

Canon Precentor

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

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Canon Precentor for the Metropolitical Cathedral of Christ at Canterbury with responsibility for Liturgy and Music, co-ordination of our Congregational Development and Deputy Safeguarding Lead for Children and Young People.

The Crown with the Bishop of Dover and Chapter, wishes to appoint a priest as Canon Precentor of Canterbury Cathedral.

As Head of Worship and Liturgy, you will give strategic and spiritual leadership to the worshipping life of Canterbury Cathedral. You will sustain excellence in the Anglican choral tradition while enabling creative, inclusive and missionally engaged worship for our congregations, pilgrims and visitors, the Diocese of Canterbury, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the worldwide Anglican Communion. A Succentor post carries much of the detailed preparation and delivery of services, so you can focus on strategy, quality, collaboration and formation.

We want worship that forms Christians and welcomes newcomers, within an embedded safeguarding culture. You will give visible strategic leadership for safeguarding across worship, music and ministry, including our work with choristers, children and young people. You will work closely with our safeguarding professionals to make sure safe practice is part of everything we do.

We are looking for a colleague with creative flair and a collaborative spirit. You will sustain all that is good in the Cathedral's life and help us live out our prayer of "inspiring life in all its fullness."



A Message from the Bishop of Dover

Worship is the heartbeat of every cathedral community, whether a small morning service or a great public occasion. A cathedral needs a vibrant, diverse praying and serving community to bring the ancient stones to life. This role prioritises worship and we hope the person appointed will help sustain and develop the worship of the Cathedral and also use it as a pastoral tool to further mission and inclusion into the life of this Christian Community; enabling new growth and sustaining the faithful.

Canterbury Cathedral is dedicated to Christ and has a ministry based on Christ the Good Shepherd. This theme is also especially appropriate as the Cathedral is the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This focus demands that all the Cathedral clergy have good skills and honed instincts as pastors, nurturing and shepherding all the people needed to ensure music, liturgy, work with children and families, provision of learning and nurture is offered with care, flair and imagination.



The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin
The Bishop of Dover and Bishop in Canterbury



A Message from the Dean

The Chapter has agreed a Strategic Plan for the next ten years.

One of its core themes is Journeys of Spirituality and Faith, through which we aim to:

1. Develop the learning tradition of Canterbury Cathedral for a modern and diverse age, and invite others into the life of faith and the way of Jesus Christ.

2. Nurture the mystery of God through prayer, place, music, worship and encounter, and sustain the story of faith across the Anglican Communion, for this generation and the next.

3. Encourage and enable all people, whatever their faith, culture, age or ability, to encounter this holy place.

The Canon Precentor will play a leading part in this theme, working alongside colleagues across the Cathedral.

A strategy only works when the culture supports it. We have identified four values that shape the culture we are building: compassion, collaboration, commitment and curiosity. Together they help us build an organisation rooted in Christian values, where people work together across teams rather than in silos or as lone heroes. We expect the Canon Precentor to model these values and to champion them.

The role of a Residentiary Canon

Residentiary Canons are members of Chapter, so they are charity trustees with shared legal and fiduciary responsibility for delivering Chapter's Strategic Plan and Annual Delivery Plan. Chapter meets about ten times a year, and its business is a key priority. As a Residentiary Canon with responsibility for an area of the Cathedral's work, the Canon Precentor also sits on the Senior Leadership Team. This team meets weekly, holds operational responsibility for all of Chapter's work, and is chaired by the Receiver General (Chief Operating Officer).



The Canon Precentor is accountable to the Dean for their ministry, and works closely with the Receiver General (Chief Operating Officer), the clergy team, the music and liturgy team and the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer so that their operational work fits with the Cathedral's plans, policies, financial controls and procedures. They belong to the clergy team that prays, preaches and leads worship every day, sharing periods of residence, presiding and preaching, and singing as cantor at Choral Evensong at least three times a week.

What we are looking for

We are looking for a priest who will give strategic and spiritual leadership to the worshipping life of Canterbury Cathedral. The Canon Precentor will sustain excellence in the Anglican choral tradition, where our plan commits us to be at the forefront, while enabling creative, inclusive and missionally engaged worship. We want worship that forms Christians and welcomes newcomers, in the building and beyond.

