

Christopher Joyce

Our new Assistant Director of Music introduces himself and his family.



I was born in 1971 and, until starting school, lived all over the world as my father was an agricultural economist.

I attended St John's College School in Cambridge from 1978 to 1982 and sang as a

boy chorister at Jesus College under James O'Donnell. My parents moved to America when I was ten, and I attended St Alban's School in Washington D.C. from 1982 to 1984, where I sang as a chorister at Washington Cathedral under Wayne Dirksen and Douglas Major. I attended boarding school Wellington College in Berkshire from 1984 to 1989. In that time I studied piano and began to learn the organ, though I did not take the latter seriously until later in life.

From 1990 to 1994 I was an exhibitor at Worcester College, Oxford, where I read Classics. I did an MA in Classics at the University of California at Berkeley from 1994 to 1996 and a Ph.D. at Durham University in Greek History from 1996 to 2001. On completing my doctoral thesis I moved back to Oxford where I tutored at Balliol and St Anne's colleges. I met my wife Sophia in 2004, and we married in 2006. That year we moved to Tonbridge in Kent, where I taught at the Judd School. Since then I have taught in Guildford, Ashford, and presently at The Haberdasher's Aske's Boys' School in Elstree, where I teach Latin and Greek to A Level. In my spare time, I write and co-author articles on topics of Greek history in international academic journals. I am also planning to write a monograph on amnesties in the ancient world, but that is a longer term project!

My experience as an organist started again when I was living in Kent. During that time I used to attend a beautiful seventeenth-century church in Tunbridge Wells close to the Pantiles called King Charles the Martyr,

built in 1678 originally as a chapel of ease, but re-founded as a parish church at the end of the nineteenth century. To begin with I sang as a bass in the choir, but got to know its organist, Michael Bacon, who granted me permission to practise the organ out of hours.

I fell in love with the instrument, which was a three-manual Walker organ of approximately the same age as the Father Willis organ at All Saints. I began to deputise at St Mary's Church in Ashford and at St Barnabas Church in Tunbridge Wells. I played occasionally at King Charles as well, though they had an abundance of highly talented musicians and were not in need of an aspiring amateur! I did, however, have the opportunity to participate in the annual 'Fingers, Feet, and Fun' concerts at King Charles which gave musicians of all standards in the parish a chance to perform.



Since moving to St Albans in 2012 I have given three organ recitals (two at King Charles, one at Haberdashers') and most recently was employed as Director of Music at the Parish

Church of St Mary The Virgin in Braughing, from where I have just relinquished my previous post.

One of my reasons for joining All Saints is to expand my skills and repertoire as an organist on its magnificent Father Willis instrument, and to work with a skilled choir. I am most grateful to Jo and to Martin for the appointment as Assistant Director of Music, and am thrilled to be joining the parish. I am sure this will be a wonderful opportunity for me, and both Sophia and I look forward to meeting you.

Ed: Christopher is pictured with Max – who just missed his 'special service' this year. See page 9!