

Director of Sacred Music

Basilica of St. Adalbert – Grand Rapids, MI

Full-Time | Starting Salary: \$80,000+ | Full Benefits

About the Basilica

The Basilica of St. Adalbert, located in the historic West Side of Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a distinguished Catholic parish with a rich history and long-standing commitment to the beautiful and faithful celebration of the sacred liturgy. Elevated to the status of a Minor Basilica in 1980—the first in Michigan—it occupies a unique place in the liturgical and pastoral life of the Diocese of Grand Rapids. The parish's architectural beauty and emphasis on musical and liturgical excellence have been fundamental in building a youthful, diverse, and growing community from across the city and surrounding region. The parish is currently clustered with (shares a pastor with) St. Mary's parish, about a half mile away.

The Basilica's liturgical life emphasizes full adherence to the Church's liturgical norms and tradition according to postconciliar liturgical books of the Roman Rite. Particular attention is given to reverence, precision, and beauty in liturgical celebrations which is supported by ongoing investment in sacred music and a well-established tradition of excellence in choral, organ, and instrumental music.

About Grand Rapids

Grand Rapids is a mid-sized city that combines the cultural amenities of a larger urban center with the accessibility and affordability of smaller communities. It is consistently ranked as one of the best places to live in the United States. The city is known for:

- A growing culinary scene with nationally recognized restaurants and craft breweries
- A vibrant arts and music culture, including museums, performance venues, and festivals
- Proximity to Lake Michigan's shoreline, with its beaches, dunes, and resort towns just 30 minutes away
- A reasonable cost of living and a wide variety of affordable housing options in nearby urban, suburban, and rural areas
- Multiple institutions of higher learning

This combination of factors makes Grand Rapids an excellent location for musicians, Catholic families, and professionals seeking both quality of life and career opportunity.

Our Music Program at Present

The Basilica's music program has been shaped for decades by high standards and a generous parish culture. It currently features:

- A well-established choir that sings weekly and for principal feasts throughout the year
- A strong organ program supported by a Wicks pipe organ with a 2022 console by Goulding & Wood
- Frequent use of brass and strings, especially for more solemn occasions
- A repertoire rooted in traditional hymnody, a diverse organ repertoire, and sacred choral literature
- Regular singing of the Communion Antiphon and limited, but growing, use of chant
- Weekly production of custom liturgy booklets via the Source & Summit Digital Platform

While some elements of Gregorian chant are present, the program has not historically been chant-centered. The Basilica is located near Sacred Heart Parish, known for its use of the 1962 Missal and fully chant-based liturgies. The Basilica does not seek to replicate that model, but instead serves as a complement—offering a rich and reverent experience of the Ordinary Form, deeply informed by the Church's musical and liturgical tradition and guided by a hermeneutic of continuity.

Our Vision for the Future

Under the leadership of the new pastor, our vision is to build upon the strengths of our music and liturgy program while deepening our commitment to the sung liturgy and to the Church's sacred music tradition as a foundational aspect of the Church's mission in our time. The Director of Sacred Music will play a central role in this next chapter by increasing musical excellence and encouraging a love and appreciation for sacred music in the parish through ongoing education and catechesis. Key priorities for future development include:

- Fostering excellence in choral singing and vocal production in adult and youth choral programs
- Building a specialized schola cantorum focused on Gregorian chant and sacred polyphony, in addition to increasing the use of these repertoires throughout the entire program
- Implementing a stronger foundation for the sung liturgy with more regular use of sung propers (in English and Latin) in the liturgy
- Developing our Spanish-language Mass (at St. Mary's Parish) with worthy sacred music
- Increasing the use of Gregorian Mass Ordinaries
- Contributing to liturgical formation and musical catechesis for both parishioners and volunteers

The music program will continue to serve the Basilica's broader mission to form a community of faith and prayer, to empower missionary discipleship, and to meet the challenges of our changing urban neighborhood in a spirit of outreach and evangelization.

Candidate Profile

The ideal candidate will be a practicing Catholic with a deep understanding of the Church's sacred music tradition and a desire to serve in a collaborative parish environment. The position requires musical excellence, liturgical competence, and a capacity to lead and form others. Essential qualifications include:

- Demonstrated skill as an organist and choral director with broad experience in sacred music repertoire
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, with a track record of working well with volunteers, clergy, and parish staff members
- A commitment to continued professional growth, ongoing liturgical formation, and pastoral leadership
- A personal commitment to living and modeling the values of the Catholic Church, with deep fidelity to Christ and the Magisterium.

Compensation and Benefits

- Salary: Starting at \$80,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications, with salary increases agreed upon and in accordance with diocesan guidelines
- Benefits: Full-time benefits through the Michigan Catholic Conference, including:
 - Health, dental, and vision insurance
 - Pension
 - Paid time off and sick leave
 - Continuing education support where applicable
- Additional compensation: Bench fees are currently \$375 for weddings and \$175 for funerals, averaging about 15 funerals and 20-25 weddings per year

Application Process

To apply, please submit a résumé along with any supporting materials (such as recordings, programs, or letters of recommendation) to:

Fr. Kyle Kilpatrick
Pastor, Basilica of St. Adalbert
kilpatrick@basilicagr.org

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.