Supported by a Succentor who carries much of the detailed preparation and delivery of services, and by a Liturgy Administrator who produces orders of service and provides administrative support to the Canon Precentor and the department, the Canon Precentor will focus on strategy, quality, collaboration and formation. Their responsibilities include:

- leading and reviewing our Liturgical Plan and Music Development Plan
- developing a 21st-century pattern of worship that draws on the wider traditions of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion
- line-managing the Director of Music, the Succentor, the Head Virger, the Liturgy Administrator and other departmental staff, and enabling effective joint planning
- working closely with Lambeth Palace, the Bishop's Office and diocesan colleagues, including on major and special services
- overseeing Children's Church and including our children in worship

Our music and virgers departments have both been through recent change. They need steady, emotionally intelligent leadership as they keep adapting and growing.



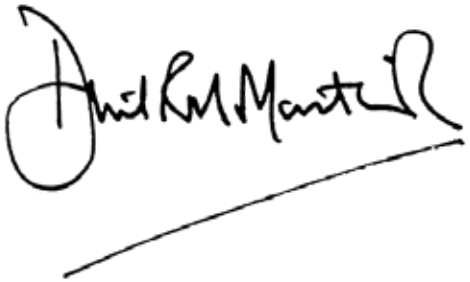
We need a creative team player who inspires others by living out the liturgy among staff, volunteers, choirs and choir parents, congregations and visitors. The Canon Precentor will act as chaplain to the choirs, and will oversee the recruitment, formation and support of lay ministers in worship, including readers, intercessors and servers.

Safeguarding leadership is central to this role. The Canon Precentor will be a visible clerical advocate for a positive safeguarding culture, embedding safe practice in worship, music, liturgical planning, pastoral care and volunteer ministry, in close partnership with the Cathedral's qualified safeguarding professionals, including for visiting clergy and ministers.

As a Cathedral Ambassador to the Diocese, the Canon Precentor will preach, lead worship or join diocesan activities about once a month, and contribute to fundraising and external engagement for worship and music.

What we offer

We offer a supportive, dynamic team of lay and ordained colleagues, a beautiful, historic space with room for tradition and creativity, and a diverse worshipping community with a global online presence and a daily rhythm of prayer and Eucharist. We are looking for someone who can lead traditional worship with confidence, bring fresh ideas and take thoughtful risks, in a spirit of hospitality that welcomes every visitor and pilgrim.



David Monteith
Dean of Canterbury

Canon Precentor and Residentiary Canon: Head of Worship, Liturgy and Music, with responsibility for Safeguarding Leadership.

Role Description

Accountable to: The Dean

Direct reports: Director of Music**;** Succentor; Head Virger, Liturgy Administrator, Visiting Choir Administrator

Works with: Receiver General (Chief Operating Officer), clergy team, music and liturgy team and Cathedral Safeguarding Officer

Governance: Chapter; Senior Leadership Team; Safeguarding Working Group; King's School Governing Body; Clergy Meeting and ad hoc groups

Core purpose: To lead the Cathedral's worship, liturgy and music so that worship forms Christians and welcomes newcomers within an embedded safeguarding culture.

Worship, liturgy and music

- Lead, implement and keep under review the Cathedral's liturgical and worship strategy, including the Liturgical Plan and Music Development Plan.
- Develop a 21st-century pattern of worship that sustains excellence in the English choral tradition and draws appropriately on the wider traditions of the Church of England and Anglican Communion.
- Oversee liturgy and music on behalf of Chapter and in consultation with the Dean, ensuring worship is imaginative, carefully prepared, pastorally sensitive, accessible and properly resourced.
- Ensure adequate briefing, preparation and rehearsal for participants in services.
- Ensure worship supports the regular congregations, pilgrims and visitors, the Diocese of Canterbury, the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Global Anglican Communion through close liaison with Lambeth Palace, the Bishop's Office and diocesan colleagues.
- Provide leadership and oversight across the liturgy, and line management to the Director of Music, Succentor, Head Virger, Liturgy Administrator and other departmental staff as appropriate, clarifying responsibilities and enabling effective joint planning.
- Contribute to the planning of major and special services.

