



ST BARNABAS WITH CHRIST'S CHAPEL

The Parish of St Barnabas Dulwich, SE21 7DG

**St Barnabas is seeking to appoint an
Organist/Assistant Director of Music**

From Summer or September 2025 | £12,000 - £16,000





Overview

St Barnabas is seeking to appoint an Organist/Assistant Director of Music from Summer 2025. This position has been vacant since the departure of Owen Elsley, who became Director of Music at St Michael and All Angels, Barnes, in Autumn 2024.

This position will suit a candidate who wishes to play a leading role in continuing to both sustain and develop the role of music across a large, well-resourced and committed parish. The post is open to both organists and non-organists. The ideal candidate will have strong musical leadership skills, capable of inspiring and developing singers and musicians of all ages and abilities.

The successful candidate will be joining a church that has a known and well-established choral tradition and which continues to be ambitious in its aims. Both choirs are thriving, with a particularly successful chorister line. The parish has two renowned organs and a new Yamaha C7X piano; there is a talented and vibrant community of singers, and our services draw a large congregation week by week. There continues to be almost unlimited potential for growth.

St Barnabas is in receipt of a Strategic Development Funding grant from the Diocese of Southwark to continue to share its good work with neighbouring parishes. Our church is working closely with St Clement with St Peter as they seek to grow further their musical offering. Although this role is working with St Barnabas initially, there is significant opportunity for the right candidate to work across both churches.

The post-holder will support the work of existing choirs at St Barnabas and work with the organist at Christ's Chapel; they will work closely with the Director of Music, Priest-in-charge, organists and administrators to ensure that music continues to play a significant role in the mission of St Barnabas with Christ's Chapel.

We seek to appoint a creative, resourceful and energetic professional musician who wishes to play a leading role in inspiring excellence in a successful and energy-giving church.

Context

There has been a church choir in this corner of SE21 for one hundred and thirty years. Records from 1891 show that from the very beginning – and even in a temporary building – the Choir of St Barnabas was a success such that it was oversubscribed, and an auxiliary choir was formed. Almost a century later in the church's darkest days when a fire ripped through the old Victorian building on the night of 7th December 1992, the choir still met, sang and led worship the following Sunday in the Parish Hall, such was the strength of commitment from members of the choir.

Over thirty years later, this commitment remains ever-strong. The parish choir numbers 40, rehearses weekly and sings every Sunday; it is supplemented by four choral scholars. At Christ's Chapel in Dulwich Village, there is also a choir that leads the regular singing of Evensong. In 2021, Dulwich Children's Choir (DCC) was formed and is hugely successful: 45 choristers meet each week on a Friday and sing regular Sunday services and almost all of these children are educated at local state schools. Such is the popularity of DCC there is currently a waiting list for new choristers and there are plans afoot to ensure we engage our youngest singers from Year 3 and above.

The choirs also sing at all the major festivals throughout the year and give concerts, accompanied with orchestra at both Christmas and in June to mark our patronal festival. The choirs will sing Britten's *St Nicolas* in November 2025. The choirs have toured internationally in previous years; most recently, they sang a residency weekend at Westminster Abbey in the summer of 2024 and toured Cambridge in the summer of 2023. Looking ahead, the choirs will sing services at Norwich Cathedral throughout the final week of July 2025; there is an international tour to northern Italy planned for 2026 and a choir residential week to Truro Cathedral planned for the summer of 2027.

Congregational attendance is strong, with some 250 adults and children joining for the Family Communion, and Sunday evenings attracting an ever-growing congregation. Our three carol services at Advent, Christmas and Epiphany are hugely popular. All services sung by the choir are usually streamed live: the church invested heavily in its IT/AV equipment to ensure this online experience is as inclusive and realistic as possible. St Barnabas is blessed with a fine 3-manual Tickell organ and new Yamaha C7X grand piano; at Christ's Chapel, there is a new upright Steinway piano and the organ is particularly renowned: having been restored in 2000, the instrument was built in 1759 and is the oldest surviving organ built by George England. Music is very well-resourced; The Priest-in-charge and PCC see music as central to mission in the Parish and wider community.



Job Description

Purpose of the Role:

This role supports the Director of Music and organists in ensuring there is both excellent music throughout the year and an outstanding provision for all ages within the Parish of St Barnabas with Christ's Chapel. Specific areas of responsibility will be tailored to the talents and interests of the successful candidate; however, the post holder will be expected to play a full role in rehearsing, leading and directing the parish's multiple choirs (and, where relevant, playing the organ to a very high standard). Depending on the skills of the successful candidate, a key area of work will include: continuing the development of the junior choristers and/or senior choristers; developing our offering of lunchtime music concerts; promoting the role of the organ through recitals, teaching and outstanding playing; ensuring recruitment for each choir remains active, forward-thinking and engaging; or building further links with local schools.

Summary of the Role:

The primary role of the Assistant Director of Music is to support, encourage and inspire the work of the existing choirs and musicians. The Assistant Director of Music will be expected to play a role in Sunday morning worship during term time and choral evensongs; outside of term time, duties are lighter and will be discussed with the successful candidate. The Parish Choir of St Barnabas and Dulwich Children's Choir (DCC) currently rehearse on Friday evenings; there is a need for more rehearsal time with our senior choristers, and to develop our offering for changing voices. The exact timing of these sessions will be discussed with the successful candidate. The ADoM should be available for all choir rehearsals during term-time, although, of course, there is the possibility for flexibility to accommodate other ad-hoc work.

