WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

BOY CHORISTER PROGRAM

2025
—
2026

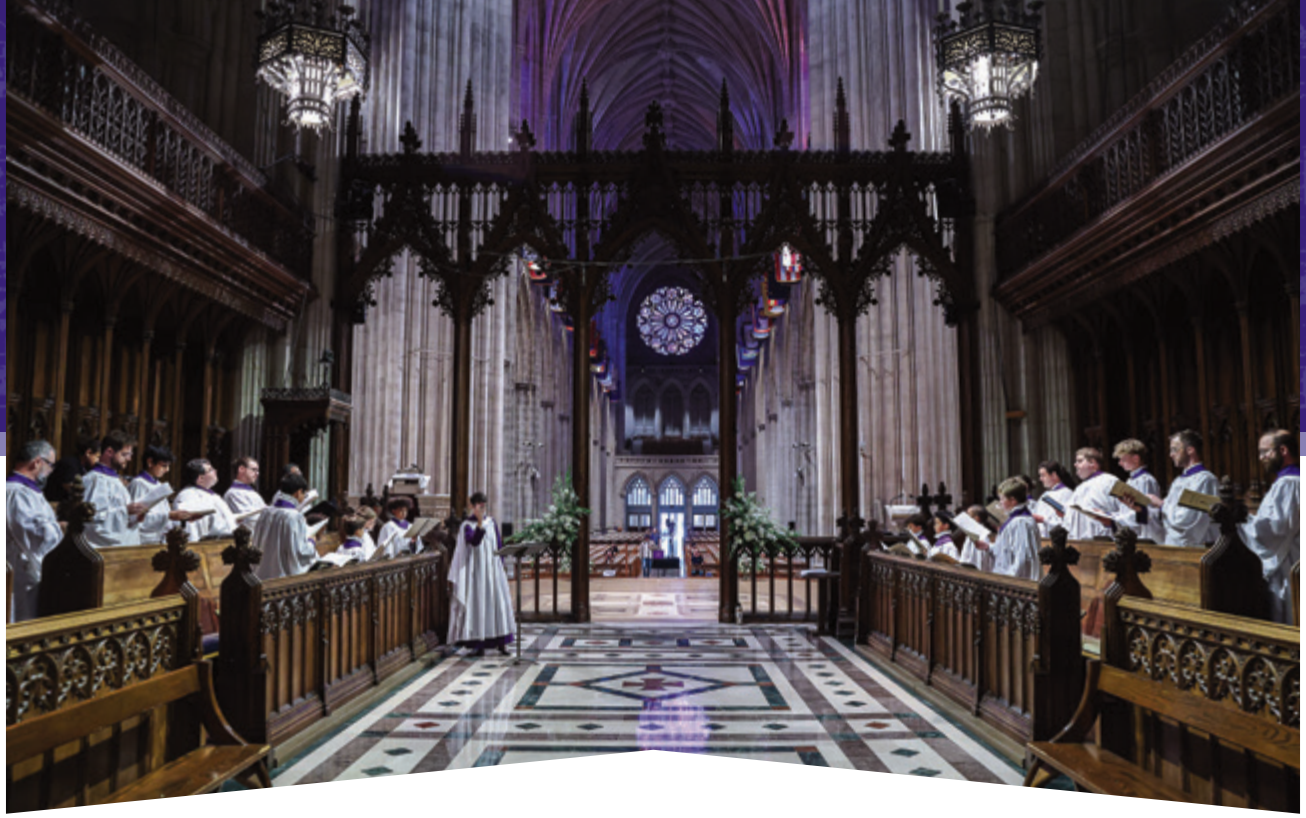
From the Director of the Cathedral Chorister Program

Our magnificent National Cathedral has been the musical home to over a century of choristers. We are proud to continue one of the oldest boy chorister programs in the country, as well as the very first girl chorister program in the United States. The National Cathedral chorister program honors the English choral tradition out of which it grew, while establishing a uniquely American identity.

