

Guild of Organists

# A.G.O. Pipe Notes

July 2016



Soli Deo Gloria

*“Sing psalms,  
hymns, and  
spiritual songs  
with gratitude  
in your hearts  
to God.”*

*Colossians 3:16*

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## *From the Dean*



Dear AGO Members,

We are surely into a great summer! As a native Californian, I do love real summer weather, and I hope you are all staying cool, calm and collected.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find a somewhat more complete review of the national convention in Houston, but you will be delighted to know that Katelyn Emerson, who we had as a young artist a few years ago, won the First Place Prize in the National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance. This prize includes \$3000 in cash and career development assistance from Karen McFarlane Artists, \$10,000 with a Gala Solo Recital on the Jordan Family Organ in Columbus, Georgia, a performance during the 2018 AGO National Convention, and a CD recording on the Pro Organo label. I caught up with Katelyn while riding the bus to one of the concert venues and she is a beautiful, outgoing, accomplished young woman along with being a fine organist! We should be proud that we helped “pad her resume” as she began this journey.

Our AGO board is in the process of finalizing programs for next season. Please take note that the first meeting on September 9, will be at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and will be the installation of officers. We will have a meal prepared by Lisa Harrison. There will be more details on this as the date approaches.

Congratulations to Meggie Snyder, one of our Kolkema Scholarship recipients, on being accepted to Interlochen to study during the next academic year. We wish her much success with her studies.

Finally, there will be summer organ concerts at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church on July 1 & 2 starting at noon and ending shortly after 1:00. If you are downtown at the Art Fair and need to rest your feet in some shade come on in, and while you are there, check the Treasure Sale. The ladies tell me that there are some really good items for sale this year.

Sincerely,  
*Caron Farmer*

**Rev. Kenneth Michnay, Chaplain of the  
Muskegon-Lakeshore Chapter,  
Celebrates Fiftieth Anniversary of Ordination**

**Read all about it on page 5 of the newsletter.**



**Muskegon-Lakeshore Chapter  
2016-2017**

Your Muskegon-Lakeshore Board is busy making final plans for next year...just know that it will be great and we'll share it with you in our August newsletter. Stay tuned!

**Feeding the Soul of the City  
2016-2017**

All performances are held  
Tuesdays from 12:15 to 12:45 p.m.  
unless otherwise noted.

We will print the new schedule as soon  
as it is available.

**Membership Renewal for 2016-2017**

I encourage each of you to login now and make sure all of your information and your email address is correct (some of you have changed that during the year). If you need a reminder...User Name is your first initial plus your last name. Password=membership number. This number can be found on your TAO label or I can provide this for you if you didn't save it when you set up your account originally.

**Chapter Member Dues**

Regular

**\$100**

Special (age 65 or over, under 21, or disabled)

**\$75**

Partner (2nd member at same address, no TAO)

**\$75**

Student (with student id)

**\$40**

**Other Member Dues**

Dual Chapter (paid to second chapter)

**\$39**

Student Dual Chapter (paid to second chapter)

**\$13**

Chapter Friend

**\$35**

**[Thank you to the 17 members who have already logged on and taken care of their renewal.](#)**

**[The remaining 13+ members still need to renew or contact me if they aren't planning to renew this year.](#)**

If anyone joined after the year began, your renewal date will go by your anniversary date. If these people would let me know if they are renewing that would help me when it comes time to print the directory.

**[Please encourage NEW people to join!](#)**

**Financial Report  
As of June 30, 2016**

General Fund

**\$1,048.57**

Scholarship Fund

**\$2,244.51**

Young Artist Fund

**\$633.00**



*Submitted by: Juanita R. Joiner, Treasurer  
Report created a day early for this publication.*

**2016 Pillar Church Summer Organ  
Concert Schedule**



**57 East 10th St.  
(Corner of 9th St. & College)  
Holland, MI**

|           |                         |
|-----------|-------------------------|
| July 6    | Joy Schroeder           |
| July 13   | Rob Hlebinsky           |
| July 20   | Thomas Fielding         |
| July 27   | Benjamin Kolodziej      |
| August 3  | Pamela Ruitter Feenstra |
| August 10 | Richard VanOss          |
| August 17 | David Schout            |
| August 24 | David Heinze            |
| August 31 | Jonathan Tuuk           |

Please take in as many of these concerts as you can...pair it with lunch and some shopping in downtown Holland.