- Contribute to the Fabric Advisory Committee or other planning where building projects or repairs affect worship, music or liturgical use.
- Sing as cantor at least three services of Choral Evensong each week, subject to the agreed clergy and music rota.
- Participate in and contribute to national Precentors' networks and relevant cathedral or Church of England bodies.

Safeguarding departmental and wider leadership

- Champion a positive safeguarding culture and ensure safeguarding is embedded in worship, music, liturgical planning, pastoral practice, volunteer ministry and the work of teams within the Canon Precentor's portfolio.
- Ensure appropriate safer recruitment, licensing, permission to officiate, training, risk assessment and safeguarding processes are complete for clergy and licensed or authorised ministers participating in worship, including visitors from England, the United Kingdom and overseas, supported by the Liturgy Administrator, who maintains the supporting records.
- Act as a visible clerical advocate for professional curiosity, timely reporting, appropriate escalation, organisational learning and survivor-centred practice.
- Contribute to the Safeguarding Working Group, audit and improvement plans, policy implementation and the monitoring of safeguarding risks and controls relevant to cathedral ministry within the Canon Precentor's orbit and more generally.

Leadership, people and resources

- Lead and line-manage the Director of Music, Succentor, Head Virger, Liturgy Administrator (who provides diary, meeting and administrative support to the Canon Precentor) and other departmental staff as appropriate, setting clear objectives, supporting wellbeing and development, and addressing performance or conduct matters in accordance with Cathedral policies.
- Provide strategic oversight of delegated budgets, compliance, risk and planning within worship, liturgy and music.
- Oversee the recruitment, formation and support of relevant volunteers and foster lay ministry within worship, including readers, intercessors, servers and other liturgical ministries.
- Act as chaplain to the choirs and choir parents, working in close partnership with music and safeguarding colleagues.
- Oversee Children's Church, supporting the development of this ministry and the volunteer leadership team. Seek ways to integrate our children within worship, including special festival and seasonal services.
- Share with other operational Residentiary Canons responsibility for a visible and supportive clergy presence among staff and volunteers in the day-to-day life of the Cathedral.

Responsibilities as a Residentiary Canon

- Take an appropriate share with the Dean and other Residentiary Canons in periods of residence, presiding at the Eucharist, leading and participating in services and preaching.
- Contribute to the development and delivery of the Cathedral Strategic Plan and Annual Delivery Plan.
- Serve as a member of Chapter and the Senior Leadership Team, fulfilling the legal and fiduciary responsibilities of a charity trustee and contributing fully to collective decision-making, especially in the furtherance of the Strategic Plan.
- Prepare for and participate in Chapter, Senior Leadership Team, Clergy Meeting and relevant committee business in a timely and constructive way.
- Work collaboratively across clerical and lay teams, promoting cross-departmental working and avoiding siloed or territorial approaches, and contribute to a visible clergy presence on site and in the building day-by-day.
- Exercise visible pastoral ministry among staff, volunteers, congregations, pilgrims and visitors, and contribute to the day-to-day clergy presence on site.
- Serve the Diocese of Canterbury, including as an ambassador for the Cathedral by, where possible, preaching, leading worship or participating in diocesan activities approximately once each month.
- Contribute to fundraising and external engagement relevant to the portfolio, working with the Cathedral Fundraising and Communications teams.
- Work within Cathedral policies, delegated authority, financial controls, safeguarding requirements and agreed budgets.

General expectations

- Model the Cathedral values of compassion, collaboration, commitment and curiosity.
- Promote a culture in which safeguarding is understood as a shared responsibility and is embedded in worship, ministry, governance and operational practice.
- Support the Cathedral's commitment to inclusion, accessibility, racial justice, environmental responsibility and the respectful welcome of all people.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality, professional boundaries and high standards of personal and ministerial conduct.
- Undertake such other reasonable duties and training consistent with the office of Residentiary Canon and the agreed portfolio.

Person Specification

The Cathedral's four core values; Compassion, Collaboration, Commitment and Curiosity embody our Community Culture which is the way we do things and the way in which our community should live and work together. You will be expected to uphold these values and demonstrate the commitment to creating a positive, inclusive and respectful community at Canterbury Cathedral, where everyone can flourish and contribute to making real in this place the gift of 'life in all its fullness'.