The choristers inspire me every day with their passion for singing, dedication to the Cathedral, and eagerness to learn. In the chorister program, boys and girls develop the skills to sing for presidents, while never losing the fun and collaborative atmosphere that is imperative in primary and secondary music education.

Few things can move us, inspire us, and bring us together like music; my hope is that choristers will continue to inspire as well as *be inspired* in this building for centuries to come.

Julie DeBoer
Associate Director of Music and Chorister Program Director



The Cathedral Choir

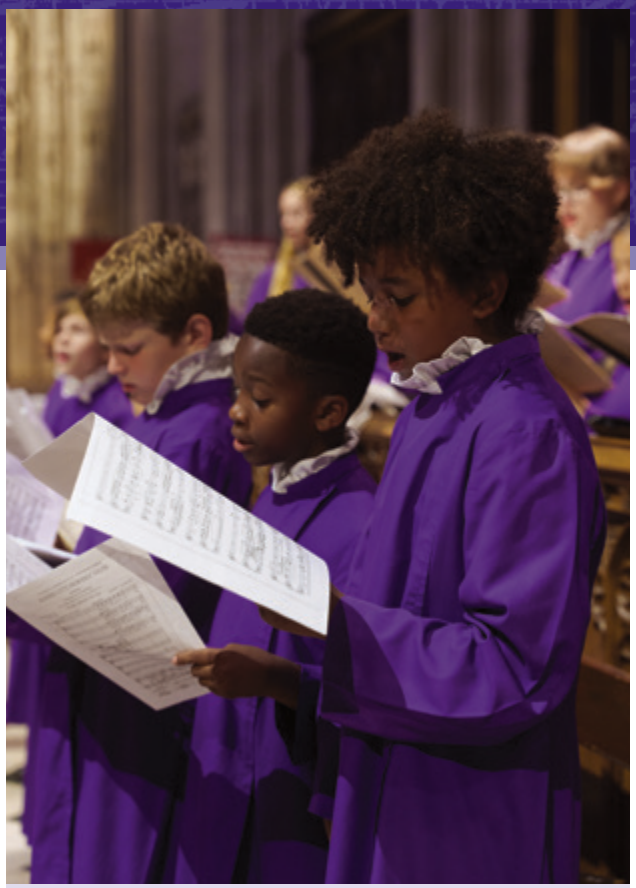
The mission of the choirs is to offer, at the highest standard possible, praises to God through leadership in music and liturgy.

The History

Founded in 1909 as the Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys, and subsequently expanded in 1997 to include the first Girls Cathedral Choir in the nation, the Cathedral Choir is among the few such ensembles in the United States with an affiliated school in the English tradition. The boy trebles, ages 8-14, attend St. Albans School for Boys; the girl trebles, ages 11-18, attend National Cathedral School for Girls. The choristers join nine professional singers to form the Cathedral Choir, leading the music liturgy in Weekday Evensong and Sunday services.

The Cathedral Choir has been featured in services of national and ecumenical importance such as Presidential inaugural prayer services, funeral and memorial services for Queen Elizabeth II, Senator John McCain, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, former Secretaries of State Madeleine Albright and Colin Powell, astronaut Neil Armstrong, Nelson Mandela, the state funeral for President George H.W. Bush, the installation of the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of the United States, the 9/11 prayer service, and the state funeral for President Jimmy Carter.

Recent international concert tours have taken the choirs to Cathedrals along the Camino de Santiago in Spain and Portugal as well as Ely, Worchester, Lincoln, and St. Paul's Cathedrals and King's College, Cambridge in the United Kingdom. The choirs have recorded numerous albums, including *Centennial Celebration, Hear the Christmas Angels,* and *Handel's Messiah*.

BECOMING A CHORISTER

The Novice Program

The Novice Program is a training course in which aspiring choristers develop their singing technique and musicianship while learning what it's like to be a chorister. The Novice Program allows Cathedral music staff to get to know prospective choristers and assess their progress over several weeks rather than during a one-time audition. At the end of the Novice Program a select number of boys are awarded positions in the Cathedral Chorister Program. Admission to the Chorister Program is contingent upon admission to St. Albans School.

