



# TRINITY EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

## LITURGY AND MUSIC AT TRINITY

Trinity Cathedral exists to worship Almighty God, proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and grow in the grace of the Holy Spirit through the liturgies of the Episcopal Church and the splendors of the Anglican choral tradition. Every other aspect of our common life flows from and draws us back again to that most fundamental work. Liturgy and music are not simply things we do: they are who we are.

At the heart of this joyful, solemn self-understanding are our world-class choirs. The tradition of choral leadership in Trinity's liturgies stretches back generations. The first surpliced choir was introduced in 1894—early for the American South. In recent decades the music ministry has grown and advanced significantly in its standards, its scope, and its centrality to the larger mission of the cathedral. The Trinity Youth Chorus, the Cathedral Choir of Boys, the Cathedral Choir of Girls, the Cathedral Choir of Adults, and the Cathedral Singers form a loving, loyal community of leaders integral to Trinity's very being. Their dedication and faithfulness, their commitment to excellence, and their careful cultivation of a spiritually nourishing fellowship—unabashedly Episcopalian yet welcoming every singer of every background—inspires and challenges all who gather at the cathedral for worship.

Opportunities for worshippers to gather are indeed abundant. In term (September through May), three of Trinity's five Sunday liturgies are led by one or more of our choirs. The 11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist (Rite I) and 4:00 p.m. Evensong (BCP 1662) each week are choral services utilizing mass settings, Anglican chant psalmody, responses, canticles, and anthems from every era of Christian sacred music, including new works commissioned especially for Trinity's choirs. Choral anthems are also sung at the 9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist (predominantly Rite II), where the choirs lead and support congregational service settings that vary with the season. A tradition of choral Compline sung on Thursday evenings in Advent and Lent has become a beloved part of our liturgical rhythm and a powerful opportunity for reaching the wider community, especially students at the nearby University of South Carolina and many other other local colleges and universities. Seasonal services of Lessons and Carols carry the familiar format beyond Christmastide and weave together Scripture and music at other meaningful moments in the Church calendar. And of course the great feasts of the Church and significant events in the life of the diocese are lifted to majestic new heights by the leadership of Trinity's musicians.

Trinity's beautiful and historic campus stands at the geographic, political, and educational center of the state of South Carolina. The first services according to *The Book of Common Prayer* offered in Columbia were conducted in the original State House, predecessor to the current structure located directly across Sumter Street from Trinity's campus (which today encompasses a full city block downtown). The parish was incorporated in 1812 and founding members included many of the early leaders of the state, the city, and the university. The present edifice was erected in 1846, with the transept added in 1863 and the chancel remodeled several times in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—largely to make architectural accommodation for our choirs as they grew both in membership and liturgical importance. At the subdivision of the original state-wide Diocese of South Carolina in 1923 Trinity's then-rector became the first Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina, and in 1977 the Annual Convention of the diocese formally named Trinity its cathedral.

Official records of Trinity's earliest instruments and musical life were lost with all other parish documents in the destruction of Columbia during the Civil War, though the cathedral building itself survived unscathed. Nevertheless it is known that Trinity was given its first pipe organ—probably the first in the city—in 1815 by a veteran of the Revolutionary War. The current in a long line of successors to that original is our Casavant Frères Opus 3769, installed in 1999 and extensively revoiced in 2010. Situated at the clerestory on both the north and south sides of the choir, this magnificent instrument's 55 stops and 73 ranks powerfully lead both choral and congregational singing, and lend themselves to a diverse and wide-ranging recital repertoire.

Recognizing music's capacity to engage those who might not otherwise visit the cathedral, Trinity's music ministry maintains a full and well-subscribed concert schedule. Anchored by an annual performance of Handel's *Messiah* in December, a themed program each spring, and the regular offering of smaller recitals and musical events throughout the year, our concerts draw a wide and enthusiastic audience. They have also enabled Trinity's musicians and parishioners to develop relationships with the extraordinary instrumentalists of the North Carolina Baroque Orchestra and many other gifted musicians from across the region, the nation, and the world.

Speaking of the nation and the world, no description of Trinity's music ministry would be complete without mention of the cherished tradition of choir tours. Whether through domestic trips to Washington, D.C., and New York City, European tours, or residencies at British and Irish cathedrals, the opportunity to travel, sing, and grow together as a community has broadened the perspective of and strengthened the bonds between generations of choristers. It has also given Trinity a chance to showcase to the wider Church, with humility and gratitude, the good work of the Lord being done in Columbia in and through our music. And, importantly, choir tours are also a lot of fun!

Mindful of all that has been accomplished in our musical and liturgical life these last 212 years by the grace of God and the tireless devotion of many faithful leaders, Trinity's music ministry looks ahead to a yet more glorious future. As we approach 2027 and our Golden Jubilee as the cathedral of the diocese, we recognize that we have been blessed with extraordinary opportunities and remarkable resources that demand bold and courageous stewardship. Our choirs and congregation are growing. Support for the music ministry—expressed in chorister, parent, and parishioner enthusiasm, healthy operating budget funding, and recent transformative gifts to the Friends of Music and Organ Endowments of the Trinity Foundation—is at an all-time high. Well we know “to whom much has been given, of [them] much will be required.” We look to give a good account to our Lord for this precious gift entrusted to our care.

In the coming years, the dean and the new director of music and organist will devote particular time, thought, and energy to discerning the future of the music ministry—praying, planning, and working toward the expression of a compelling vision that will guide and advance this singular program in the years ahead. As we seek to build on many decades of growth and excellence, we will consider how God is calling us to serve our community through our musical tradition even more faithfully and effectively. What are the plans the Lord has prepared for us? A youth music academy? Renewed and transformed instruments? A new choir school? Outreach to underserved members of Columbia's community through music? All of these—and, doubtless, many other things beyond what we could ask for or imagine—are possible for the music ministry of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. With grateful and faithful hope in the unfailing provision of Almighty God, we await with eagerness the new leader who will serve here in the midst of the Lord's people. *Venite, exultemus Domino.*