



The Choir School at St. Peter's  
2017 – 2019 Strategic Plan

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### INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The board and staff of The Choir School at St. Peter's have developed this plan to provide a strategic approach to the direction of The Choir School over a three-year period beginning January 1, 2017 and ending December 31, 2019.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Choir School at St. Peter's is an auditioned community choir offering music education and performance opportunities to talented boys, girls, and young men and women from every background and every corner of the Charlotte region. Originally founded in 1993 as a boys choir in the classic European tradition, the school has grown to include five distinct choirs whose members range in age from eight to eighteen.

Every year the choirs of The Choir School perform for thousands of audience members, offering three concerts at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Uptown Charlotte as well as performances throughout the region. Each summer our tour choirs and MasterSingers travel to destinations throughout the United States, performing for audiences all along the way. Every four years the MasterSingers travel to England to perform and to experience firsthand the roots of the Anglican choral tradition.

The Choir School is currently led by Artistic Director Ben Outen and Managing Director Kay Johnson, and governed by a 15-member Board of Directors. The school is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization and is supported primarily through donations from individual contributors, corporations, and foundations.

The Choir School experience is enriched for every chorister because our choirs are comprised of talented children from every walk of life. For this reason, we do not charge tuition. We do ask families who *can* financially support the school to consider doing so in these ways:

- By covering the cost, or a portion of the cost, of their child's participation in the program.
- By donating to the school's Outreach Fund, which makes it possible for us to maintain the highest standards of excellence and keep all the benefits of arts education accessible to the broad community.
- By participating in annual parent fundraisers.

## Our Vision

The Choir School's students, board, staff and faculty use their collective gifts to enrich the community by:

- Giving all children access to an extraordinary music education and experience;
- Celebrating choral tradition and the transformative power of music;
- Creating confident, creative, collaborative Choir School alumni who successfully enrich their own communities in a wide variety of professions and endeavors.

## Our Mission

The mission of The Choir School is to strengthen and enrich lives through excellent, rigorous choral music education and outstanding performance.

## Our Values

We are motivated by the knowledge that arts education can be a permanent foundation for success in life.

We are dedicated to the principle that excellence and diversity are equal catalysts in the impact of the Choir School program.

We are proud to be an example of how the arts can tear down cultural barriers and build perspective, tolerance, and respect.

We believe in the value of determination, collaboration, and beauty.

2017 -2019  
Strategic Goals

**The Choir School at St. Peter's  
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**Goal I: Leadership**

Nurture and grow a diverse team of staff, board members, and volunteer leaders who have the talent, understanding, and commitment to both safeguard our founding principles and plan and implement relevant, forward-thinking programs.

**Rationale:** The Choir School has thrived for over two decades because of the talent and tenacity of its founders. As we look toward the future, it is imperative that our staff and key volunteers continue to model and deliver excellence and innovation and prepare our organizational structure to support our mission beyond our founders.

**Strategies:**                    *Excellence*                    Recruit, develop, and retain outstanding artistic and administrative professionals and key volunteers to carry out the mission of the school.

*Diversity*                    Cultivate a board, staff, and key volunteer base that reflects the diversity of Choir School choristers.

**Action Step 1:**                    Create working staffing plan to ensure stability beyond founders.  
**Responsibility:**                    Personnel Committee

**Action Step 2:**                    Develop salary, evaluation, and professional development plans that reflect regional peer nonprofit sector standards.  
**Responsibility:**                    Personnel Committee

**Action Step 3:**                    Create and execute a plan for broader board diversity.  
**Responsibility:**                    Board of Directors, led by Governance Committee

**Action Step 4:**                    Create and execute a plan for broader staff and key volunteer diversity  
**Responsibility:**                    Staff

**Action Step 5:**                    Continual enhancement of partnership between The Choir School and St. Peters  
**Responsibility:**                    Executive Committee and the Rector

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- Goal II: Program**  
Provide the region's most relevant, excellent, and accessible choral training program to the region's most talented young people.
- Rationale:** The Choir School has long aspired to be the leading choral education program in the region. This aspiration requires continual reassessment as we participate in the essential role of the arts in our changing community. We will continue to set rigorous standards, cultivate long-standing partnerships within the arts community, and seek innovative improvements to our curriculum. We will also look for new ways to recruit the region's most talented young singers.
- Strategies:**
- Excellence* Provide choral music instruction and performance opportunities of the highest caliber.
  - Diversity* Expose a diverse community of choristers to a wide range of learning opportunities, musical styles, performance venues, and professional musicians.
- Action Step 1:** Evaluate and upgrade music theory program.  
**Responsibility:** Assistant Artistic Director
- Action Step 2:** Support instrumental study for all choristers.  
**Responsibility:** Artistic Director
- Action Step 3:** Cultivate partnerships with guest artists and peer arts organizations  
**Responsibility:** Artistic Director
- Action Step 4:** Create, implement, and evaluate new recruitment program  
**Responsibility:** Director of Town Choirs

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**Goal III: Financial Sustainability**

Develop a financial strategy that will support our mission and vision for future seasons and safeguard our commitment to excellence and accessibility.

**Rationale:** The Choir School must continue to execute financial practices that maximize existing resources, create opportunities for innovation and growth, and support the policies and program components that make The Choir School a unique resource to the Charlotte community.

