

A.G.O. Pipe Notes

October 2019



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 ~ Richard Hoogterp

It was gratifying that so many of us were able to attend *Evensong* at St. John's Episcopal Church in Grand Haven on September 15. The service of prayer and music, in the Episcopal tradition, was led by Dr. Jared Cramer and our Chaplain, Reverend Kenneth Michnay, with organist Nicholas Palmer. It seems particularly fitting to me that we have celebrated the beginning of a chapter program year and installation of officers in this way again in 2019. I was struck by the powerful efficacy of simple chanting between clergy and assembly, a thoughtful message relating to the importance of music in worship, and the singing of Psalms and hymns.

I follow with interest the careers of organists who have performed in our chapter Young Artists series.

- ***Katelyn Emerson** (2011) played recitals (two days apart) at the Grand Rapids and Buffalo AGO Regional Conventions.
- ***Aaron Tan** (2013) won the 2018 NYACOP and performs widely and is represented by MacFarlane Inc.
- ***David Heinze** ((2014) performed at Dimnent Chapel in Holland for the Grand Rapids convention.
- ***Abigail Rockwood** (2015), a former piano student of Susan Tindall, performed with a chamber ensemble (at the Church she serves, St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, Buffalo, NY) for the Northeast Region Convention.
- ***Chase Loomer** (2016) was a finalist in the prestigious Longwood Gardens Competition.
- ***Monica Csausz** (2017) performed a recital deemed "brilliant" for those attending the Mid-Atlantic Convention.
- ***Jillian Gardner** (2018) performed a recital for the Northeast Region Convention in Milwaukee.

How fortunate we have been for the generosity of the churches which annually sponsor fine young organists under Muskegon-Lakeshore AGO auspices. Incidentally, by accessing Jillian's web-site, you may experience a scintillating performance of her transcription of the "Jupiter" movement from *The Planets*.

First Presbyterian Church in Grand Haven will present *Pipes Spooktacular* (the title is self-explanatory) at 3:00 PM on Sunday, October 27, 2019. This program has successfully introduced music for the organ which is unusual, varied and interesting to people of all ages. Rob Hlebinsky welcomes anyone who would be willing to prepare and perform a suitably macabre selection to take part in the festivities. I am sorry not to have attended *Spooktacular* on previous occasions because Eileen and I are involved in a service at her St. Joseph's Parish (Wright Township) on the same day these past years.

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Muskegon-Lakeshore AGO Chapter

2019-2020 Programs

Complete details will be printed in your directory.

October 27, 2019 (Sunday) 4 p.m.

"Pipes Spooktacular"

First Presbyterian Church—Grand Haven

November 10, 2019 (Sunday) 3 p.m.

"Young Artist: Matthew Wachtman"

Central United Methodist Church—Muskegon

December—No Scheduled Meeting

January 10, 2020 (Friday) 6:30 p.m.

"Twelfth Night Party"

Home of Shane Arkels—Muskegon

February 29, 2020 (Saturday) 9-11a.m.

"Choral Workshop" — Dr. Michael Match

Mona Shores MS Choir Room—Muskegon

March 15, 2020 (Sunday) 3 p.m.

"In Memoriam: A Members' Recital"

First Congregational Church UCC—Muskegon

April 19, 2020 (Sunday) 4 p.m.

"Young Artist: Emily Amos"

First Presbyterian Church—Grand Haven

May 8, 2020 (Friday) Time TBA

"60th Anniversary Banquet and Celebration"

Prince of Peace Catholic Church—Muskegon

Feeding the Soul of the City

2019-2020

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

October 22, 2019

"Matthew Ball, boogie-woogie piano"

November 26, 2019

"Lee Murdock, The Christmas Ship" (folk music)

December 8, 2019 5 p.m.

"Festival of Lessons & Carols"

Grand Rapids Choir of Men and Boys

December 17, 2019

"Christmas at the Organ" Peter Kurdziel

February 25, 2020

"Grand Valley Faculty Brass Quintet"

March 24, 2020

"Grand Rapids Guitar Quartet"

April 14, 2020

"Gregory Maytan, violin"

May 26, 2020

"Quintessence, Woodwind Quintet"

June 9, 2020

"Denise Newell, mezzo soprano and Caron Farmer, piano"

Grand Rapids Chapter: October 21 at 7 p.m.

