

**ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
WINSTON-SALEM, NC
2011 CHOIR SCHOOL HANDBOOK**

"Bless, O Lord, us thy servants who minister in thy temple: Grant that what we sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts, and what we believe in our hearts we may show forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (RSCM Prayer)

The St. Paul's Choir School gives all ages an outstanding musical education through regular study and performance. Each week members have opportunities for meeting challenges in a loving, team-oriented environment, and the privilege and responsibility of leading public worship. Through a structured incentives program modeled on the Royal School of Church Music's Voice for Life training scheme, our singers learn to appreciate the value of achieving short and long range goals individually and collectively. Singers are exposed to the greatest works of sacred music. Concerts, choir festivals, and travel are a regular part of the program as well.

In order that high standards of excellence are maintained, and that the organization of the choirs runs smoothly and effectively, it is essential for all choir members and parents to study this Handbook, and follow the rules and regulations accordingly. **PARENTS AND CHOIR MEMBERS MUST SIGN THE LETTER OF COMMITMENT AND RETURN IT TO THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT BY SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11.** Only those who have turned in the last page will be allowed to sing.

STAFF

Organist/Choirmaster jcummins@stpauls-ws.org	Dr. John Cummins 336-723-4394 x259
Assistant Organist/Choirmaster dgrice@stpauls-ws.org	Dr. Don Grice 336-723-4394 x261

CHOIRS

Choristers	3 rd – 6 th grades
Chorale	7 th – 12 th grades

Training ensemble

Novices 1st & 2nd grades

COMMUNICATION

For economic and environmental reasons, communication will take place using **email and telephone**. It is essential that we have a current email address for you, and that you read messages from the music staff promptly.

WEBSITE

A calendar is posted that will list the rehearsal schedule as well as special events such as the Lessons and Carols Service, Feast of Lights and Evensong.

http://www.stpauls-ws.org/music_calendar

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

- Punctual attendance at rehearsals and services/concerts is vitally important in all choirs. The Choirs cannot perform well unless choir members are well-rehearsed and present for services/concerts.
- Choir members and their families maintain busy schedules and conflicts are inevitable. However, acceptable reasons for missing a rehearsal or service are: illness of a choir member, death or grave illness of a close family member, special school functions, and family trips (please, not too many).
- Have no more than one service absence and one rehearsal absence a month. Prior notice of absences should be given to Dr. Cummins (ext. 259) or Dr. Grice (ext. 261) or the choir member should sign out on the Sign-Out Sheet for his/her choir. Extended absences must be negotiated with the choirmaster in advance. Parents: When a project is due at school, please make sure your chorister works steadily on it and does not miss choir due to last minute catch-up work.
- Choristers who also acolyte must be in the Choir Room for the warm-up from 8:15 – 8:45 am on Sunday mornings.

BEHAVIOR

Choir members are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times.

This includes:

- entering the choir room quietly, getting your materials from your cubby and proceeding to your place before the rehearsal begins.
- no talking during rehearsals. If you are responding to a question or have to ask one, raise your hand.
- listening attentively and following instructions.
- showing respect for leadership and fellow choir members.
- moving to new locations (such as the Chancel) during rehearsals or services in as quiet and orderly a fashion as possible.

REHEARSALS

Tuesday: Boys and Girls (Trebles only)
 4:00 RSCM Training
 4:30 Rehearsal
 5:30 Dismissal

Wednesday: Choristers and Chorale
 5:00 RSCM Training
 5:30 Dinner
 6:00 Rehearsal
 7:30 Dismissal

Sunday, 8:15 preparation for 9:00 am service

Please arrive by 8:10 am in time to be vested and ready to sing by 8:15 am.
(Arriving at the church at 8:15 means you will be late to rehearsal.)

The choirs learn an enormous amount of music each year and so it is essential that every minute be used wisely. In choirs such as ours one must get in the habit of doing the following:

- a. arrive in plenty of time to pick up music, and get a pencil;
- b. use washrooms before rehearsal since no bathroom breaks are scheduled;

- c. bring in a bottle of water with a top if a singer must have water;
- d. be in your place when rehearsal begins;
- e. stay through the entire rehearsal;
- f. refrain from chewing gum at rehearsals, services/performances or on tours; (this means NO gum)
- g. have regular attendance, and be energetically involved throughout the rehearsal;
- h. place music (in library number order) and pencil in your storage box, return storage box, hymnal and folder to your cubby.