Timeline and Schedule

- **NOVICE PROGRAM SCHEDULE**
  Classes take place at the Cathedral on Tuesdays in January and February from 3:30pm-5:00pm

- **INCOMING CHORISTER SCHEDULE**
  Boys who are awarded positions in the Chorister Program will continue their training after spring break with classes and services on Tuesdays from 3:45pm-5:00pm, working toward their official installation as choristers during Valediction Evensong on May 21, 2026 at 5:00pm

The Novice Program is open to 3rd grade boys who love singing and are applying to St. Albans.

Interested families should contact Chorister Program Director, Julie DeBoer at ***jdeboer@cathedral.org***.

CHORISTER SCHEDULE

Time Commitment

Choristers commit a significant amount of time to music education, rehearsals and performances throughout the year, including some holidays. With this considerable time commitment comes a unique experience, an excellent music education, and the opportunity to sing for events of National importance.

Choir Camp

Incoming choristers are required to attend a week-long camp in August in Richmond, Va. Camp includes working on new music for the coming year, a community concert, a fun field trip, and a focus on getting to know new choristers.

Chorister Levels

Students who complete the Novice Program will become choristers based on their incoming grade level.

Boys C and B forms — **JUNIOR CHORISTER**

Boys form A, forms I & II — **SENIOR CHORISTER**

Schedule

REHEARSALS AND SERVICES (SEPTEMBER–MAY)	
Mon & Wed 7:10–7:55 am	Rehearsal
Tues 3:30–5:30 pm	Recess/Study Hall & Rehearsal
Thurs 4:10–5:45 pm	Rehearsal & Evensong
Every other Sunday 2:45–5 pm	Rehearsal & Evensong
One Sunday per month 9:30–12:45 pm	Rehearsal & Eucharist

HOLIDAY PERFORMANCES		
JUNIORS	**SENIORS**	
	✓	*Messiah*
	✓	Christmas Eve
✓	✓	Presidents Day Weekend
✓	✓	Maundy Thursday
	✓	Palm Sunday
✓	✓	Easter

CHORISTER LIFE

CHORAL STIPEND

To recognize the significant time commitment made by choristers, the Cathedral offers a tuition stipend per school year.

CHORAL STIPEND (2024–2025 ACADEMIC YEAR)	
JR. CHORISTER *BOYS C AND B FORMS*	**$6,000**
SR. CHORISTER *BOYS FORM A, FORMS I AND II*	**$8,000**

School Credit

Choristers receive school credit for being part of a Cathedral Choir and are assigned letter grades based on their performance and growth in the choir. Being a chorister adds great weight to applications for education beyond high school.

Benefits for Life

Cathedral choristers build lasting memories and essential life skills like time management, leadership and cooperation. The choirs play an important role in the life of both the Cathedral and their school. To become a Cathedral chorister is an extraordinary opportunity found at few other schools in the nation.

Unique Enrichment

- Professional-level musical training
- National & international recognition
- Senior recitals
- College audition preparation
- Leadership development

Professional Music Training

Built into the rehearsal schedule, senior choristers receive individual voice lessons, at no additional cost, with professional voice teachers. Junior Choristers receive regular musicianship classes that further enhance and prepare their aural, vocal, theory, and keyboard skills for their time as Senior Choristers.

PER WEEK

JUNIOR CHORISTERS

- 6 hours of choral training
- 3.5 hours of performance
- 15 minutes of individual vocal instruction
- 60 minutes of music theory

SENIOR CHORISTERS

- 6 hours of choral training
- 3.5 hours of performance
- 30 minutes of individual vocal instruction

LEARN MORE

For additional information, visit us online at **cathedral.org/chorister**

CONTACT

If you have questions, please contact **Julie DeBoer** the chorister program director, at **(202) 537-5730** or ***jdeboer@cathedral.org***.

