

Job Description

Choir Director and Organist

Fort Massey United Church, Halifax NS

2016

Overview of position:

The Choir Director/Organist is responsible for worship music at Fort Massey Church, operating within general guidelines set by the Kirk Session through the Music Committee.

Duties:

1. Regular discussion and planning of the service music in conjunction with the Minister.
2. Preparation of service music including choral anthems, hymns, organ pieces and music for piano and/or other instruments as required.
3. Playing the organ and piano for regular weekly services on Sundays and special occasions such as Christmas and Easter, as well as weddings and funerals.
4. Playing the chimes for a short time each Sunday prior to the Prelude, to welcome the congregation to worship and to indicate to the local community that a service is about to start.
5. Training and directing the choir in one 1.5 to 2 hour practice during the week, and an approximate 20 minute rehearsal before each service. Practice on Sunday should not be held within the sanctuary unless it can be completed by 15 minutes before the start of the service.
6. Directing the choir during services and accompanying them on the organ/piano where appropriate.
7. Recruiting choir members, including section leads.
8. Prepare junior choir performances periodically for special services.
9. Arranging for occasional accompanist, instrumentalists or visiting musicians.
10. Liaison with the Minister, Kirk Session, and Music Committee concerning the role of music in the church.
11. Participation in meetings of the Music Committee
12. Provide information for the printing of musical items in the weekly bulletin.
13. Planning and ordering of new music within the allotted budget.
14. Copying and arranging special music, in compliance with copyright.
15. Supervision of Fort Massey's music library and use of the Nova Scotia Choral Federation library.
16. Arranging occasional church-related concerts or special programs as appropriate.
17. Arranging for notification of choir members in the event of cancellations of services or practices.
18. Arranging for a supply organist/choir director when needed.
19. Providing the Minister and Music Committee with a list of names and phone numbers of possible supply organists for emergencies.

20. Liaison with organ technicians and piano tuners to ensure that instruments are regularly tuned (within budget, usually twice per year), and to discuss and supervise any repairs or revoicing of the organ.
21. Providing advice to the Kirk Session and the Property Committee on the placement of pianos and other portable musical instruments, and on arrangements within the sanctuary for improvement of acoustics for projection of the choirs, organ, and small ensembles.

Conditions:

1. The salary will be determined on the basis of qualifications, training and experience.
2. Salary will be paid monthly with the annual rate to be reviewed and set each year.
3. Vacation entitlement is 4 weeks per year with the church paying for the supply organist during Sunday and special services during the vacation period.
4. The Choir Director will inform the Music Committee and Minister of vacation days, and arrangements for supply.
5. The Choir Director should be present for the major church festivals (Christmas and Easter) and for the preparation of the choir for these events.
6. The choir season lasts from the first week after Labour Day until the last Sunday in June and practices are not held in July and August.
7. In the event of illness the church will pay for a supply organist for up to two weeks per year. The two week period is not cumulative and cannot be carried over from one year to the next.
8. Any organ supply required for Sunday services, but not covered by the 4-week vacation entitlement or sick leave, shall be at the expense of the Choir Director.
9. Playing for funerals is considered part of the duties of the Choir Director. If the Director is unable to be present for some funeral services, the church will cover the cost of organ supply for up to 4 funeral services per year, after which the cost will be borne by the Director. This proviso is in addition to vacation and sick leave.
10. When the organ is to be used for a wedding, it is expected that the Choir Director will normally be asked to play and should accept if possible. The fee (currently \$150) is set by the Kirk Session in consultation with the choir. If the Choir Director is unable to play, he/she should find a suitable substitute organist. If another organist is requested and the choir approves the choice, a courtesy fee (\$50) should be offered to the Choir Director for waiving the privilege of playing and introducing the substitute organist to the instrument.
11. Three month's notice for termination of the church's contract with the Choir Director will be given by either side.
12. Use of the organ for teaching by the choir is encouraged, in consultation with the Music Committee.

Relationships:

1. The Choir Director will work with the Minister concerning the selection of hymns, anthems and service music and make arrangements for any special concerts or other church musical events.
2. The Choir Director will also work with the Music Committee to develop and work within the annual music budget, to decide on any concert formats and to discuss any need for new music supplies or equipment.
3. The Choir Director will guide and work in conjunction with the Piano Accompanist/Junior Choir Director, if such a person has been appointed by the Session.

4. The Ministry and Personnel Committee is a vehicle for assisting with relationships within the church community and will conduct an annual review with the Choir Director

Qualifications:

1. Experience in the training and conducting of choirs.
2. Ability to play the pipe organ, including elements of the standard and developing repertoire, for church service music (preludes, offertories, postludes) and for accompaniment of hymns, choral anthems and soloists.
3. Ability to play the piano and other similar keyboard instruments.
4. Familiarity with the history and development of Christian church music including both traditional and contemporary music.
5. Formal qualifications such as a degree in music related to the above, are not imperative but will be considered an advantage, as will training in singing and conducting, and ability to play other instruments.

Dated: 2016-July