).

Holiday. The Director will be entitled to seven Sundays or feast days off during each twelve-month period from appointment, subject to the recruitment of an adequate substitute those days.

Reporting. For all matters relating to liturgical music, the Director will report to, and liaise closely with, the Vicar; administrative issues, including holidays and substitutes, will be confirmed and approved jointly by the Churchwarden and Vicar. Contractually, the Director will be employed by the Churchwardens and Parochial Church Council of the Parish of Cowley St John.

Person Specification

- Accomplished organist (at least ARCO level of competence or equivalent)
- Experienced choral conductor
- Experienced commitment to Anglican liturgy and musical tradition
- Ability to work creatively with all ages, including young children
- Excellent organisational skills
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Ability to create and develop new musical initiatives

Remuneration: £6,000 p.a., plus occasional services (weddings and funerals) paid at RSCM rates.

To Apply: Please send a letter of application with a *curriculum vitae*, to Fr Philip Ritchie, 271 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 2AJ; or cowleysaintjohn@btinternet.com.

Cowley St John Parish

Our parish was formed in 1870 from the historic parish of Cowley St James to serve Oxford's rapidly growing, mostly working class, eastern suburb. Its first incumbent was Fr Richard Benson, also superior of the newly formed Anglican monastic community, the Society of St John the Evangelist (the 'Cowley Fathers'). This inheritance continues today in a wholly 'inclusive' expression of Catholic Anglicanism, marked by a strong eucharistic focus, commitment to the Daily Offices, and outreach to the poor, homeless, mentally ill, and new immigrant communities in East Oxford. The parish consists of two churches – St Mary and St John on the Cowley Road, and the former 'mission' church of St Alban's nearby in Charles Street. Attendance at the main (10.45) sung eucharist at St Mary and St John is currently ca. 50-100, depending on the season. Attendees are overwhelmingly local residents, and although the area is rapidly gentrifying, Cowley St John is Oxfordshire's most economically, socially, and racially diverse parish. We are particularly keen to enhance our ministry to the area's large population of students and younger families.



St Mary & St John Church

For his new church of St Mary and St John, Father Benson commissioned as architect Alfred Mowbray, son of the Oxford Movement publisher and printer Alfred Richard Mowbray. Building commenced in 1875, with consecration in 1883, followed by the addition of the west tower by Mowbray in 1892-3. Large vestries were added in 1912. Due to lack of funds, much of the decorative stonework in the church was left unfinished, but the building is an impressive architectural essay in Anglo-Catholic theology and liturgy by design, rather than adaptation, with its voluminous nave and aisles dramatically focussed on the climax of the elevated chancel, high altar, and carved and painted reredos (1918) by Cecil Hare, assistant to G F Bodley.



Music at St Mary & St John

The Organ. Before 1950, a series of smaller organs were housed above the north or south chancel, with choir stalls below, all since removed. The present organ of 38 stops and three manuals is a fine instrument, well-suited to the large volume of the building. Its origins (ca. 1850) were as the instrument for Oxford's St Michael-at-the-Northgate, but rebuilt with three manuals by Norman and Beard (1914), and brought to St Mary and St John in 1940. It was entirely overhauled at the cost of some £200,000 in 2010, and is in excellent working order, housed in a gallery above the west end.

The Choir During the heyday of attendance numbers, ca. 1900-70, the church had a large robed choir, and from that period dates an enviable music library of four-part 'cathedral' repertoire. At present there is a very dedicated, but very small, core of singers (4-6, often just short of SATB) who meet before the 10.45 service to rehearse hymns, psalms, and an anthem (usually taken from the *Oxford Anthem Book*). The choir presently sings from the west gallery around the organ console, with occasional forays to the north aisle at a grand piano (Bluthner).

The Congregation Service music is sung congregationally (at present Murray, with Merbecke in Advent and Lent), as are Psalms (Anglican chant). We are a hymn-loving parish, and have recently invested in a full new set of the 2013 edition of *Ancient & Modern* (words-only for pew copies; full music for choir).