**Strategies:**

<i>Excellence</i>	Develop a financial and development operating model that is both achievable and aspirational.
<i>Diversity</i>	Develop a financial and development operating model that keeps a Choir School education available to young people from every walk of life.

**Action Step 1:** Create a methodical, timely, team approach to the annual budget process.

**Responsibility:** Managing Director and Finance Committee

**Action Step 2:** Study tuition vs. contribution models and adopt research-based policy.

**Responsibility:** Managing Director and Finance Committee

**Action Step 3:** Create new income streams that allow for program growth and support accessibility.

**Responsibility:** Development Committee and Director of Development and Communications

**Action Step 4:** Stabilize financial component of England Tour.

**Responsibility:** Managing Director, Director of Development, Finance Committee, Development Committee

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**Goal IV:       Communications**

Improve internal and external communication to foster a stronger community and a stronger reputation for excellence and accessibility.

**Rationale:**    Effective communication is essential for building understanding, trust, and a sense of value for Choir School families. It is also essential for building future choirs, community partnerships, audiences, and donors.

**Strategies:**       *Excellence*        Become more well known throughout the region as a unique provider of excellent choral arts education.

*Diversity*         Build a deeper and more inclusive sense of community among choristers, families, and alumni.

**Action Step 1:**       Create and execute a more robust external public relations initiative.  
**Responsibility:**     Director of Development

**Action Step 2:**       Expand partnerships with regional music educators  
**Responsibility:**     Director of Town Choirs

**Action Step 3:**       Nurture Choir School Parent Council.  
**Responsibility:**     Director of Development and Council President

**Action Step 4:**       Engage Alumni and Alumni Parents  
**Responsibility:**     Director of Development

## 2016 – 2017 Choir School Board of Directors

Tina McEntire, President	Associate Provost for Enrollment Management, UNC-Charlotte
Carl King, Vice President	Partner, Culp, Elliot & Carpenter, PLLC
Hulene McLean, Secretary/Treasurer	Certified Public Accountant
William Krewson, Past President	Technology Vision Consulting, LLC
John Arrowood	Partner, James McElroy & Diehl
Sarah Geis (non-voting)	Parent Council President
Kay Johnson (non-voting)	Managing Director, The Choir School
Todd Mortimer	Vice President, Fifth Third Private Bank
Jay Norton	Senior Vice President, Wells Fargo Risk Management
Sam (Trey) O'Quinn	Director of Administrative Policies and Procedures, UNC-Charlotte Business Affairs
Ben Outen (ex-officio)	Artistic Director, The Choir School
The Reverend Ollie V. Rencher (ex-officio)	Rector, St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Jennifer Roberts	Mayor, City of Charlotte
Grace Stockdale	Physical Therapist

## 2016 Choir School Staff

**Ben Outen** is the Founding and Artistic Director of The Choir School. After graduating from Yale and Furman Universities with degrees in organ performance and music theory, respectively, he came to North Carolina to serve as organist and choirmaster at First Presbyterian Church in Belmont. Mr. Outen has traveled extensively throughout the United States and England with the choirs. He was instrumental in the procurement of St. Peter's organ, Fisk Opus 136 and in the development of an Evensong series that includes singers from throughout the community. He had led classes for the Royal School of Church Music in America, and hosted and performed for the Association of Anglican Musicians Conference. In 2014, he hosted the Early Music America Board. He is Director of Music and Organist at St. Peter's Episcopal Church.

**Elizabeth Lenti** is Assistant Director of Music and Organist at St. Peter's and Assistant Director at the Choir School. A native of Rochester, NY, Elizabeth is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and the Cleveland Institute of Music. Before beginning work at the Choir School, she was Associate Director of Music and Worship at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Cleveland, OH and has also served as a member of the organ faculty at the Cleveland Institute of Music. She is active as a recitalist, having performed on concert series throughout the United States, and has played at regional and national conventions of both the American Guild of Organists and the Association of Anglican Musicians. Elizabeth conducts and accompanies the choirs, and manages The Choir School's music theory program.

**Colin Burns** conducts the Town Choirs, accompanies the choirs, teaches the introductory levels of music theory, and plays a lead role in chorister recruitment. A 2007 graduate of The Choir School and a founding member of the MasterSinger ensemble, he holds degrees in Church Music and Choral Conducting, respectively, from Furman University and Boston University. Colin has served as Music Director of New Life MCC at Holy Trinity Lutheran in Charlotte, and Assistant Director of Seminary Singers at Boston University School of Theology. He was Organist/Choir Director at Nahant Village Church in Nahant, Massachusetts, and Founding and Artistic Director of the Kendall Square Singers in Cambridge Massachusetts. Most recently, he served as Associate Director of Music for Children and Youth at First Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, North Carolina.

**Kay Johnson** is Managing Director of The Choir School. A founding member of the school's staff, she has managed Choir School operations, financial reporting, rehearsal and concert scheduling, summer camps and tour for more than two decades. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Chemistry from North Carolina State University and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from WVCOGS, now a component of Marshall University. She is the parent of three Choir School alumni.

**Allison Elrod** is Director of Development and Communications for The Choir School. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management and Marketing from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. A writer, publicist and marketing strategist, her expertise includes brand management, copywriting, event planning and promotion, public relations and fundraising.



The Choir School at St. Peter's  
*Founded 1993*

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