The ADoM will be involved in the planning and preparation of music for services, concerts and tours, and will be involved in crafting liturgy for weekly services. The ADoM will have specific responsibility for the planning of sung Music at services outside of term-time. In addition to the regular work of the parish choirs, there are regular weddings and funerals throughout the year (c.30) and a professional quartet/octet is used; the ADoM can expect to play a leading role in the direction of Music at these services for which additional fees are payable.



Key Responsibilities:

Whilst specific areas of responsibility will be tailored to the talents and interests of the successful candidate, in general the post-holder will need to:

- play a key role in supporting the Director of Music, with particular oversight for at least one of the three major areas:
 - lead, recruit and direct either the junior or senior choristers within the Parish
 - develop the role of the organ (and/or other instruments) through recitals, teaching and outstanding playing
 - ensure a recruitment strategy for all choirs is dynamic and successful
- assist in training the Parish Choir, Choral Scholars and Dulwich Children's Choir, ensuring the highest musical standards in worship at all services
- work closely with the Director of Music, The Priest-in-charge, organists, choir administrator and parish administrator in the musical and logistical planning of services, concerts, tours, recording and other related projects
- assist the Director of Music, as required, in developing strategy and planning and promotion of the Parish's musical life, including commissions, repertoire development, choir tours, recordings and concerts
- lead in the recruitment of Choral Scholars
- assist with the choral training and education of Dulwich Children's Choir, including sight-singing, theory tuition, and probationer training
- actively seek to undertake personal musical preparation and practice, and the learning of new repertoire
- ensure that strong communication is maintained with all members of the choirs (and, where appropriate, parents of choristers)
- attend the weekly liturgy meeting (held remotely)
- conduct the choirs in the absence of the Director of Music, and as required

Person Specification:

We are seeking to appoint a creative, resourceful and energetic musician who has:

- a passion and vision for how music can contribute to the worship life of a Parish Church and its wider community
- experience, energy and ability to motivate, train and inspire girl and boy choristers, teenagers, and other adults contributing to the music, both in and outside of worship
- experience of playing a role in leading the music traditions within a church (or similar context),
- a high administrative competence, including the ability to plan, schedule and work to deadlines, and use IT effectively
- an ability to direct and lead music within the context of choral services
- an understanding of vocal technique, particularly with young and changing voices
- an understanding of safeguarding and how this leadership role plays a part in maintaining safe practice throughout the work of the Music Department

Terms of Employment:

- Your employer will be the PCC of St Barnabas and Christ's Chapel, Dulwich. You will be responsible to the Director of Music on behalf of the PCC.
- You will be expected to work an average of 12 hours per week during term time, with lighter duties outside choir term as agreed with the Director of Music
- Your employment will begin in either Summer or September 2025. The parish is prepared to wait for the right candidate. The first 6 months will be treated as a probationary period.
- You will be paid a gross annual salary between £12,000 - £16,000 (depending on experience) which will be paid monthly and no later than on the last day of the month. Payment for additional services and other engagements will be made in addition to your salary at rates agreed by the PCC and Director of Music.
- You will continue to be paid normal basic salary during absence due to illness or incapacity on the terms set out in your contract, such payments being inclusive of any statutory sick pay or other benefits to which you may be entitled.
- You will be enrolled automatically in a pension scheme. Further details of the scheme in place for all parish staff will be included in your contract of employment.
- A choir cassock will be provided by the parish for your use.
- As part of the parish community, the mutual respect required between all members of the choir and all those connected with the Church is important. Good relations with colleagues, other members of the parish staff team, clergy and choir members are key to a successful partnership. You will be required to behave in a manner in keeping with the high standards expected of the staff team.
- You are entitled to six working weeks' paid leave per year, which should be taken during periods of choir holiday. Members of the team are required to coordinate their leave in such a way that there is always organist cover out of choir term for Sunday services and for non-statutory services.
- Beyond the probationary period, you will be entitled to receive and be required to give three months' notice should it be necessary to terminate your employment.
- The post is subject to an enhanced DBS clearance.
- You will be expected to comply with parish policies including policies on Safeguarding, Conflicts of Interest, Anti-bribery, Managing Risk, Whistleblowing, Managing Complaints, and Managing Volunteers.



Application Process

For further information visit www.stbarnabasdulwich.org. Both Revd Liz Barnett (Priest-in-charge) and Christopher Woodward (Director of Music) would be delighted to speak to you if you would like an **informal conversation**. In the first instance, please contact the Choir Administrator at choiradmin@stbarnabasdulwich.org or 020 8693 1524 to arrange this.

To apply, please send your CV and covering letter setting out your interest in and suitability for the role by email to dom@stbarnabasdulwich.org.

Please provide the contact details of two referees. Your referees should include your current employer and a church reference, preferably from the incumbent and/or Director of Music; references will be taken up for short-listed candidates only and only after seeking your permission to do so.

We will acknowledge all receipt of applications.

No interview can be stress-free, but we aim to run a programme which will enable an effective discernment process for candidates and the Parish. Short-listed candidates will be asked to direct the Parish Choir of St Barnabas and work with the choristers of DCC; applicants will also need to demonstrate their musical abilities (through playing or singing), in addition to a formal panel interview.

The closing date for applications is 9 am on Thursday 10th April 2025.

Short-listed candidates will be contacted not later than Monday 14th April 2025. We reserve the right to close this vacancy early if a suitable candidate is found, so early application is encouraged. Information concerning audition requirements will be sent to short-listed candidates in advance. **Interviews and auditions** are planned to take place on Friday 2nd May 2025, but again, if the right candidate is found, this date may be brought forward.