This may sound demanding. It is! But choir members who do the above faithfully and regularly are well on their way to becoming well-organized and responsible young people!

CARE OF MUSIC

Music is costly and difficult to replace. Each choir member must assume the responsibility of looking after it very carefully. Markings in the music must be done in pencil. **No doodling/drawing should be done on the music.** Music must be kept neatly in its storage box and in the correct cubby.

If you are absent from a rehearsal or service/performance when music is turned in, it is YOUR responsibility to return it to the table in the rehearsal room after it has been performed.

Each choir member is to take EXCELLENT care of his/her cubby and all its contents. If a chorister abuses his/her materials, he will be asked to pay to replace them.

VESTMENTS

The church provides vestments for all choir members. They are very expensive and hard to replace. Choir members must take care of their assigned vestments. Each chorister will have his/her number in the cassock and cotta, as well as on the hanger. He/she will be expected to hang it up neatly (cotta on top of cassock) in the correct place. Parents are asked to check the vestment occasionally and wash (separately) when necessary.

ATTIRE

Choir members should wear appropriate attire with their vestments, just as certain attire is required for swimming, soccer, baseball, dance, etc.

- Dark full shoes are required for boys and girls.
- No sport shoes are allowed for boys or girls.
- Boys must wear dark socks and long pants with no bare leg showing.
- Low heels are preferred for girls.
- Girls, please no hair bows on the front or side of head and please be conservative with earring selection.

EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

The Choirs at St. Paul's happily acknowledge individual accomplishments in a graded way. **All members are expected to be actively working on RSCM medal/ribbon requirements.** Workshops are regularly scheduled through the week. See rehearsal schedule on website for times. A choir member who participates fully in the choir with good attendance, positive attentiveness, excellent performance, improving musicianship, and completion of RSCM requirements will receive a medal and/or new ribbon.

SAFETY

Please drop off and pick up your chorister at the lower level entrance to the new building for every rehearsal.

SAFETY is our utmost concern. Parents: Please encourage your choir members to wait at the entrance or under the sheltered part of the drive rather than running to find your car.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- **Sunday morning** volunteers supervise vesting rooms, supply extra copies of music and provide supervision in restrooms and sit with probationers during services.
- Helpers serve supper on **Wednesday nights** and provide supervision during supper.
- Parents assist with supervision at **Tuesday and Wednesday rehearsals**. Please sign up in the volunteer notebook.

SOLOS, ENSEMBLES, TEAM LEADERS AND HEAD CHORISTERS

Soloists and members of small ensembles will be chosen according to ability, attitude, punctuality and all other qualities that make a singer a good chorister. There will be an effort made to spread these opportunities among as many people as possible. In essence, choir members are auditioning for solos during group singing in regular rehearsals.

Head choristers are juniors and seniors in high school, who have earned the red ribbon or higher. Attendance, attitude, commitment, ability to put the group ahead of self, reliability, leadership ability, musical ability and RSCM achievement determine who is chosen.

If a chorister is musically talented but shows a wavering of commitment and/or loyalty to the choir, he/she probably will not be chosen for a leadership position. The idea is to have someone who can be of help to the director and model attitudes and rehearsal techniques which the director would like for others to copy. In effect, choristers are auditioning for these positions by their efforts in all that we do together as a choir.

SPECIAL SERVICES AND EVENTS 2011-2012:

September 11	6:00 PM	Evensong
November 6	5:30 PM	Evensong
December 18	5:30 PM	Lessons & Carols
December 24	5:00 PM	Christmas Eve
January 8	5:30 PM	Feast of Lights
February 22	5:30 PM	Ash Wednesday
April 6	12:00 PM	Good Friday
May 20	5:30 PM	Evensong

Call time is 1 ½ hours before service time unless otherwise noted.