

Music in 2025

Martin Penny

Much of what follows is, of necessity, a reflection of highlights. We regard every service as special and prepare everything with the same care and attention whether it be a swinging number for an All-Age Service, an anthem we know almost too well or a deeply contemplative motet for Passiontide.

Over the course of the year, in addition to the regular cycle of rehearsals and services we:

- Sang an Epiphany Carol Service.
- Sang Faure Messe Basse (upper voices) for Mothering Sunday evening.
- Sang for the sequence of services from Palm Sunday to Easter Day
- Sang for a Town Civic Service in May.
- Sang at the Garden Evensong
- Sang for the High Sheriff's Justice Service – reviving Jubilate Deo (Coll:Reg) by Howells.
- Led the music at the annual Services of Remembrance
- Sang the Palestrina Missa Brevis that evening.
- Ran the usual pattern of Advent and Christmas services/celebrations,
- Sang carols (including requests) at the In Patient Unit of Isabel Hospice.

People

All that we do is only possible because of the commitment and efforts of the choir membership. Youngsters spend between three and six hours each week and adults rather more. Huge thanks to them all (and their chauffeurs) for doing this week in, week out.

We said farewell to Theo Teare as he moved on to a Choral Scholarship at Trinity College,

Cambridge. We welcomed Bérenger Morel as a 'SoundBites' Organ Scholar in October.

Throughout John Norris continued to provide a solid base for all our work through his excellent and sensitive accompaniments and David Ford conducted to allow me to play from time to time.

Mary also puts in time distributing, collecting in and re-filing 25 sets of music – an average of 1 ½ - 2 hours per week.

Recruiting

This remains a challenge, and we continue to find ways to work with schools and younger children. Plans and relationships have been formed and, hopefully will bear fruit in 2026.

Of course, the best way is through personal recommendation so if you know of someone – or fancy a 'go' yourself do come and talk to us – we'd love to hear from you.

Concerts

We ran an even more ambitious Soundbites programme in 2025, with more larger ensembles. A total of 27 concerts raised just over £14,500.

Thanks to Ann and her teams and, of course, to Chris for juggling performers and budgets to good effect.

We added a couple more Concert Promoters to our stable of 'regulars' in total raising a further £8000 for the church. More are planned for 2026, with a very busy December!

"Thank you"s

I would like to finish by thanking Simon, Janet (B), Verity, Colin and indeed you all for so many helpful and supportive comments.

Martin Penny April 2026