

THE SAINT BRIDGET PARISH GIRL AND BOY CHOIRS

Called to Serve

The Liturgy Ministries of Saint Bridget Church believe God calls all of us to celebrate the Real Presence of Jesus among us, in our liturgies and in our lives. We also believe that some of us are called to serve in ministries of Preparing the Sanctuary for Mass, Greeting the Faithful, Proclaiming the Word of God, Serving at the Altar and by Leading the Congregation's Song.

If you are reading this it's because your child has expressed an interest in the choir, or because you are a parent who believes the Girl and Boy Choirs of Saint Bridget offer a unique opportunity for your child to learn and grow. Regardless, the philosophy of our Liturgy Ministry is that God has nudged you in this direction.

The Girl and Boy Choirs offer children an opportunity to be important ministers to the Saint Bridget Parish Community. In order to accomplish that ministry, to offer the best to the Lord, they will learn to read music, to use their voices well, and to understand the role of music in the life of the Church. They will do this in team environment that builds their self-confidence and gives them a sense of poise.

The first requirement for membership in the Girl or Boy Choir is that the parents and family make time for rehearsals and all scheduled liturgies and public performances.

The second requirement for membership is that each child come prepared to grow and to learn. There is no audition for either choir, and no minimum skill set or experience is required to join. However, each child is expected to grow in knowledge and understanding of music.

General Information & History

The Girl and Boy Choirs grew out of the Saint Bridget Junior Choir. Since 2010, the girls and boys have rehearsed separately, and sung separately for liturgies throughout the school year, but together for concerts and on special occasions. Each choir rehearses about one hour a week, September through May. The choirs sing for regular weekend Masses, about once a month. The children in these choirs are trained based on the Royal School of Church Music curriculum (used by thousands of choirs, worldwide), and sing a variety of musical styles, from simple, jazzy children's choir anthems, to more serious music by classical composers.

The Girl and Boy Choirs have sung by invitation at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. (2011), and at Lincoln Center in New York City (2013). They have been hired to sing for several weddings over the years, and been honored by the City of Richmond, City Council and Mayor with a Distinguished Artistic Accomplishment Award. They will sing at two churches in New York in April 2017. Those invitations and honor are a testament to the quality of the Saint Bridget choral program.

The choirs are a ministry to children in the parish, preparing them to be, in turn, ministers to the parish through music. The Saint Bridget Girl and Boy Choirs should not be confused with an "after school activity." Children of all levels of ability and skill are welcome in the choir. However, each child is expected to participate and engage fully in rehearsals, be willing to develop their knowledge and understanding of music, and be present at all scheduled liturgies and concerts. The choir offers children a unique opportunity to learn the value of self-discipline and commitment, while imparting to them a sense of poise. All of this takes place in a spiritual context, one that is thoroughly Roman Catholic.

Parish Girl Choir

Girls in the parish (Saint Bridget Church or School), who are in at least 2nd Grade, are welcome to join the Parish Girl Choir. Non-parishioners may apply for admission and, if admitted, are asked to make a modest donation to Saint Bridget Church for music and other supplies. New girls are given a six (6) week trial period during which they and the director will determine if they are interested in, and able to fully engage in the choral program. After the six week trial period, upon full admission to the choir, a child is expected to complete the nine (9) month season, ending in May.

The Girls rehearse most Thursdays of the school year, 4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M. (beginning the week of Labor Day)

The Girl Choir will typically sing the weekend of the 4th Sunday of each month, for Christmas Eve, and on other occasions as scheduled or announced.

Parish Boy Choir

Boys in the parish (Saint Bridget Church or School), whose voices are unchanged, who are in at least 2nd Grade, are welcome to join the Parish Boy Choir. Non-parishioners may apply for admission and, if admitted, are asked to make a modest donation to Saint Bridget Church for music and other supplies. New boys are given a six (6) week trial period during which they and the director will determine if they are interested in, and able to fully engage in the choral program. After the six week trial period, upon full admission to the choir, a child is expected to complete the nine (9) month season, ending in May.

The Boys rehearse most Tuesdays of the school year, 4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M. (beginning the week of Labor Day).

The Boy Choir will typically sing the weekend of the 2nd Sunday of each month, for Christmas Eve, and on other occasions as scheduled or announced.

Contact the Music Minister, abean@saintbridgetchurch.org for more information.

Music Minister, Allen Bean, Director

Allen Bean has been Music Minister for Saint Bridget since October 2005. He is the primary organist for parish liturgies. Allen is responsible for all liturgical music in the parish, and directs the Parish Adult Choir, the Girl & Boy Choirs, and The Gentlemen of Saint Bridget. Before coming to Saint Bridget, he was Director of Music at Good Shepherd Episcopal here in Richmond, and Trinity Episcopal Church in Vero Beach, Florida. He has served in leadership positions with the American Guild of Organists, the Museum District Neighborhood Association, and The Yale Club of Central Virginia. He holds degrees from the University of Tennessee and Yale University and was an International Exchange Scholar to Manchester University in England, 1982-83.

Assistant Music Minister, William Buckley, Assistant Director

William Buckley is beginning his second year at Saint Bridget as the Assistant Music Minister. He assists Allen Bean with the liturgical music in the parish, including accompanying cantors and choirs at mass. He also sings with the Parish Adult Choir. Before coming to Saint Bridget, William studied both piano and voice at the University of Richmond and served as a music director there for the Catholic community on campus. After graduating in 2014, he spent a year working in New York, primarily as a music minister for St. William the Abbot Church in Seaford, NY. William has taught private piano lessons and is also starting a new chamber choir that will be performing at Saint Bridget this year.