

Director of Music
Knox Presbyterian Church, Ottawa
Fall 2026

Background:

The music ministry is a long-standing and highly valued aspect of worship at Knox Ottawa. It incorporates congregational singing from the hymnbook of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, as well as music in a variety of styles and from different periods and sources using the Casavant organ, grand piano, and other musical instruments.

The role of the Director of Music is to enhance, deepen, and uplift the worship experience of attendees and encourage their involvement in the music ministry.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Reporting to the Clerk of Session, representing the Kirk Session, and working in close collaboration with the Minister, who is responsible for all aspects of worship at Knox, the Director of Music:

- 1) Meets with the Minister on a regular basis to select organ, piano, choral and other music for Sunday worship services and special occasions such as Good Friday and Christmas Eve.
- 2) Leads music at worship services and plays both organ and piano. The music includes a prelude, congregational hymns typically selected by the Minister, offertory, a sung amen, and postlude, as well as a choir anthem or other additional music at most services. Incorporates various styles of music, including contemporary works, while preserving Knox's strength in traditional organ and choral music.
- 3) Leads rehearsals and directs the choir during Sunday services and special occasions in the singing of anthems or other pieces of music suitable for the liturgical season, as agreed to by the Minister, and appropriate to the abilities and available practice time of the choir. Provides clear and timely communication to choir members, paid and volunteer, regarding expectations and schedules.
- 4) Strengthens and grows the choir by encouraging congregants and others to join, and encourages their musical growth. Recruits and oversees paid section leads (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) and provides them with clear direction to ensure they are effective in supporting their sections.
- 5) Encourages musical contributions to worship services and other aspects of congregational life. Arranges for soloists to lead singing both in church and for livestreaming when the choir is not in attendance.

- 6) Welcomes, works with, and supports interested congregants including children, youth, and young adults to encourage their regular musical participation in services. Offers options for roles such as four-part harmony versus melody-only singing.
- 7) Initiates and facilitates, in cooperation with the Minister and Clerk of Session, musical enhancements such as guest musicians and, as time permits, special services, concerts and programs.
- 8) Proposes the hiring of additional musicians or the acquisition of new instruments or equipment to support the music program at Knox Ottawa. Discusses options for funding with the Minister, Clerk of Session and Treasurer.
- 9) Submits annual budget proposals to the Clerk of Session and Treasurer, and manages the music program within the limits of the approved budget to make the most effective use of funds to pay musicians, purchase music, and purchase and maintain instruments. Attends the Annual Congregational Meeting to speak to the music program and budget, and respond to music-related questions.
- 10) Cares for the Casavant organ, a key asset of Knox Ottawa. Monitors the “health” of the instrument, identifies issues as they arise and arranges for maintenance or repairs by qualified technicians. Ensures those requesting use of the organ are qualified to do so. Plans regular tuning and maintenance of the grand piano.
- 11) Participates in discussions and decisions related to the allocation of funds from the Lilian Forsyth Scholarship, established in honour of former Director of Music Lilian Forsyth, which provides funding for “persons pursuing a career in church music or actively involved in music directly related to the worship of the Christian community.”
- 12) Arranges for a substitute when unable to attend services, ensuring that the substitute has the required skills to maintain the expected quality of music. Gives preference to musicians with a connection to Knox Ottawa.

Conditions of Work:

The Director of Music leads music at worship services for a total of up to 54 services annually including scheduled Sunday worship, Christmas Eve, Good Friday and an additional Christmas carol service and Maundy Thursday service if planned.

The Director of Music leads and directs the choir during worship on Sundays and special occasions such as Good Friday and Christmas Eve from September to June, excluding the Sundays after Easter and Christmas.

If the Director of Music is unable to attend any rehearsals, services or special programs for which attendance is normally expected, the incumbent is required to secure a suitable replacement and compensate that person. Any absences should, to the extent possible, be arranged in advance with the Minister or Clerk of Session at the earliest possible opportunity. Failure to do so will result in a pro-rated deduction of monies at the end of that month.

The Director of Music has the first right of refusal to be paid to accompany weddings, funerals, memorial services and any other functions held in the sanctuary for which a musician has been requested. A per occasion fee, consistent with the policy of Knox, would be paid by those who requested the service.

Skills and Experience Required:

Extensive experience in playing a Casavant or similarly sized pipe organ.

Experience in playing organ and piano to lead worship, including complex scores for solo presentations or vocal accompaniments.

Experience in conducting and directing a choir composed mainly of volunteers and leading choir rehearsals while playing the organ or piano.

Experience in hiring, motivating, and overseeing musicians including both singers and instrumentalists.

Experience working collaboratively in a team approach to ministry.

Compensation:

Total hours of work are expected to be 10 to 15 hours per week, including planning and coordination, rehearsal, and leading music at Sunday services and other worship events. An increase to 20 hours per week could be discussed if the successful applicant grows the Knox music ministry.

Fair compensation will be negotiated with the successful applicant, commensurate with the musician's experience, skills and hours of work, and considering the RCCO recommendations.

The position includes use of a dedicated Director of Music office beside the sanctuary. Use of church space and instruments for teaching or practice for non-service-related activities can be negotiated.