

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **Conductor of Vocal and Handbell Choirs LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church**

#### **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 full-time Conductor of vocal and handbell choirs with an anticipated start date of summer, 2023. The director will lead at least five all-volunteer choirs—both children and adults, vocal and handbell—to enrich the church’s worship and bring praise and glory to God through the gift of music. The conductor 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 conductor. LaGrave’s music ministry, overseen by Minister of Music and Organist, Dr. Larry Visser, currently includes four vocal choirs, two handbell choirs, three assistant organists, and several instrumentalists of all ages, with over 150 participants. The church’s 1996 five-manual, 109-rank Austin-Allen organ is among the finest in the region. The church also has an 8’4” Schimmel grand piano in the neo-Gothic sanctuary which seats approximately 850. Additional information regarding LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church may be gleaned from the church’s website: [www.lagrave.org](http://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 Jesus 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 and lay 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, and occasionally several members of the congregation participate by playing traditional band or orchestra instruments.

LaGrave Church holds three worship services per Sunday: 8:40 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services which are nearly identical, and a 6:00 p.m. service.

Our mission 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, and play.

LaGrave CRC strives to be a **worshipping 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 worshippers 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 **serving 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 Conductor of Vocal and Handbell Choirs position is a full-time, salaried position. The choir season, including rehearsals and worship participation, extends from early September through May or early June. The conductor is responsible for providing spiritual leadership within each of the choirs as well as teaching and preparing music for worship services. The position requires a person who has proven musical skills from experience in vocal and handbell choir 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 successful candidate will be supportive of the theological standards and beliefs of the church and is highly encouraged to become a member of LaGrave Church.

In performance of duties, the Conductor of Vocal and Handbell Choirs is directly accountable to the Minister of Music and Organist. In matters of personal conduct, they are accountable to the Executive Committee and Council.

A competitive salary is offered commensurate with a candidate's qualifications and level of experience as a conductor. The position includes a full benefits package, four weeks of paid vacation per calendar year, and a continuing education allowance.

### **Skills and Experience**

Candidates for this position should demonstrate the following:

1. A thorough knowledge of the sacred vocal and handbell repertoire and the ability to choose appropriate music that supports the theme of the sermon, Scripture passage of the day, and/or liturgical season in line with Reformed doctrine and beliefs.
2. The ability to choose and lead vocal anthems of varying styles from all historical periods.
3. The ability to relate well to adults, children, and youth in a spirit of love and compassion.
4. The ability to work effectively with people of varying ages and skill levels.
5. The ability to rehearse with and conduct occasional instrumental ensembles.
6. The ability to communicate well and effectively.
7. A minimum of a bachelor's degree in music and conducting, with a higher degree preferred, or equivalent experience.

### **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**

1. Prepare for and lead regularly scheduled rehearsals for at least five choirs: Chancel Choir, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Choir, 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Choir, Adult Handbell Choir, and Children’s Handbell Choir. A sixth choir, K – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Choir, currently rehearses Sundays 10:00 a.m. to 10:40 a.m. This choir could be led by a part-time LaGrave member.
2. Prepare the vocal and handbell choirs in all music for Sunday worship services.
3. Research and choose music that appropriately supports the Word, Scripture passage of the day, sermon theme, and /or liturgical season of the church year in line with Reformed doctrine and beliefs.
4. Prepare for and lead choirs in all special worship services (Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve Services, Maundy Thursday, periodic Good Friday Services, Easter Services).
5. Work periodically with combined vocal and handbell choirs.
6. Purchase new choral and handbell music within the annual budgeted allowance.
7. Organize, rehearse with, and conduct vocal quartets, octets, and small ensembles to participate in occasional worship services at which the LaGrave choirs do not participate.
8. Prepare and conduct instrumental ensembles typically on Easter morning, Thanksgiving Day, and other special services.
9. Develop positive rapport with all colleagues and members of the entire LaGrave staff and the congregation in a spirit of mutual support and respect.
10. Recruit new members in all the choirs.

### **Administrative Duties**

1. Plan all music for each vocal and handbell choir.
2. Become familiar with the vocal and handbell music libraries and organize and maintain them with the assistance of a choir librarian.
3. Attend music staff meetings and work in close collaboration and communication with the Minister of Music and Organist.
4. Assist the Minister of Music and Organist in contacting and scheduling member and guest vocal soloists (especially during the summer months) for services at which the LaGrave choirs do not participate.

### **Professional Duties**

1. The Conductor of Vocal and Handbell Choirs will represent LaGrave Church in all professional organizations, events, meetings, workshops, and conventions.
2. The Conductor of Vocal and Handbell Choirs is encouraged to maintain memberships within appropriate choral and handbell professional organizations.
3. The Conductor of Vocal and Handbell Choirs is encouraged to seek opportunities for professional growth through continuing education (classes, conferences, conventions, symposiums, etc.).

### **Application Process**

All interested candidates should send a resume including references and a cover letter stating their interest in the position via email to [conductorposition@lagrave.org](mailto:conductorposition@lagrave.org). The deadline for submissions is May 15, 2023.