

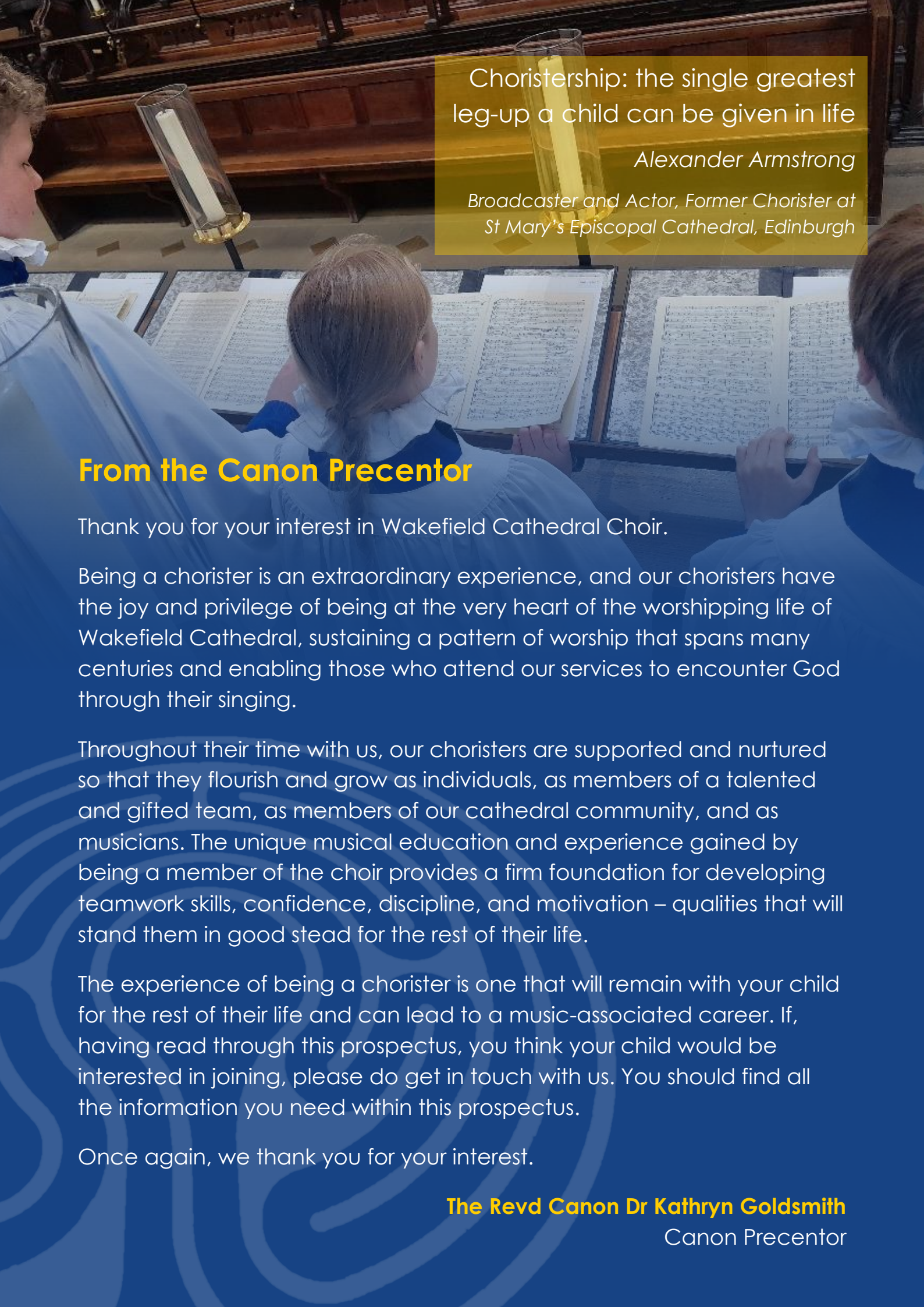


**Wakefield  
Cathedral**

Christ. Culture. Community.

# Cathedral Choir

## Prospectus



Choristership: the single greatest leg-up a child can be given in life

*Alexander Armstrong*

*Broadcaster and Actor, Former Chorister at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh*

## From the Canon Precentor

Thank you for your interest in Wakefield Cathedral Choir.

Being a chorister is an extraordinary experience, and our choristers have the joy and privilege of being at the very heart of the worshipping life of Wakefield Cathedral, sustaining a pattern of worship that spans many centuries and enabling those who attend our services to encounter God through their singing.

Throughout their time with us, our choristers are supported and nurtured so that they flourish and grow as individuals, as members of a talented and gifted team, as members of our cathedral community, and as musicians. The unique musical education and experience gained by being a member of the choir provides a firm foundation for developing teamwork skills, confidence, discipline, and motivation – qualities that will stand them in good stead for the rest of their life.

