

### *Dress and Care of Music*

All choristers wear a royal blue cassock and a white surplice. Surplices should be taken home for washing 3 times a year; before Christmas and Easter, and during the summer holidays. Hangers are provided with names on them, and it also helpful if name tapes can be sewn in the vestments. Choir robes are extremely expensive, so please look after your robes as well as you can. For services, singers should wear dark shoes and ties. Incidentally, a choir sweatshirt is available with the St. Giles' logo; ask for details if you would like one.

Choristers are given a black folder with their name on for their music. Music is very expensive: please take good care of it, because it has to last a long time. Please note if any of your music is beginning to look worn, and draw the Choir Director's attention to this so that it can be mended.

### *Special Events*

Our Patronal Festival is celebrated on the nearest Sunday to September 1<sup>st</sup> - St. Giles' Day. Special music is also sung at Easter and Christmas, and at the service of Nine Lessons and Carols, held on the Sunday before Christmas Day.

### *Commitment*

Choir practice is on Friday evenings from 8.00pm to 9.00pm, and we sing during Sunday Services at 10.30am and 6.30pm. The boys leave the practice at 8.30 pm, so the period from 8 – 8.30 is particularly important for getting the blend of the forthcoming anthems right with the whole choir.

### *Attendance*

Regular rehearsals, teamwork, and commitment encourage everyone to develop personally and artistically in an enthusiastic and caring environment. To achieve this, to build skills and to prepare music necessary for a high level of performance, punctuality and regular attendance are both expected and necessary. Please therefore observe the following attendance guidelines:

- Regular and punctual attendance is expected at all rehearsals and services.
- Absence: Singers are expected to notify the organist in writing or by telephone when they expect to be absent. As much advance notice as possible is appreciated. A chart is provided in the choir vestry for this purpose.
- Where a choir practice has to be missed, singers are expected to make up the work on their own. Music can be borrowed for this purpose.

The following are the maximum acceptable number of absences per term. (Whenever possible, choristers are encouraged to pre-plan their absences to minimise the inconvenience to the rest of the Choir.)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Months</i>	<i>Max. absences</i>
Autumn	(September – December)	2
Spring	(January – April)	3
Summer	(May – July)	2

### *Attendance: Summary*

Practice	Fridays	8 – 9 pm
Services	Sundays (Mattins/Communion)	10.30 am
	(Evensong)	6.30 pm

### *Punctuality*

All the above are start times, not arrival times. Please arrive in good time for the practice/service, to be ready to start at those times. This means 5 minutes before the start of the Friday practice, and by 10.20 and 6.20 for the two Sunday services, in time to get robed and find your music. Punctuality is a courtesy to the Choir Director and to the other members of the choir!

### *Absences from practices and services*

Singers are expected to come to all practices and services. This enables the choir to work efficiently and always sing its best. If your absence is unavoidable, please make sure you sign up in the appropriate space in the chart on the choir notice board in the Choir Vestry. If you are ill, or an absence is suddenly necessary, please inform the Choir Director (01865 310686). If you forgot or were unable to call, please contact us the next day. This is both a courtesy and an aid to the efficient running of the choir.

### *Holidays*

These coincide approximately with school holidays, as follows:

Summer: The choir breaks up towards the end of July, and has August off

Christmas/Easter: The Fridays and Sundays after these two major festivals, and usually the week after that, are also choir holidays.

Please make every effort to ensure that you are available for the Christmas and Easter services, and to try to take your own holidays during the choir holidays.

*And finally*

## THE FIVE VIRTUES OF CHORISTERS

I. **COURTESY:** The most important virtue of a chorister is courtesy toward God, that is, reverence. Choristers express their reverence by careful preparation for worship, which the choir assists in leading (not only in music but also in spoken responses, prayer, and silence).

II. **DEPENDABILITY:** You are important. A chorister is someone who can be counted on. The tradition at St Giles' rests on faithful, regular leadership of worship Sunday by Sunday. This needs equally faithful practice. It is impossible to plan ahead if we do not know who is going to be there. Please therefore be on time for rehearsal and services.

III. **SILENCE:** A choir must learn to be quiet before it can fill that quiet with beautiful music. Whenever you hear music, whether from the organ or voices, try to be still and listen to it.

IV. **ATTENTION:** Cultivate the habit of concentrating, that is, applying as much of your brain as possible to the task in hand. Remember that good posture helps the mind as well as the body. Hold your music properly so that you can look at the conductor and are not singing into the floor.

V. **BEAUTIFUL SINGING:** which goes without saying!

### A DAILY PRAYER FOR CHORISTERS

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.

## GUIDELINES FOR CHOIRMEN



**St Giles' Church Choir, Oxford**

### *Background*

St. Giles' Church dates back to 1086. At that time it was outside Oxford's city boundaries (then represented by St. Michael at the North Gate), as is normal with churches dedicated to this patron saint of outcasts and beggars.

### *Choir*

Apart from some College choirs, St. Giles' is now the only church in Oxford to continue the tradition of an all-male choir.

### *Repertoire*

The choir usually sings two anthems at the Sunday services, selected from a repertoire including works by such composers as Palestrina, Byrd, Tallis, Gibbons, Bach, Scarlatti, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Stanford, Britten, Vaughan Williams and Howells.