## AGO NATIONAL CONVENTION REPORT

~ Caron Farmer

The AGO National Convention in Houston, TX, was an inspiring, rejuvenating experience. It was a chance to make new connections with some of the really big, important figures in our church music world. For example, on Sunday, June 26, I played an offertory piece written by Michael Bedford, a composer who I heard play another of his compositions in a small workshop setting. I was able to meet and talk to Rebecca Groom teVelde one of the editors of the Oxford University Press recent publications, one of which I reviewed recently in Pipenotes.

There were several notable programs at this convention. If you ever have the opportunity to hear Isabelle Demers, you must hear her. She is a refined, articulate performer and very amusing as a speaker as well. David Cherwien does great hymn festivals and there is nothing more uplifting than a church filled with great singers singing great hymns. Wow! Finally, the final program of the convention was “over the top.” One of the astronauts on the space station greeted us from way up there. After that surprising greeting, we heard a program organized by David Aaron Miller of Hildegard von Bingen tunes interspersed with contemporary music and spectacular images projected on a huge screen of our world and its galaxies.

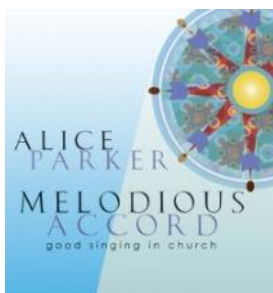
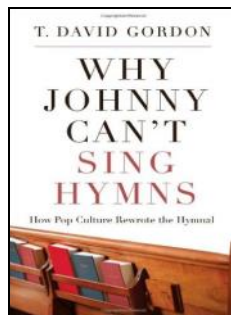
I highly recommend your attending one of these conventions. The next regional convention will be in Youngstown, Ohio. Please put this on your calendar for next summer. The dates are July 2 - 6. You will not regret attending an AGO convention, I promise. Give yourself the opportunity to become inspired about church music by attending a convention. If you want to really plan ahead, the next national convention will be in Kansas City, 2017.

### GOOD READ? YOU DECIDE!

I know that many of our members love to read and since we're in the lazy days of summer, I thought I'd give a couple of suggestions that just might peak your interest about "singing in church". I've printed an article on page 4 written by Jonathan Algrer entitled: "15 Reasons We Should Still Be Using Hymnals". I found it to be very interesting and very thought provoking. If you really enjoyed that article, I'm also providing a link to another article..."Why WOULD Anyone Sing in Church These Days?" [CLICK HERE](#)

### BOOK SUGGESTIONS:

**Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns**  
by T. David Gordon



**Melodious Accord**  
by Alice Parker

### CONGRATULATIONS

Meggie Snyder  
Headed To Interlochen



Meggie has been accepted at Interlochen Arts Academy to study organ. She has attended two POE's and was the recipient of our Irene Kolkema Scholarship last year. Currently she is studying organ with Rob Hlebinsky. While at Interlochen she will be studying with Tom Bara. Congratulations, Meggie! We are so proud of you!

## 15 REASONS WE SHOULD STILL BE USING HYMNALS

~ Jonathan Algner

Unfortunately, many churches have removed their hymnals from the pews, but I think they are important symbols for worshiping congregations. Here are some of the reasons why.