The experience of being a chorister is one that will remain with your child for the rest of their life and can lead to a music-associated career. If, having read through this prospectus, you think your child would be interested in joining, please do get in touch with us. You should find all the information you need within this prospectus.

Once again, we thank you for your interest.

**The Revd Canon Dr Kathryn Goldsmith**  
Canon Precentor

# What does “being a chorister” mean?

## Choristers sing.

Those two words contain in their simplicity a world bursting with opportunity, diversity, excitement, and depth. From exploring music they would rarely come across otherwise and singing with others who share the passion for singing, to being part of **something bigger and older than they can imagine**, choristers enjoy all the untold benefits that a musical education brings.

As a chorister, your child will become part of a **musical family**, learning routine, teamwork, structure, discipline, and musicianship, playing a part in the story which has been told in Wakefield Cathedral for hundreds of years.

Being a cathedral chorister can be hard work and is a significant commitment. It will demand a lot of your child’s time and energy, and your own as well as you support them on this journey.

But it is also hugely rewarding and great fun – choristers will **form friendships** with children across other year groups, and receive some of the **finest musical education** available as well as a **wealth of opportunities and experiences** they wouldn’t get anywhere else. The **transferable skills** of teamwork and commitment that they gain will be useful whatever they go on to do in life, and many successful people in all sorts of careers are former cathedral choristers.

**Becoming a chorister at Wakefield Cathedral will change your child’s life.**

I love everything about being in the choir – singing amazing songs and making new friends!

*Arthur, aged 12*





## What does being a chorister involve?

Choristers normally join the choir as **probationers**. They learn the ropes, are mentored by a senior chorister, and gain confidence in singing. When they have made sufficient progress, generally after around a year, they will be admitted as full choristers in a short ceremony. Full choristers will start to gain **additional responsibilities** like singing solos and looking after the younger probationers as they were once looked after.

Choristers receive **regular free singing lessons** provided by the choir singing tutor, and we encourage them to have further singing lessons or learn an instrument. They are also encouraged to work towards exams offered by the **Royal School of Church Music**, for which they receive medals to wear with their choir robes.

During their time in the choir your child will not be expected to reach any absolute level of achievement but, by hard work and enthusiasm, they are expected to make the very best of their training and talents. The secret to their success lies in children discovering that **they can achieve more than they imagine possible**.

## Special events

Choristers sing at special services and concerts in the cathedral, including our annual **Carols by Candlelight** concerts, Wakefield's most popular Christmas concert. These events are an exciting chance to sing music outside of the usual repertoire, often to a larger congregation or audience.



## Choir Tours

The choir aims to undertake a tour every other year either within the UK or abroad. In Autumn 2024 the choir toured **Norwich**, and has previously visited **Poland, Sweden and the USA**. Tours are a brilliant way for our choir to experience singing in other places, to form even stronger bonds as a choir and simply to have fun!



## Social life

Being a chorister is not all hard work! As a 'thankyou' for all that they do throughout the year, the cathedral provides certain social activities. In the recent past these have included **crazy golf, a trip to the panto, and the annual choir summer barbecue**.



## What are the commitments?

Choristers sing **every Wednesday and Thursday** during term-time and **every second Sunday**. These commitments are generally only during school term-time, but choristers are expected for services and concerts up to and including **Christmas and Easter Day**. There are also occasional extra duties and special events.

In order to maintain the high standard of the cathedral choir, choristers are expected to attend all rehearsals and services on time.

Whilst we understand that occasional absences may be unavoidable, choristers may sometimes have to prioritise the cathedral choir and miss other activities. Permission to be absent may be requested for educational trips, major family events, and one-off sports matches or similar.

All choristers are expected to continue in the cathedral choir until **the end of Year 9** (or voice change for boys), with the option to continue into Year 10. The majority of their termly scholarship payment is put into a fund to be paid out when they leave the choir, as long as they stay for the full term of service. This final payment can be well over **£1500**.

The choir depends on this commitment because choristers are not replaceable – if a chorister leaves the choir before this time they lose the benefit of the training in their early years in the choir and the cathedral loses the investment of time and resources put into their training. The result will be a gap in the choir as a replacement chorister would lack the training and experience.

If you have a son or daughter and they are interested in singing, PLEASE bring them to join the cathedral choir!