> *"The years that I spent in the Cathedral Choir were a highlight in my life and left me with memories that endure to this day. I always felt special being a Cathedral chorister — I still feel special having been one."*
>
> —FORMER CHORISTER

MEET THE MUSIC FACULTY

Julie DeBoer - Chorister Program Director, Associate Director of Music

Julie DeBoer oversees the education and training of the Cathedral Choristers. Ms. DeBoer directs rehearsals and services, liaises with the schools, teaches musicianship, and recruits for the program. Prior to her appointment at the Cathedral, Ms. DeBoer taught voice and choir for seven years at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. During that time, she also served as Choir Director at Grace Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, and has served on the music staff at a number of churches and Cathedrals.

Ed Hewes - Cathedral Organist, Associate Director of Music

Ed Hewes serves as the primary organist at the Cathedral and oversees the organ program. In his capacity as Associate Director of Music, he directs rehearsals and services, with a primary focus on the Girl Chorister Program, and supports the education and training of choristers. Mr. Hewes grew up as a chorister at Lincoln Cathedral in the UK, where he sang from age 7-13. He has previously held positions at Canterbury and Southwark Cathedrals, and outside of the Cathedral he maintains an active schedule as a choral conductor and organist, frequently performing in New York City.

Laura Stuart - Head of Vocal Studies

Laura Stuart oversees the vocal technique of all choristers. Ms. Stuart teaches voice lessons to Senior Choristers, preparing them for recitals throughout the year, and works with Junior Choristers to establish healthy vocal technique and an understanding of their instruments. Ms. Stuart is an accomplished soloist and ensemble singer, and she is frequently featured in Cathedral Concerts such as Handel's *Messiah*.

Michele Fowlin - Associate Director of Music,
Director of Contemporary Ensemble

Michele Fowlin directs the Contemporary Ensemble at the Cathedral. Ms. Fowlin works with Choristers on contemporary repertoire and technique both at choir camp and occasionally throughout the year. Outside of the Cathedral, Ms. Fowlin serves as the Artistic Director for the Washington Performing Arts Children of the Gospel Choir and is an active recitalist.

Patrick Keyser - Priest Associate

Patrick Keyser serves as the chaplain for the choristers, leading worship services at choir camp and holding weekly check-ins with both the boys and girls during the program year. Rev. Keyser serves in the Worship Department and frequently sings as a cantor for Evensong with the choristers.

Ariana Corbin - Organ Scholar

Ariana Corbin joins the Cathedral music program in a two-year position as organ scholar. Ms. Corbin will play for Cathedral services, accompany chorister recitals, and serve as a vocal coach in preparing choristers for solo opportunities. She recently completed her coursework for a Ph.D. in organ studies at Florida State University.

Caroline Nielson - Voice Instructor and Staff Singer

Caroline Nielson serves as a voice instructor at the Cathedral as well as a professional alto in the Cathedral Choir. Ms. Nielson teaches individual singing lessons to a number of choristers. Outside of the Cathedral, Ms. Nielson sings as a professional alto in the United States Army Chorus.

MEET THE MUSIC FACULTY

CONTINUED

Jason Widney - Voice Instructor and Staff Singer

Jason Widney is the primary teacher for the Choral Apprentices—the older boys in the program whose voices have changed. Mr. Widney also serves as a voice teacher for a number of choristers and sings as a professional bass in the Cathedral Choir. Outside of the Cathedral, Mr. Widney is an active ensemble singer and soloist and teaches voice at Towson University and UMBC.

Joseph Hubbard - Music Librarian, Voice Instructor, and Staff Singer

Joseph Hubbard is a professional bass in the Cathedral Choir as well as the music librarian. Mr. Hubbard purchases, organizes, and distributes music; he also supervises choristers in their third year who assist with music library duties. Additionally, Mr. Hubbard serves as a voice teacher with a number of choristers. Outside of the Cathedral, Mr. Hubbard performs as a soloist and ensemble singer across the country and internationally.

Staff Singers

The professional singers of the Cathedral Choir lead the music liturgy in six services per week. Known as lay clerks or vicars choral in the English tradition, this group of nine resident singers is comprised of some of the most accomplished musicians in the country. They regularly perform with ensembles such as Conspirare, Artefact Ensemble, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, The Clarion Choir, Seraphic Fire, Washington Bach Consort, and Washington National Opera, among many others.

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