Essential

- A priest of at least six years' standing in Holy Orders, ordained in the Church of England or a church in communion with it, with the right to work in the United Kingdom.
- A person of prayer, spiritual resilience and sound pastoral judgement, sustained by the Cathedral's daily rhythm of worship.
- Demonstrable theological, musical and liturgical expertise, including the ability to sing to cathedral standard and to lead complex public worship.
- Proven strategic leadership of worship and music, with the ability to combine tradition, creativity, inclusion and disciplined, planned delivery.
- Substantial and current safeguarding knowledge, with evidence of embedding safe culture and practice in a church, cathedral, education or comparable setting.
- Ability to manage budgets, risk, compliance, competing priorities and high-profile events in a complex institution.
- Excellent written, verbal, digital, IT and communication skills, including use of e-diaries and online portals, and a willingness to learn more as technology develops, including the beneficial use of AI.

Desirable

- Cathedral or major-church experience.
- Experience of trustee governance.
- Cross-cultural or international experience.
- Online and broadcast worship experience.
- Experience of working with choristers, schools or children and young people.
- Coaching or mentoring experience.
- Experience of leading and developing staff and volunteers through change, with strong emotional intelligence and collaborative instincts.



Terms and Conditions

This post is offered with Common Tenure at the stipend of a Residentiary Canon.

One full day off is taken each week as well as six full weeks annual leave. We are trying to find ways to enable Canons to take 36 hours equivalent/week in a busy demanding context.

The post-holder will be accountable to the Dean overall for their work for Chapter. As with the other Residentiary Canons, they also work with the Receiver General (Chief Operating Officer (COO)) for their operational delivery as a head of department and line manager of staff.

Expenses of office are reimbursed in line with the Cathedral's policies.

Housing is provided. Council Tax and water charges are included, and Chapter makes a contribution to utility costs which is taxable as a benefit in kind.

Removal expenses and appointment grant are covered in line with the policy set by the Diocese of Canterbury.

An office is provided in the Cathedral Music and Liturgy offices, with administrative support from the Liturgy Administrator, from which the Precentor is expected to work at least 50% of their time. Electronic work diaries are shared and must be used.

Recruitment Process

Prospective candidates may wish to have an informal conversation with the Dean. These 30-minute sessions may be booked with Andrea Tadiwala (andrea.tadiwala@canterbury-cathedral.org).

Apply online on the Church of England Pathways website - APPLY NOW

The personal statement in your application should focus on your suitability to the role and particularly in relation to the essential characteristic of the Person Specification and to limit your words to approximately 1,200.

Applications will close 7 January 2027

Shortlisting Monday 11 January 2027

Interviews will be conducted in person in Canterbury on 26 and 27 January 2027. You may travel with a partner if you wish them to see around the house as this role involves living inside the Precincts which we know doesn't suit everyone. Accommodation will be provided.

On 26 January you will have a tour, a singing test and meet various people primarily for you to explore the role and to understand your questions further. We ask you to attend evensong at 5.30pm and after that your evening will be free.

On 27 January you will meet more people and have an interview lasting approximately one hour. The panel will be chaired by the Dean and consist of a representative from the Crown, a representative of the Bishop of Dover, a lay non-executive member of Chapter, a Precentor from another cathedral, and the Receiver General (Chief Operating Officer).

This session will include each candidate offering a 5-minute homily based on Mark 4.1-20.

We endeavour to inform candidates as soon as possible following interview. It is likely that a preferred candidate will then need to meet with the Bishop of Dover (probably online).

This post will require an enhanced DBS process.





Compassion

Collaboration

Commitment

Curiosity





Our Community Culture







Christ, the Good Shepherd,
in whose care and protection, we find life in all its fullness;
encourage us to pray for each other and for the holy Church of Canterbury that,
being guided by your values, we may serve the world inspired by compassion,
eager in collaboration, steadfast in commitment, and delighting in curiosity.
Draw us all into one flock and one fold,
so that we may become pastors of his people,

Amen

Inspiring life in all its fullness