*Joseph, aged 14*

	Week A	Week B
<b>Monday</b>		
<b>Tuesday</b>		
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>16.30</b> Rehearsal <b>17.30</b> Evensong (Year 4-6) <b>18.00</b> Finish	<b>16.30</b> Rehearsal <b>17.30</b> Evensong (Year 7+) <b>18.00</b> Finish
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>16.30</b> Rehearsal <b>17.30</b> Tea (usually a hot meal provided free of charge) <b>18.00</b> Rehearsal <b>18.30</b> Evensong <b>19.15</b> Finish	<b>16.30</b> Rehearsal <b>18.00</b> Finish
<b>Friday</b>	Occasional <b>16.30-18.00</b> Rehearsal	
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>No regular duties</b> (occasional extra services or social events)	
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>No duties</b>  (Choristers at junior school normally sing either the morning or afternoon services, but not both)	<b>08.45</b> Rehearsal <b>09.15</b> Eucharist <b>10.30</b> Rehearsal <b>11.00</b> Eucharist <b>12.15</b> Finish  <b>14.45</b> Rehearsal <b>15.30</b> Evensong <b>16.15</b> Finish

**Evensong** is a service with psalms, readings, prayers, and other songs, most of which is sung by the choir.

**The Eucharist** is the central act of worship for Christians, including the receiving of bread and wine at Communion.

## What does it cost?

**Nothing!** There's no cost associated with joining any of our choirs. Tours and trips can sometimes cost money, but they're often heavily subsidised through fundraising, and we have hardship funds to try and make sure nobody misses out!

Choristers and youth choir members are also paid **a small scholarship payment** each term in recognition of their hard work.

## Is it right for my child?

No previous singing experience is necessary to join the choir – we're looking for potential and an **enthusiastic approach to singing and learning**.

Membership of the choirs is open to people of **all faiths and none** – whilst some choristers do choose to be baptised and confirmed, that's their own choice, and choristers are encouraged to think about their own faith and spirituality.

I enjoy getting to know other people, and I like singing with the mix of girls and boys all together and with people that are not just my own age.

*Adelaide, aged 11*





## Pastoral care and safeguarding

The cathedral is committed to the safeguarding, flourishing and wellbeing of all those in our care, providing a **positive, nurturing environment** that promotes their wellbeing and enables them to flourish as whole people.

My daughter's confidence has certainly improved, and she just continues to grow and grow in her role as a chorister

*Chorister Parent*

When your child is in our care, we take full responsibility for their safety and wellbeing. The Director of Music and Choir Chaperone are always on hand to talk with and listen to parents, and the Canon Precentor has overall pastoral care of the choir and chorister families. Every term we invite parents to meet with the Precentor and music staff at a **Music Forum** to discuss any ongoing issues or queries for open discussion. This is a chance for all involved to work together to improve the choristers' experience in the choir.

## After leaving the choir

Becoming a chorister impacts life beyond your child's time in the choir. Most of our choristers continue singing after they leave the choir, and a number have gone on to make a career in music. Many choristers go on to take **choral scholarships at prestigious universities**, including the Royal Northern College of Music, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, and the Universities of Bristol and Durham.

There is no doubt the [chorister] experience made me the cricketer I became

*Sir Alastair Cook*

*Former England Cricket Captain,  
Former Chorister at St Paul's Cathedral*

When their commitment to the cathedral choir has finished, many of our choristers go on to join the **Cathedral Youth Choir**, led by Alana Brook, for 14-18 year olds. This choir is an opportunity for teenagers to continue to sing choral music at a high level, and to continue the social life

they will have developed during their time in the cathedral choir, whilst having a lower level of commitment to balance with their studies.

## What do I need to do next?

If cathedral music staff have already heard your child sing in school and invited them to a trial session at the cathedral, and they want to give it a go simply **get in touch to join the choir!** Otherwise, get in touch to arrange an **informal voice test** – this is nothing scary or intimidating, just a chance for us to hear your child sing and get to know them a bit!



# Who's who in the Cathedral Music Department?



**The Revd Canon Dr Kathryn Goldsmith**

Canon Precentor

Kathryn is primarily responsible for worship and liturgy in the cathedral. She also has the over-arching responsibility for the cathedral choir and the musicians.

[Precentor@wakefield-cathedral.org.uk](mailto:Precentor@wakefield-cathedral.org.uk)

**James Bowstead**

Director of Music

James is responsible for the training, direction, and management of the cathedral's music. He will be the main point of contact for probationers and choristers.

[DoM@wakefield-cathedral.org.uk](mailto:DoM@wakefield-cathedral.org.uk)



**Alana Brook**

Assistant Director of Music

Alana accompanies and assists in the training of the cathedral choir, and directs Byrd Song (ages 6-9), and the cathedral youth choir (ages 14-18).

[ADoM@wakefield-cathedral.org.uk](mailto:ADoM@wakefield-cathedral.org.uk)

**Cathedral Office**

01924 373 923 / [admin@wakefield-cathedral.org.uk](mailto:admin@wakefield-cathedral.org.uk)



# Wakefield Cathedral

+44 (0)1924 373923

[admin@wakefield-cathedral.org.uk](mailto:admin@wakefield-cathedral.org.uk)

[www.wakefieldcathedral.org.uk](http://www.wakefieldcathedral.org.uk)

