

THE COUPLER

THE DEAN'S MESSAGE



Pilgrims on a Covid journey

A couple of years ago, as I was preparing to take my parish choir on a pilgrimage/residency, I read a wonderful book, *The Art of Pilgrimage* by Phil Cousineau.

It is full of questions and explorations of what it is to be a pilgrim, to go on pilgrimage, instead of being a tourist and making trips.

Inside the back cover I made some notes in addition to all the markings I made within the text. This week I came across something I had written in response to something in the book, but I had made no notation of why: "If we ask God to be involved in this pilgrimage, He - She - They will be involved in messy, amazing, unmeasurable heaps. Completely."

I don't know where that came from, but I believe it is true.

And it struck me that perhaps this is happening these days, nine-plus months into the pandemic--a pilgrimage of its own. If we ask the Divine to be

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

DECEMBER 2020

IN THIS ISSUE



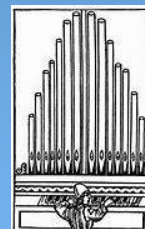
A chapter colleague shares her story of a moment of consternation at the console.

3



This month's Member Spotlight focuses on chapter treasurer Rob Church.

4



Area musicians are planning virtual events, as well as some live ones with special precautions.

5

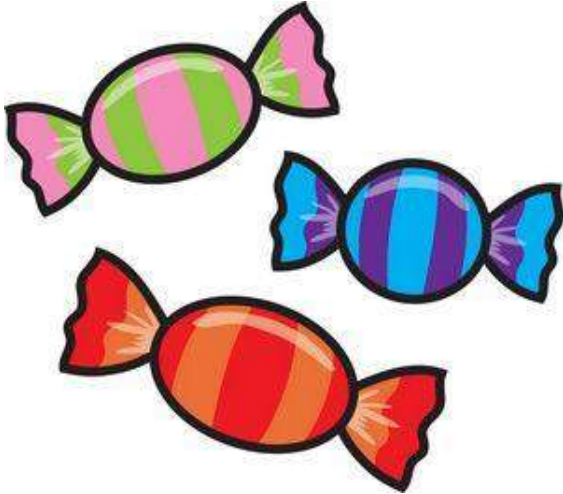
Mark Your Calendar!

Our Dec. 14 online chapter program, "Bonbons for Advent and Christmas," will share ideas for easy seasonal music. It will be followed by a social hour on Zoom. See Page 2.

DECEMBER CHAPTER EVENT

Bonbons for Advent and Christmas

Always on the lookout for easy seasonal music? Tune in to our chapter's Facebook page on Monday, Dec. 14, at 7:30 pm for our December program featuring short, delectable pieces suitable for Advent and Christmas. You do not have to be a Facebook member to listen to this program.



Board and lifetime members will play pieces by a wide variety of composers including Aaron David Miller, Gilbert Martin, J.S. Bach, Pietro Yon, Dietrich Buxtehude, Keith Chapman, Michael Burkhardt, Mark Sedio and Theodore Dubois.

If you like what you hear, you might jot down the titles and publishers to add them to your own collections.

We recommend high-quality speakers or headphones for the best listening experience.

The Facebook program will be followed by a Zoom social hour. Watch for an email that will announce how to join that session.

PAST CHAPTER PROGRAMS NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

Two of our fall chapter programs are available online.

The Nov. 16 program, in which chapter members Joy-Leilani Garbutt and Eileen Guenther discussed Joy's research on women composers in France, is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPf8xM3RuOo>.

You can also watch the Oct. 25 tri-chapter Pipes Spectacular featuring Nicholas Sheehan at the organ at the Washington National Cathedral. Go to: <https://cathedral.org/event/tri-chapter-american-guild-of-organists-online-pipe-spectacular/>.

LET ME TELL YOU...

Beware of Paper Clips



DIANE WITH AN ERRANT CLIP

By Diane Heath

Sermons at the Methodist church in Martinsville, Indiana, were long--a good 30 minutes long. The little Schantz organ was tucked in a corner. No one would notice if the organist dusted the keys.