Organ Concert by Wolfgang Rubsam

Mayflower Congregational Church — GR

Holland Chapter: October 18 at 7 p.m.

Music of Japan for Organ, Marimba and Taiko
Drummers — Dimnent Chapel, Hope College

A Financial Report As of September, 2019

**General Fund
\$2,764.76**

**Scholarship Fund
\$3,290.51**

**Young Artist Fund
\$543.00**



*Submitted by: Juanita R. Joiner, Treasurer
(Feel free to ask for a more detailed report.)*

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Our membership for 2019-2020 now stands at 34. Please join me in welcoming Greg Borgman, organ enthusiast and supporter of each of you.

**Directories have all been delivered or mailed.
Please double check that you have your copy
in a safe place.**

PERHAPS OF INTEREST: A collection of the music of J.S. Bach (choral works, organ works, etc.) can be found by going to **YouTube** and search **Netherlands Bach Society**. Give it a try!

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David Gritter has done fine work maintaining and expanding our chapter web-site and I encourage you to peruse it. The extensive information about local organs is exceptional and I make frequent use of that section. Juanita Joiner provides year-in and year-out work as Chapter Treasurer, in addition to preparing *Pipe Notes* and keeping careful membership records and preparing our outstanding Membership Directory Books. We owe each a debt of gratitude for his/her efforts on behalf of the Muskegon-Lakeshore Chapter.

Carry on,

A Look Down Memory Lane — Installation Service from 2006

~The Rev. Kenneth Michnay

Whenever a Lutheran Pastor like me is asked to talk about music, it's tempting to quote some of the wonderful things Martin Luther said on the subject: how he called music one of God's greatest gifts and how it should be honored almost as much, but not quite as much, as theology. In his *Table Talk* he observed that nobody should be ordained to the Holy Office of the Ministry unless that person had training in music. He also commented on how powerful music is to bring solace to the "sad and sorrowful mind, *refreshing* the heart and *giving* it a certain peace and calm." That last quote is part of the caption on a picture I have hanging in my home. It shows Luther strumming on his lute, surrounded by his wife Katie and their children, and with his colleague Philip Melancthon at a table in the background, grasping a tankard of beer; so Philip was evidently enjoying two sources of peace and calm.

Another temptation is to talk about what a source of support and encouragement it is to have an organization like the American Guild of Organists. Trained musicians in the Church are, alas, a rare breed—and getting even more rare—so it's nice to know that you aren't the only one around dedicated to the weekly task of leading God's people in worship and trying to do it in the most disciplined and caring way you can.

So let me give in to the second temptation and talk about the calling church musicians follow, your need for mutual support, and the discipline you take on as you practice your art. I'd like to get into the subject by talking about something that we might not immediately connect with this calling, and that's Stewardship. Anyone who's ever had anything to do with a church knows that Stewardship is an important concern, especially when finances are an issue, which is to say almost all the time. Generally we try to make it clear that Stewardship isn't just about money; but since it's also about money, that colors a lot of what people say on the subject. I'd like to put all the money considerations to one side and talk about Stewardship in its more basic sense, and that is the way we take care of, develop, and put to use whatever gifts that we have.

Jesus once told a parable about a man who goes away and leaves his servants in charge of his household finances, entrusting each of them with different amounts of money, "each according to his ability." The men who had received five bags of gold and two bags of gold invested them and doubled their value. The man who had received one bag of gold hid it in a hole in the ground. He did nothing to increase its value, because he was afraid to take risks. The first two are commended as "good and faithful" servants. The other is condemned as a "worthless, lazy servant." Some translations of the Bible use the word talents rather than bags of gold in this story. A talent was about fifteen years' worth of wages for a laborer. But when we use the word talent, we usually mean a special ability somebody has: a gift. And I think that the parable works just as well when we think of talents as gifts or abilities rather than amounts of money. The one who gave us whatever talents we have, whatever gifts, wants us to work to increase their value. The giver of all gifts, of course, is God. If musical gifts are among our talents, God the Giver is pleased when we discipline ourselves to develop our musical gifts. It's a matter of Stewardship.

