Christ Church Cathedral Oxford

Notes for Visiting Choirs

revised 2018
Notes for Visiting Choirs

1. Introduction
We are very pleased to welcome visiting Choirs to sing the services at Christ Church. These notes are intended to help visiting Choirs and their directors plan their visit to Christ Church, select appropriate music for the services, and anticipate the particular character of worship in Oxford’s Cathedral.

2. General Notes

   a. Accommodation
Whilst Christ Church Cathedral is unable to arrange or pay for accommodation in Oxford, Christ Church College may be able to accommodate visiting Choirs. The charge made for bed and breakfast accommodation is very reasonable (around £50 per person, per night), especially compared with the market rates at guest houses that might be some distance away from the Cathedral. Alternatively, the College owns the Liddell Building, on Iffley Road (just over Magdalen Bridge from the High Street). This provides a number of three- and four-bedroom self-catering flats. Early booking is essential as the College is almost always full out of term time with conferences. Directors of Music should contact the Conferences Manager

       Joanna Malton
       Christ Church
       OXFORD OX1 1DP
       Tel: 01865 276174 (+44 1865 276174 from overseas)
       Email: conferences@chch.ox.ac.uk
The Oxford Visitor Information Centre can give accommodation lists:

Oxford Visitor Information Centre
15–16 Broad Street
Oxford, Oxfordshire OX1 3AS

Tel: 01865 686430 (+44 1865 686430 from overseas)
www.experienceoxfordshire.org

Alternatively, Oxford Rooms.co.uk offers bed and breakfast accommodation in Oxford colleges:

www.oxfordrooms.co.uk

b. Parking
Parking in Oxford is very difficult, and Christ Church can offer very little space. It is usually best to avoid bringing private vehicles into the town centre. If this cannot be avoided, then the nearest public parking Oxpens car park. Cheaper parking can be had using the excellent park and ride scheme, with frequent buses to the town centre. If travelling by coach, then the coach is able to drop off at the Norfolk Street coach stop.

For Oxford City Council advice on travelling into the city, see:

www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20012/parking_and_travel

c. Entrance to the Cathedral
Entrance to the College and Cathedral is through the Meadow Gate or Tom Gate (see enclosed map). In either case you will need to explain to the custodians that you are members of the visiting Choir. Name badges are available on arrival.
d. **Cathedral Time**

By long custom, the Cathedral keeps local time. Services start five minutes “late”. Processions for services should set off from the south transept at “three minutes past”, so that the service may begin exactly at “five minutes past” the advertised hour. However, to avoid confusion, in this document all timings are according to “standard time”.


e. **Organists**

Unless arranged otherwise, visiting Choirs are expected to provide their own organist. The Cathedral is not usually able to book organists in the summer months, especially at short notice. If it is likely (or even unlikely) that a visiting Choir will lose their organist between arranging to come to Christ Church and their residency, then we ask the Choir to have an unaccompanied repertoire that can be sung at short notice. We are happier to announce a change in music in a service than to attempt to arrange an organist dep. Organists are expected to play from 8 minutes before the service, and to play a voluntary afterwards.

_The following notes on the organ are contributed by David Goode, former Sub-Organist:_

_We hope you enjoy playing our fine Rieger organ. Please treat it carefully, in particular the very sensitive action. During the day, we ask you to restrain your practice to flutes only. Should you urgently need more volume (for example, before a Choir practice) please check with a verger. They may also be able to arrange evening practice._

_The organ is very loud in the building. For hymns and choral accompaniment, the maximum needed is:_

\[
\text{Gt. 16 8 8 4 4 (2) Ch. 8 8 4 4 (2) Full Sw. Ped. 16 16 8 8 4}
\]

_with perhaps the Gt. VI Fourniture or Ped. 16 Reed for a large congregation._

_Please avoid Full Organ even in voluntaries. Broadly speaking, if you cannot hear the Choir, you are accompanying too loud. You can often use more Swell than you think, but less of everything else!_
f. Dress
It is the custom in Christ Church for Choirs and directors of music to dress in “Choir dress”, that is, cassock and surplice, without academic hoods. Visiting Choirs are welcome to use their own custom if they wish.

g. Cantors
One of the cathedral clergy will always “officiate” at Choral Matins and Choral Evensong, leading all the spoken parts of the service. Some will also cantor the Preces and Responses, but not all, and therefore on some occasions a Choir will need to provide its own cantor. Details of the officiant will be communicated at least a month in advance; where the member of clergy is going to cantor the service please inform them of the setting as soon as possible.

