

JOB DESCRIPTION

LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church

Position: Part-time Chancel Choir (adult) Director

Summary

LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church, a growing and active 1900-member church established in 1887 and located in downtown, Grand Rapids, Michigan, seeks a part-time Chancel Choir director with an anticipated start date of summer, 2020. The director will lead a 70-member, all volunteer choir to enrich worship and bring praise and glory to God through the gift of singing. The director will work as part of a team of professional full and part-time staff and will advance the vision and goals of the church through their work and skills as an accomplished choral director. LaGrave's music ministry, overseen by Minister of Music and Organist, Dr. Larry Visser, currently includes three vocal choirs, two handbell choirs, three assistant organists, several instrumentalists of all ages, with over 150 participants. The church's 1996 five-manual, 108-rank Austin/Allen organ is among the finest in the region. The church also has an 8-foot Schimmel grand piano in the neo-Gothic 1960 sanctuary, which seats approximately 850. Additional information regarding LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church may be gleaned from the church's website: www.lagrave.org.

Worship at LaGrave

LaGrave Church is a Protestant church that is part of the Christian Reformed Church. Our theological roots are based in Calvinism. We believe that all things are under the sovereignty of Christ, and there is not one square inch of our world that is not being renewed and transformed under the Lordship and mind of Christ. Our worship follows a Reformed pattern in that we gather for worship, confess our sin, receive God's assurance of pardon, respond by giving our gifts, receive the Word from God, and go out to serve him in our world. Our worship is both traditional and liturgical. It is led by a minister, a pastoral staff liturgist, professional musicians, and occasionally lay leaders. The various elements of worship proceed unannounced. The organ is the primary instrument used to lead worship. The piano is also used, as well as several instrumentalists from the congregation.

Our mission statement states, "Led by the Holy Spirit, LaGrave's members seek to worship and serve God in all of life, transforming his world and being transformed to reflect the character of Christ." Our mission has five components:

As the grace of God blesses our prayer, planning, and combined efforts, LaGrave CRC strives to be a **confessing community**, whose members understand and embrace LaGrave's mission of transformation. We declare and share that mission by our daily words and actions in the places we live, worship, work, learn, and play.

LaGrave CRC strives to be a **worshiping community** committed to maintaining a tradition of formal worship which integrates articulate and intelligent preaching of God's Word with music that glorifies God so worshipers may be inspired to transform all of life in worship.

LaGrave CRC strives to be a **caring community** committed to transforming lives for Jesus Christ by caring for the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of its members and actively enfolded members, visitors, and neighbors into a community of love and care.

LaGrave CRC strives to be a **discipling community** committed to following Jesus Christ and to helping others do the same through growing congregational participation in educational programs and discipling ministries.

LaGrave CRC strives to be a **servng community** committed to holistic outreach to the poor and the powerful, nearby and far away, through growing member involvement in evangelism, missions, and Christian compassion and social justice.

Position Requirements and Compensation

The part-time Chancel Choir director position is a nine-and-a-half-month position (September through early June) with minimal duties during the summer months. The director is responsible for providing spiritual leadership within the Chancel Choir as well as teaching and preparing anthems for weekly worship services. The position requires a person who has proven musical skills from experience in choir conducting and leadership, educational achievement, creative ideas, and effective interpersonal skills. The person holding this position will represent LaGrave Church, will further its mission, vision, and goals, and will be part of a team of professional staff members.

The Chancel Choir director is directly accountable to the Minister of Music, but is ultimately responsible to and evaluated by the Worship Committee.

The successful candidate will be highly encouraged to become a member of LaGrave Church.

A competitive salary is offered commensurate with a candidate's qualifications and level of experience as a choral director. Benefits include a continuing education allowance and 2-3 Sundays of vacation per church year.

Skills and Experience

Candidates for this position should demonstrate the following:

1. A thorough knowledge of the sacred choral repertoire and the ability to choose appropriate music that supports the theme of the sermon, Scripture passage, and/or liturgical season in line with the Reformed faith, doctrine and beliefs
2. The ability to choose and lead anthems of varying styles from all historical periods
3. The ability to rehearse with and conduct occasional instrumental ensembles
4. The ability to work effectively with people of varying ages and skill levels
5. The ability to assist the Minister of Music in scheduling vocal soloists for worship services at which the LaGrave choirs do not participate
6. The ability to communicate well and effectively
7. A minimum of a bachelor's degree in music, with a higher degree preferred, or equivalent experience

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

1. Prepare for and lead regularly scheduled Wednesday evening choral rehearsals (September through early June)
2. Prepare for and lead the Chancel Choir in all music for weekly Sunday worship services (alternating 8:40 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services and both morning services periodically, and one evening service per month)
3. Prepare for and lead the Chancel Choir in special worship services (Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday, periodic ecumenical Good Friday service, Easter morning services, hymn festivals, and occasional musical events outside of worship with community groups or guest choirs)
4. Work with other LaGrave choirs in combined anthems about once per year
5. Purchase new choral music within the annual budgeted allowance
6. Organize, rehearse with, and conduct vocal quartets and/or small vocal ensembles to participate in some services at which the Chancel Choir does not sing
7. Prepare and conduct instrumental ensembles typically on Easter morning, Thanksgiving Day, and other special services
8. Develop positive rapport with all colleagues and members of the entire music ministry and the congregation in a spirit of mutual support
9. Recruit new members of all ages, particularly younger members

Administrative Duties

1. Plan all choral music for the Chancel Choir
2. Become familiar with the church's extensive choral library
3. Print music schedules for the Chancel Choir and rehearsal instructions on the whiteboard
4. Distribute music in coordination with the music librarian
5. Attend music staff meetings (typically 1-2 per church year)
6. Organize a seating chart of choir members
7. Assist the Minister of Music in contacting and scheduling member and guest vocal soloists (September through early June) for services at which the Chancel Choir or other LaGrave musical groups do not participate
8. Collaborate regularly with the Minister of Music (who serves as the Chancel Choir accompanist) in all plans for the Chancel Choir
9. Attend a review/evaluation with the Worship Committee chairperson and the Minister of Music every 2-3 years

Professional Duties

1. The Chancel Choir director will represent LaGrave Church in all professional organizations, events, meetings, workshops, and conventions
2. The Chancel Choir director is encouraged to maintain memberships within appropriate choral professional organizations (such as ACDA)
3. The Chancel Choir director should seek opportunities for professional growth through continuing education (classes, conferences, conventions, etc.)

Application Process

All interested candidates should send a resume including references and a cover letter stating their interest in the position either electronically to choralposition@lagrave.org or by mail to the

attention of Dr. Larry Visser, Minister of Music, LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church, 107 LaGrave Avenue SE, Grand Rapids, MI, 49503. Submissions will be accepted through Saturday, February 29, 2020.

LaGrave is also posting a second position for part-time Children's and Youth Ensembles director. While these two positions are currently posted as two separate, independent positions, flexibility will be given on the scope of these positions based on candidates' qualifications. Candidates who wish may apply for both positions, thus conducting all five choirs, or may also apply for a combination of directing the Chancel Choir and high school aged choir.

LaGrave is also posting a third position for part-time adult handbell director. Candidates who wish may apply for both positions.