When St. Paul wrote to the Romans about offering themselves to God as "a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for his acceptance, the worship offered by mind and heart," he was talking about how they were to think of themselves as united with Christ and with one another in the same way a body is made up of different limbs and organs, each with its own unique and vital purpose. "Let us use the different gifts allotted to each of us by God's grace..." And then he goes on to list some examples, such as inspired utterance, administration, teaching, counseling, leadership, service to others. He didn't, of course, but he might

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But an unfortunate thing is happening in the Church these days. It seems as though many Christian churches value the musical gifts of their people only if they aren't very good at it. The ones who put in the time and devotion it takes to become skilled organists, for example, may be dismissed as elitists—along with the music they have taken the time to learn to play properly, music composed by men and women who have been good stewards of their special craft.

It doesn't work that way in sports. Lots of people have athletic abilities, talents; but television sponsors won't spend millions for a minute of advertising time if the football game is played by some guys who like to throw a ball around on weekends, even though those guys may have some athletic talent. We in America build expensive stadiums and pay enormous amounts of money to watch the players who have honed their skills. We admire the people who train long hours, even years, to compete in the Olympics; but nobody would pay to see somebody who just likes to skate around an ice rink. Nobody would ever dream of calling those who have developed their athletic skills elitists; but people don't notice the inconsistency when they dismiss trained musicians and composers as elitists.

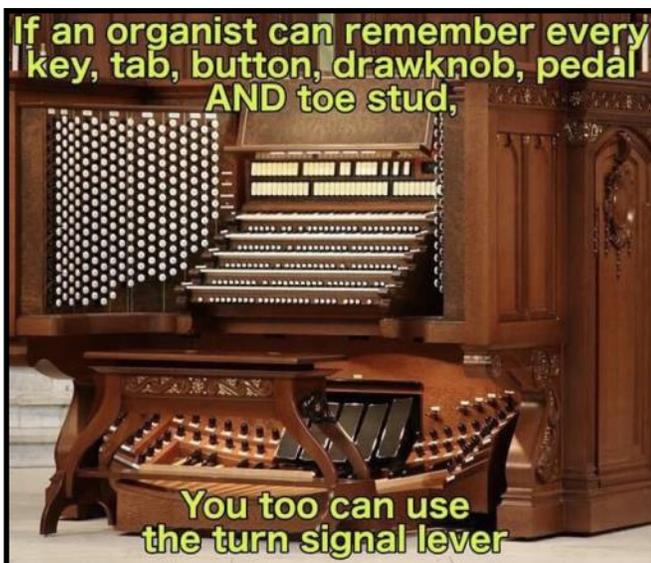
As a local chapter of the American Guild of Organists, we have a problem and an opportunity. The problem is that the churches we serve aren't always good stewards of our musical talents even if we may try to be. And so it's up to us to encourage a greater value to be set on the gift of music that God has given the Church and on the people who try to be good stewards of their musical gifts. This Chapter is to be commended for its efforts to help young people discover their own musical talents and help them to develop those talents. That's the opportunity.

Good church music takes devotion and discipline in the selecting of what's to be used as well as in the performing of it. In the *Lutheran Book of Worship* there's a wonderful little paragraph in the "Notes on the Liturgy" where it talks about music at weddings and funerals. The same rubric is used for both:

Wherever music is employed in the service, and by whatever instruments or voices, it should be high-quality examples of the art of composition, not cloud communication of the content and mood of the service with musical triteness or associations bordering on sentimentality, and be within the ability of the performers at hand to play or sing with assurance.

I especially love that last phrase: "and be within the ability of the performers at hand to play or sing with assurance." I invite you to practice your craft like "good and faithful" stewards, so that music will never be mere decoration for worship but may help the community of faith to strengthen each other in service. By being good stewards of musical gifts and by honoring those who receive our ministries, we help others become better stewards of whatever gifts they have. And far from being elitist show-offs, we will be providing what God in his grace has made available in the rich musical tradition of the whole Church, "high-quality examples of the art of composition" and "performers at hand *who can play and sing with assurance.*"

Sometimes we need a little humor. These two gems just had to be included.



This was shared on Facebook by John Riddle, former Muskegon-Lakeshore member and organist.



A good friend of mine who attends all of our programs sent this to me.

Please join us for a

Spooktacular!

Organ Recital

The program will include the famous Toccata and Fugue in D Minor,
by J. S. Bach as well as other spine chilling pieces.



Sunday, October 27

4:00 p.m.

All who dare are
welcome to attend!

Costumes encouraged!

Admission is free



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
508 FRANKLIN,
GRAND HAVEN, MI 49417
616.842.6730

Next Meeting

October 27

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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