1. **Hymnals actually teach music.** We're making less music than ever before. Oh, to be sure, there's lots of music going on around us, but very few people are actually making it. We're just consuming it, or at the very most, singing along with music someone else made first. But even an untrained musician can look at the words and music in the hymnal and learn to follow melodic direction and rhythmic value.
2. **Hymnals set a performance standard.** Contemporary worship music is based on recording instead of notation. This is endlessly confusing, and it opens each song up to individual interpretation. Without notation, it is exceedingly hard to sing well as a congregation. Hymnals fix that. Everybody has the same notation, so we all know how the song is supposed to go.
3. **Hymnals integrate the music and text.** Words on a screen give no musical information. Hymnals fix that. Singers aren't dependent upon learning the song by rote.
4. **Hymnals allow you to sing anywhere.** When you depend on projection to display hymn texts, you're bound to do your music making in a space outfitted with sufficient media.
5. **Hymnals allow people to take possession of the music.** I know congregants that love to find out the next Sunday's hymns during the previous week, so they can open up their hymnal, refresh the words, and work on their part so they're prepared to lend their voices. Preparation like that is one of the ways music making becomes a worshipful activity. Hymnals make it possible for people to have easy access to the very best songs.
6. **Hymnals don't screw things up.** Unless some kid has ripped the page out of your hymnal, you know the hymn you're looking for is going to be there. Technology lets us down all the time, and if it happens in the middle of a song or hymn, you're sunk.
7. **Hymnals are as helpful as the singer needs them to be.** It's hard to ignore a screen, no matter how well I know the song being sung. Its mere presence sends most people into a trance. There are times I must pay close attention to the hymnal. I recently sang the hymn "Ye watchers and ye holy ones" in a service. I know of the hymn, and I know LASST UNS ERFREUEN, but I didn't grow up singing it. I had to follow the entire time. I needed the hymnal. Last Saturday, I sang in the choir for a funeral. It was a beautiful service; a reflection on a life well-lived in service of the kingdom. When it came time for the final hymn, "Blessed Assurance," I rose, opened the hymnal, and held it out, but didn't look at it once. I long ago internalized every note and word of this hymn. I was free to look out into the congregation, making eye contact, sharing the ethos of the experience with others.
8. **Hymnals are a theological textbook.** There is no perfect hymnal, but well-crafted hymnals are reliable sources of theological information.
9. **Hymnals involve tactile action.** Hymnals make the people work. Picking up the hymnal, finding the right page, and holding it up to sing grounds you in time and space. Feeling the weight in your hand engages you in the activity more than staring at a screen ever could.
10. **Hymnals are not particularly distracting.** Screens are actually very difficult to follow. Whenever I'm forced to read a projected text, I am so easily lost in the colors, backgrounds, and movements. I find myself anticipating when the next slide will be advanced. When I'm using a hymnal, none of that comes into play. I have the words and music, and I don't even have to worry about turning the page.
11. **Hymnals preserve the aesthetics of the Sanctuary.** There is rarely a good place to hang a screen. Even worse, when installed into older spaces, the result can be a visual nightmare. Don't be mistaken. It may be a secondary issue, but it's also a theological one. There is a particularly painful before and after example at Second Baptist Church in Houston, Texas. The beautiful organ pipe arrangement and the stained glass baptistry are now masked by three massive projection screens. The *en chamade* were completely removed.
12. **Hymnals confront us with "new" songs.** We tend to go back to our favorite songs too often. It's easy to fall into a rut. I recently looked back at a year's worth of bulletins, and was a little embarrassed at how much we had sung several hymns. Not that there was anything wrong with the hymns, but the congregation needs to be stretched to learn unfamiliar songs. When I was a kid, I enjoyed learning to play my favorite hymns on the piano from my mom's 1975 Baptist Hymnal. After a while, while flipping through the book, I

I would run into hymns again and again. Finally, I would stop and take a look. Often, these “new” hymns turned out to be great sources of encouragement to me, even though they were once unfamiliar and foreign.

