St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church

Director of Music and Organist

Position Profile
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND ORGANIST

Our mission is to spread God’s love by actively following Jesus’ example for our lives through our journey of faith by radical hospitality and celebrating God through worship and music. We pursue social justice, peace and care for each other and our neighbors, near and far.

St. Margaret’s is a welcoming and vibrant Episcopal Church in Palm Desert, CA, and is well known throughout the Coachella Valley for high quality music. We seek a full-time Director of Music and Organist who will bring gifts of creativity, faithfulness, an entrepreneurial spirit, and joy to our parish life as we strengthen and expand our music and arts ministry. The Director of Music and Organist is central to our shared ministry and life together.

OUR CHOIR

The foundation of our music ministry is our highly dedicated adult choir with close to thirty volunteer members, as well as paid section leaders. Our choir is a spiritual community which prays together and shares one another’s joys and sorrows in a culture of caring.

The choir sings at the 10 a.m. service, (September through June) on holy days, and other occasions such as Evensong Services, and Lessons and Carols. In the past we have had a smaller select group from within the choir, the Chamber Singers, who sang music more suited to a small ensemble. Prior to Covid, we offered a monthly sung Compline service led by a member of our choir with approximately 8 select singers.
OUR ORGAN

Dedicated in 1998, the St. Margaret’s organ is Opus 50 of the Quimby Pipe Organ Company of Warrensburg, Missouri. It is a 4 manual and pedal instrument comprised of 58 Stops, 71 Ranks, and 4,291 Pipes. In addition to the new pipe work, a number of beautiful color stops built by Ernest M. Skinner have been incorporated. Additionally, Walker Technical Company of Zionsville, PA installed 20 digital stops (18 ranks plus Harp and Chimes) to provide more support for congregational singing in the rear of the nave and the balcony.

One of the great joys for our congregation, and the broader musical community, over the past twenty years is the phenomenal musicianship of renowned organist Fred Swann, our Artist in Residence.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday worship is the foundation of who we are as the Body of Christ at St. Margaret’s. We celebrate two Eucharists each Sunday at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends, we worship together at one 9 a.m. service. Our 8 a.m. attendance ranges from 45 to 90 and we welcome between 200 and 350 at our 10 a.m. service. Minimal music is offered at the 8 a.m. service.

DEsert FRIENDS OF MUSIC

The Music Director leads this all-volunteer group which presents high quality music programming for the desert community with an emphasis on choral and organ performances. For nineteen seasons DFOM has sponsored public concerts in the church’s sanctuary including The Vienna Choir Boys, Canterbury Cathedral Choir, Chanticleer (multiple times), The Queen’s Six, and The American Boychoir. World-renowned organists including Fred Swann, Ken Cowan, Nathan Laube, James O’Donnell, Christopher Houlihan, Thomas Trotter, Simon Johnson, Isabelle Demers, Monica Czausz and Jan Kraybill. Our own tradition of Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas is produced by DFOM and is a highlight of the holiday season.

In addition, DFOM sponsors 30-minute Organ Recitals during Lent with lunch following. This free offering to the community attracted over 100 people each Friday during the past season.
THE FUTURE

Our Strategic Plan calls for the creation of a new alternative worship service to attract newcomers from the broader community. We see this as an important opportunity for the new Music Director to help us explore and expand our vision of worship.

Starting in 2023, St. Margaret’s is launching two important initiatives: a Choral Scholars Program and an Organ Scholars Program. They are designed to attract young musicians to our worship and music ministry. Our scholars will be paid a stipend for their musical education and development. Two members of our congregation have committed $20,000 per year for 5 years to support this important musical expansion.

Our new Music Director will help us to creatively expand the reach of our music ministry to new audiences.

OUR DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND ORGANIST WILL

- Work creatively with the rector in liturgical and music planning
- Be the primary organist and choir director, leading all musical aspects of 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Sunday worship, and other services, as required
- Direct the choirs with a pastoral, faithful, optimistic vision. Build relationships in the parish and the wider community to attract new choir members
- Direct music at the 9 a.m. summer service
- Manage the Choral and Organ Scholars Program
- Encourage the congregation to joyfully sing both traditional Anglican music and sacred music from other traditions
- Work with our Communication Director to produce worship bulletins, communications, and marketing materials
- Actively participate in a weekly staff meeting
- Hire musicians (strings, brass, harp, flute, etc.) for special Sundays. Audition and hire section leaders for the choir as needed
- Serve as the primary musician of the parish with first right of refusal for weddings and funerals. An extra stipend is paid for these services. Arrange a substitute to play for these services when unavailable
- Maintain excellence in traditional Anglican choral music and hymnody, while incorporating the best of other sacred music traditions, such as African American Spirituals, Global music, and contemporary composers
- Experiment with different musical styles and instrumentation
- Work with staff and lay leaders to renew and reimagine ways our music can serve as outreach and engagement to the broader community, such as adult care facilities, Greater Palm Springs PRIDE, etc...
- Identify ways to encourage more robust congregational singing
- Oversee all use and maintenance of our organ and pianos
- Abide by all policies of St. Margaret’s and the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego
OUR DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND ORGANIST WILL BE

- A person of faith
- An accomplished and creative organist and choir director who will challenge us to grow, deepen, and take creative risks
- A creative collaborator, who values communication and is digitally adept and highly organized
- Extensive experienced with organ performance, liturgy, music ministry, and sacred music
- Passionate about directing and developing adult choirs
- Highly self-aware and committed to meeting people where they are
- A self-starter and builder with an entrepreneurial spirit
- Respectful of different opinions

ST. MARGARET’S IS

Located in the heart of the Coachella Valley, Palm Desert is approximately two and a half hours from San Diego and Los Angeles and 20 minutes from downtown Palm Springs. We are blessed with a collaborative, creative, and joyful staff. Our congregation maintains high expectations for our music ministry and is extremely supportive of our Music Director and choir. While we currently attract a handful of families with children, most of the members of our congregation are retired. A considerable number are “seasonal members,” who leave in the spring for cooler climates and return to the valley in the fall.

APPLYING

St. Margaret’s is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We do not discriminate on the basis of a person's race, nationality, gender, age, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation. Please send a C.V. or résumé, cover letter, and links to sample recordings/videos (organ, conducting, piano, etc.) to The Rev. Andrew Butler, Rector at andrewb@stmargarets.org and find out more about us by visiting stmargarets.org. Deadline to apply is June 30, 2022.