h. Calendar
The Cathedral uses the Common Worship calendar, with a few local variations. Sundays follow the Church of England Common Worship Lectionary and readings and psalms are taken from this lectionary, or a special Matins lectionary. The readings at weekday evensongs mostly follow the new ‘Pillar Lectionary’. The collects for Matins and Evensong are taken from the Book of Common Prayer. The Liturgy Office will provide a list of feasts, commemorations, readings and psalmody for your visit.

i. Psalter
At Evensong on weekdays, the psalm(s) for the day, according to the rules of the Book of Common Prayer, are sung. Sometimes these psalms are superseded by the proper psalms for Feast Days, and certain days when Commemorative Evensongs may be kept. Psalm 109, on the twenty-second evening is omitted. The Psalms for the 30th and 31st evenings may be spilt 147–148 and 149–150. See the enclosed almanac.
Where a Director of Music feels that the psalmody appointed for the evening is too long, they are welcome to discuss abridging it with the Diocesan Canon Precentor.

On Sundays, the psalms from the Church of England *Common Worship* lectionaries or the Christ Church Matins lectionary are used. Where there is a choice of psalms, or any uncertainty, the Liturgy Office chooses the appropriate psalm, and will inform the Choir.

**j. Choice of Music**

It is important that the music sung in Christ Church should be worthy of the worship of God. It should be sung well, chosen thoughtfully in accordance with the liturgical season, and fit the length of the service (Choral Evensong should usually finish by 7pm at the latest).

Please send details of all proposed music to the Liturgy Office in good time, for approval by either the Diocesan Canon Precentor (Grant Bayliss) or the Succentor (Philippa White).

The Liturgy Office should be informed of the choice of music six weeks before the engagement (for summer residencies, it should be informed by mid–June). This will enable the Cathedral both to incorporate the choices in our published music lists, and to make any suggested alterations.

**k. Hymns**

The Liturgy Office makes the choice of hymns, generally taken from *Common Praise* (2000). The choice of hymns is published in the Cathedral’s music list, and will include verse omissions and alternative tunes. The detailed descriptions of the services below show where and when hymns are sung in the services, but as a rule of thumb: Weekday evensongs: 1 hymn at the beginning of the service; Midweek eucharists: 1 hymn (at offertory); Saturday evensongs: 2 hymns (at beginning and before the blessing); Sunday matins: 2 hymns (after
collects, and after the sermon); Sunday eucharists: 3 hymns (introit, offertory, after the blessing); Sunday evensongs: 2 hymns (at the beginning, after the blessing). The play over of each hymn should cover at least 4 lines of text: many of our congregations are visitors, who may take some time to find their place.

3. Weekday Choral Evensong — 6.05 pm

Evensong is sung (almost) daily at Christ Church and follows the pattern in the *Book of Common Prayer* (1662). The only exceptions are Mondays out of term, and Thursdays, when, a Choral Eucharist is celebrated at 6.05 pm. However, visiting Choirs are most welcome to sing on Mondays when the Christ Church Choirs are out of residence. The service should be over by 7pm at the latest.

a. Rehearsal
The Cathedral is closed from 5pm (last entry 4.45 pm) to enable undisturbed rehearsal. If your Choir requires more time than that, it is possible with prior notice to rehearse earlier in the afternoon, with the central area roped off and the Cathedral remaining open to visitors.

b. After Rehearsal
The Priory Room can be reserved by visiting Choirs for robing, refreshments and the secure storage of belongings.

c. Outline of Service
The organist begins playing by 5.57 pm. The Choir assembles in the south transept by 6.02 pm. The Officiating Minister leads a vestry prayer. The Choir then processes into the Choir stalls via the south aisle and under the organ loft.
On entering the Choir stalls from the west end remain facing east and bow with the Officiant and conductor. The organist concludes playing when the Chapter have all entered their stalls (follow their movements on the CCTV). The Officiant welcomes the congregation and announces the **Opening Hymn**. After the hymn, the organist gives a cue note to the Officiant or cantor for the Opening Versicles and Responses.

Remain standing for the **Opening Versicles and Responses** (the congregation remains standing).

**The Psalm(s)** are announced by the Officiant, and the congregation is invited to sit. The congregation is not expected to join in the singing of the psalm.

**First reading** (Choir sits). At the end of the first reading, the Choir stands for:

**The Magnificat** (not announced).

**Second reading** (Choir sits). At the end of the second reading, the Choir stands for:

**The Nunc Dimittis** (not announced).

Remain standing and face east to say the **Apostles’ Creed** (begun by the Officiant).

**Lesser Litany** (The congregation kneels after “And with thy spirit”.) The organist gives a cue note for the Officiant or cantor.