13. **Hymnals give validity to new hymns.** New hymns are often defined by the company they keep. When new hymnals are published, if they’re done well, they will introduce us to newer songs to be added to the ranks of hymnody. The fact that these songs are now sandwiched in between hymns like “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty” and “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken,” adds to their validity.

14. **Hymnals make songs less disposable.** Okay, obviously you can throw a hymnal away if you want, but text on a screen is there one second and gone the next. There’s no visible permanence. Hymnals are symbols of consistency. They give life and breath to the great songs. They demonstrate that what we sing is worth keeping around.

15. **Hymnals give congregational singing back to the people.** Congregations watching screens are at the mercy of whoever is sitting behind the computer. Holding hymnals symbolizes the fact that the voice of the congregation is the primary instrument in corporate worship.

What are your thoughts? Re-read Caron’s second paragraph on page 3 where she wrote about David Cherwien and hymn festivals. I hope some of you will respond back to me...perhaps with an article.

## Muskegon-Lakeshore’s Chaplain Celebrates Fiftieth Anniversary of Ordination



On June 5, 2016, the congregation of Dr. Martin Luther Lutheran Church, Muskegon, Michigan celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of ordination of the **Rev. Kenneth Michnay**. This milestone of service to Christ’s church was observed with a celebratory service of Holy Communion led by Pastor Michnay; this Eucharist service took place exactly fifty years to the day from when Pastor Michnay presided at communion for the first time. The sermon was preached by the Synod Bishop, the Rev. Wilma S. Kucharek and included words of recognition of the various roles in which Pastor Michnay has served during these past fifty years. A brass quartet joined the organ in enriching the music during worship. At the conclusion of worship, Bishop Kucharek presented the honoree with a Testimonial of Commendation and Gratitude in Recognition of the Fiftieth Anniversary of Ordination on behalf of the Slovak Zion Synod and the ELCA. A catered lunch followed worship, during which words of congratulations were offered by the congregation’s interim pastor, the Rev. Chris Anderson, and by Bishop Kucharek from the Synod; the menu of the luncheon featured foods found in the congregation’s 100th anniversary cookbook.

Kenneth Michnay was born in Cleveland and graduated from Parma Senior High School and Wittenberg University, Springfield, Ohio with an interdepartmental major in English, History, and Religion. A Masters of Divinity was conferred upon him by the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1966. He was ordained on June 1, 1966; his first Call was to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Stafford Springs, CT, where he served nearly ten years. His second Call was to Dr. Martin Luther Lutheran Church, in Muskegon, MI, where he served from March 1976 to August 2001. His next Call was from the ELCA’s Division for Global Mission, serving as a Missionary teaching English at the Evanjelicka Bohoslovecka Fakulta, University Komenskeho (Evangelical Lutheran Seminary, Comenius University) in Bratislava, Slovakia. He returned to the United States in 2005, retiring at the end of that year.

Pastor Michnay has been Christ’s witness in service in the wider church through service on various boards and committees in the synod, most notably serving on Synod Council, as Chairperson of the Synod’s Worship & Music Committee where he was affectionately known as the “liturgical czar,” and as pastor-supervisor of seminary students from Central and Eastern Europe facilitated by the Synod and hosted by the congregation in Muskegon. His ecumenical service is noteworthy in his service as an Associate Priest in the Episcopal Church.

***Your colleagues in the Muskegon-Lakeshore Chapter congratulate you on this special honor. May you continue to serve where needed.***





*Next Meeting...*

**September 9, 2016**

## MISSION STATEMENT

The American Guild of Organists is an organization devoted to the advancement of organ and church music in the United States.

Since its founding in 1896, the Guild has grown from approximately 100 members clustered around New York to over 24,000 nationwide, with chapters in all 50 states and abroad. Synagogues and churches of all denominations and sizes are represented in the Guild's membership, which ranges from students to world-renowned recitalists and teachers.

The Muskegon-Lakeshore Chapter currently has some 30 members serving churches throughout the Western Michigan area.

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