

# **Saint Columb's Cathedral Information for Choristers**



**Recruiting Boy and Girl Choristers,  
aged seven and above, September 2022**

## Who are we?

Saint Columb's Cathedral, completed in 1633, is the Church of Ireland Cathedral of the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe. It is part of the world-wide Anglican Communion, and is dedicated to Saint Columb, who founded a monastic community in Derry in the sixth century.

The Dean, The Very Reverend Raymond Stewart, oversees the services, which include many high-profile diocesan and civic occasions.

The Cathedral has a rich tradition of choral singing, dating from at least 1773.

We welcome singers from all faith backgrounds – not just the Church of Ireland.

The Cathedral Choir is made up of approximately twenty-four members: twelve boys and twelve gentlemen (who form the countertenor, tenor, and bass sections). The boys, aged between seven and fourteen, are known as the Boy Choristers. The Cathedral also has an adult Chamber Choir of around twenty members. Music Department staff comprise the Organist, Assistant Organist and two Organ Scholars. All Cathedral staff and volunteers are trained in Safeguarding and are fully compliant with Child Protection requirements.

From September 2022 an exciting new development will be to form a Girls' Choir, with up to twenty Girl Choristers, aged from seven up, who will share in the schedule of Cathedral Services.

## What are the benefits of being a Chorister?

- Choristers from the age of seven, receive a free first-class musical education.
- Instruction in good posture, secure vocal technique, and musicianship.
- Improved confidence, maturity, and performance skills.
- Improved reading, listening and presentation skills.
- Experience being a valued contributor to the team.
- The opportunity to perform at special occasions including TV and radio broadcasts.
- Opportunities to learn to play instruments, including the piano and organ.
- The opportunity to take part in Choir Tours. In previous summers we have visited UK and Irish Cathedrals, and visited France.

## What is the time commitment to being a Chorister?

- Boys will attend rehearsals on Thursday and Fridays from 4.30pm to 5.30pm.
  - Girls' rehearsal will be on Wednesday from 4pm to 5.30pm.
- From September 2022:**
- Boys sing three morning services per month beginning at 11am with rehearsal at 10am, and one afternoon service per month beginning at 4pm with rehearsal at 3pm.
  - Girls will sing one morning service per month beginning at 11am with rehearsal at 10am and one afternoon service per month beginning at 4pm with rehearsal at 3pm.
  - Choral Services occur between September and June, and although additional services occur at the major festivals of Christmas and Easter, these are followed by a week off, similar to the pattern of the school calendar.

## What happens at choir rehearsals?

- Choristers receive group vocal lessons, to establish and develop good posture and their best singing voice.
- Our aim will be the highest possible standard of performance.
- Aspects of vocal technique, musicianship skills and the rudiments of music theory will be taught with the Organist taking the lead role with the Boy Choristers and the Assistant Organist with the Girl Choristers.
- Opportunities for support to individual Choristers will be made available as necessary.

## What happens when I join?

- New Choristers will attend rehearsals only, until they are fully confident to sing at services.
- An initial trial period of three weeks will assess the Chorister's potential to develop as a singer.
- New recruits will then join the Choristers as a Probationer for a period of six months, after which they will be fully admitted and presented with their surplice, a white over garment, worn in services as a sign of their role.

## How much does it cost?

- Membership of the choir and all training is provided free of charge.
- Parents will be asked to contribute 50% of the cost of the Choristers' uniform, comprising a polo top and jumper, which is worn for services. Black shoes are requested to be worn at all services.
- The Cathedral will provide a range of trips and activities beyond rehearsals that enrich the experience.
- On some occasions Choristers may receive a fee for additional services, for example weddings and civic events.

## Can parents help?

- We are very keen to have Parents as involved as they wish to be in supporting the activities and work of the Choir.
- Training will be provided to those willing to help with supervision and there will be a range of social activities for both Choristers and Parents to become involved in.
- The Choir Association helps to coordinate support for the Choirs and is a great way to become involved.

## Contact details

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