**Preces and Responses.**
Three Collects, including the Collect of the Day (sung by the Officiant or cantor to a single note) — four collects in Advent and Lent.

Anthem (usually announced).

Prayers (led by the Canon in Residence, usually concluding with the Grace).

At the end, stand with the Officiant. The organist begins playing and the Choir faces east and bows with the conductor and Officiant. They turn and process out of the stalls from the west end back to south transept.

Line up in south transept for vestry prayer.

It is Christ Church custom to sing introits or closing motets on major feast days only. These should be explicitly agreed with the Diocesan Canon Precentor in advance.

4. Saturday Choral Evensong — 6.05 pm

The service follows the pattern for Evensong on Weekdays until the final prayers. These are followed by a second hymn and a blessing from the high altar. The Choir then processes out as on weekdays.
5. **Weekday Choral Eucharist (Thursdays) — 6.05 pm**

The service follows the pattern in *Common Worship* (Order One, in contemporary language).

**a. Rehearsal**

The cathedral is closed from 5pm (last entry 4.45 pm) to enable undisturbed rehearsal. If your Choir requires more time than that, it is possible to rehearse earlier in the afternoon, with the central area roped off and the cathedral remaining open to visitors.

**b. Outline of Service**

The Service follows broadly the books *The Sung Eucharist*.

The organist begins to play by 5.57 pm. The Choir assembles in the south transept by 6.02 pm. The president leads a vestry prayer. The Choir then processes into the Choir stalls via the south aisle and under the organ loft.

On entering the Choir stalls from the west end remain facing east and bow with the conductor.

The president begins the service from the chancel step.

The Choir sings *Kyries*, *Gloria* (except, usually in Lent or Advent), *Sanctus*, *Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei*. The *Creed* is usually omitted but will be said on principal Festival days. An offertory hymn is announced and sung. The Choir sings the *Agnus Dei* immediately after the invitation to communion. A communion anthem is sung after the Choir have received.

After the Blessing and Dismissal the organist begins to play as the Choir returns to the south transept for the vestry prayer.

6. **Sunday Choral Matins — 9.50 am**
The service follows an abbreviated version of that in the Book of Common Prayer (1662). The congregation follows the service as printed, beginning at the Opening Versicles and Responses. Directors of Music should be aware of the pressure of time on Sunday Matins. The service must finish by 10.45 am, and to allow time for the sermon and prayers the sung portion of the service should finish by 10.20 am / 10.25 am. It is usually better to sing one canticle to a polyphonic setting, and the other to a simple chant.

a. Rehearsal

The Song Room is available from 8.45 am for rehearsal.

b. After Rehearsal

The Priory Room is used for coffee between Matins and the Sung Eucharist, and so it is better for belongings to be left in the Song Room.

c. Outline of Service

The organist begins to play by 9.42 am. The Choir assembles in the south transept by 9.47 am. The Officiant leads a vestry prayer. The Choir then processes into the Choir stalls via the south aisle and under the organ loft.

On entering the Choir stalls from the west end remain facing east and bow with the conductor. The organist concludes playing when the Chapter have all entered their stalls (follow their movements on the CCTV).

The Officiant reads a sentence from scripture, then the organist gives a cue note for the Officiant or cantor.
Remain standing for the **Opening Versicles and Responses** (the congregation remains standing).

**The Venite** (or **Easter Anthems** during Eastertide) is usually sung by Choir and congregation together to Anglican Chant, which the Liturgy Office will provide.

The Officiant welcomes the congregation.

**The Psalm** is announced by the Officiant. The congregation sits and is not expected to join in the singing of the psalm.

**First reading** (Choir sits). At the end of the first reading, the Choir stands for:

**Te Deum** (or **Benedicite** during Advent, **Psalm 51** during Lent): not announced, and usually sung to a canticle setting.

**Second reading** (Choir sits). At the end of the second reading, the Choir stands for:

**The Jubilate** (or **Benedictus** where requested by the Liturgy Office) is not announced, and is usually sung to chant if the **Te Deum** or **Benedicite** has been sung to a setting.

Remain standing and face east to say **the Apostles' Creed** (begun by the Officiant).

**Lesser Litany** (The congregation kneels after “And with thy spirit”.) The organist gives a cue note for the Officiant or cantor.

**Preces and Responses.**
Three Collects, including the Collect of the Day (sung by Precentor) – four collects in Advent and Lent.

NB. There is NO anthem sung at Matins.

Second Hymn (announced)

Sermon

Third Hymn (announced)

Prayers (led by the Canon in Residence or the Dean, usually concluding with the Grace).

At the end, stand with the Officiant. The organist begins playing. The Choir faces east and bows with the conductor. Turn and process out of the stalls from the west end back to the south transept.

Line up in the south transept for the vestry prayer.

Due to time pressures neither an introit nor closing motets are sung at Matins.
7. **Sunday Choral Eucharist — 11.05 am**

The service follows the pattern from *Common Worship* (Order 1 – contemporary language).

The Choir sings *Kyries, Gloria* (omitted in Advent and Lent), *Sanctus, Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei*. The *Creed* is said. The ordinary of the mass is usually sung in Latin (Greek for the Kyries, of course), although it may, on occasion, be sung in English.

**a. Rehearsal**

If the Choir is singing Matins as well, then rehearsal for the Choral Eucharist should be had at the same time as the rehearsal for Matins. There is usually only enough time between the end of Matins and the beginning of the Eucharist to drink a quick cup of tea. Do not count on being able to rehearse anything at that point!

If the Choir is not singing Matins, the Song Room is usually available for rehearsal from 9.00 am. As the Priory Room is used for refreshments between Matins and the Eucharist, belongings should be kept in the Song Room.

**b. Outline of Service**

Silence is kept before the service. The Deacon welcomes the congregation at about 11.00 am and then returns to the south transept where the Choir assembles and leads them in a vestry prayer at 11.02 am. The organist then improvises as the Choir processes into the Choir stalls via the south aisle and under the organ loft.

On entering the Choir stalls from the west end, remain facing east and bow with the conductor.
The organist leads straight into the playover for the first hymn as soon as the Choir are in place.

During the singing of the first hymn, the servers, chapter and altar party enter the cathedral.

The Choir remains standing when the congregation kneels for the Prayers of Penitence. The Kyries precede the Absolution. Following the Absolution, the congregation stands with the Choir and a choir cantor begins Gloria in Excelsis Deo.

There are two readings before the Gospel. After the First Reading, the Choir sings the Psalm appointed for the day (this may be to Anglican chant, plainchant, or responsorially by cantor and Choir). After the Second Reading, the Choir sings an Alleluia response (or, in Lent, a short motet related to the readings).

After the Gospel is concluded, the organist plays a “Gospel Fanfare”, which should match the tone of the reading, until the altar party returns to the sanctuary. The organist concludes playing when the preacher reaches the crossing lectern.

After the Sermon a period of silence is kept and the Choir stands with the President to say the Creed. The Choir kneels for the Intercessions and stands for the Peace.

After the Peace, the Deacon announces the Offertory Hymn.

The Sursum Corda may or may not be sung, according to the preference of the President. The Director of Music should check with the vergers.
The Choir sings **Sanctus** and **Benedictus** immediately following the preface. (If the **Benedictus** is particularly long it may be sung as a communion anthem in addition to the **Agnus Dei** or omitted entirely. The Director of Music should consult with the President before the service).

After the **Invitation to Communion**, the Choir sings **Agnus Dei**, during which the altar party and congregation begin to receive communion. After the **Agnus Dei** is over, the Choir receives communion and then sings a motet. The organist should play quietly for the remainder of communion, stopping when he sees the president returned to the centre of the altar.

Immediately following the **Post Communion Prayer**, the Deacon announces the **Final Hymn**. At the end of the hymn, the President gives the **Blessing** and the Deacon the **Dismissal** from the sanctuary. The organist begins the **Voluntary** immediately.

The Choir processes out of their stalls, before the altar party, and returns to the south transept for the vestry prayer.
8. **Sunday Choral Evensong — 6.05 pm**

The service largely follows the pattern for Choral Evensong on weekdays, with three main differences:

**a.** After the first hymn the Officiant leads a confession and absolution before continuing with the Opening Vesicles and Responses (the organist should give a cue note to the Officiant or cantor).

**b.** Shorter psalmody (from the Common Worship Second Service Lectionary) is used.

**c.** After the prayers there is a second hymn and blessing (as on Saturdays).
Plan of Christ Church
Liturgy Office Contact Details:

From June 2018, the primary email contact for all visiting choirs will be: visitingchoirs@chch.ox.ac.uk

Liturgy Office 01865 276214 (or from overseas +44 1865 276214)
Vergers’ Office 01865 276154 (or from overseas +44 1865 276154)

Diocesan Canon Precentor
(Chapter member with overall responsibility for worship in the Cathedral)
Revd Canon Dr Grant Bayliss grant.bayliss@chch.ox.ac.uk

Succentor (from September 2018)
Revd Philippa White philippa.white@chch.ox.ac.uk