No one would notice pencils being put away in their cup. No one would notice a stray paper clip on the floor or see the organist reach her slender fingers between the organ pedals to neaten things up.

The paper clip maneuver required an acute bend of the torso and tuck of the shoulder under the bottom manual. On that particular day it also involved a slight bend of the head into the General 6 piston.

With feet planted firmly on the pedals, and shoulder lodged immovably under the Great manual, the sermon was interrupted for a Very Long Time.

One benefit of AGO membership that we are missing in the time of Covid-19 is in-person fellowship. Chapter get-togethers provide the chance to swap tales about the quirks of our jobs – and we do have some stories!

So, please tell us what is the oddest...scariest...funniest...most spiritual thing that has happened to you as an organist? What is your wackiest wedding tale?

We'd like to share some of your stories in upcoming newsletters. There's no need to name names (except your own). Email them to pathenry33@gmail.com. Include a photo if you'd like.

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THE COUPLER

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Pat Henry,
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To contact the DC AGO
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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Rob Church, DC chapter treasurer

What first got you interested in the organ?

I'm a lifelong Episcopalian, and I grew up hearing and watching the organist in the church service. My parents sent me to piano lessons when I was 6, but the organ looked much cooler with all its keyboards, pedals and controls. I knew I wanted to learn to play it and, at age 14, I began organ lessons.

Tell us more about yourself.

I have a BS in economics with a minor in organ. I also have a master's in finance, which is what



prepared me for my day job: working on the trading desk at Fannie Mae.

I hold the CAGO certificate and one of these days I'll get to the AAGO certificate.

I'm the organist and choirmaster at St. David's Episcopal Church in DC.

What do you value most about the AGO?

I value the camaraderie to share in something with others who are also passionate about organ music and church music. I also value the educational opportunities the AGO offers to its members.

Who are your favorite composers?

That's a tough question, so many to be honest, but of course some of my favorites are Bach, Handel,

Franck, Vierne and Durufle. I also especially love English choral composers like Purcell, Parry, Stanford, Howells and Elgar.

What do you like to do when you are not on the organ bench?

In the summer I enjoy spending as much time as I can on my boat, which I keep on the Chesapeake Bay. Wakeboarding and fishing are my favorite boating activities. In the fall I enjoy mountain biking and camping, and in the winter, snow sports like skiing, snowmobiling and even dog sledding! I also enjoy traveling as much as I can, which isn't nearly as often as I like.

I also have a love of cars, especially '90s and early 2000s German machines.

AGO Membership Assistance Program

Throughout the week of OrganFest 2020 in July the national Guild shared a Donate button, providing everyone with the opportunity to contribute to a fund that would help membership renewals for members who had experienced job loss due to Covid-19. If you know of a member who has lost income due to the effects of the pandemic and cannot afford to renew his or her membership, please send their information to elizabeth.george@agohq.org.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Sunday, Dec. 13, 4 pm: Jordan Prescott (St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Ellicott City, Md.) plays a livestream recital at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America in Northeast DC. Log onto myfranciscan.org to view.

Thursday, Dec. 31, 6 pm: St. Columba's Episcopal Church presents a one-hour online New Year's Eve Concert to benefit Housing Up. Performers will include Rosa Lamoreaux, Ann Colgrove, Diane Heath, Anne and David Timpane and Sonya Sutton. Free-will donation. The video will be on YouTube: tinyurl.com/columbayoutube.

2021

Sunday, Jan. 10, 3:30 pm: Paul Hardy, principal organist at St. Matthew's Cathedral, plays a recital at the cathedral, 1725 Rhode Island Ave. NW. Masks and social-distancing will be observed. Also to be [live-streamed](#). For more information, visit the Cathedral [website](#). Donations accepted, but not required.

Sunday, Jan. 10, 4 pm: David Houston (St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, College Park, Md.) plays a livestream recital at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America in Northeast DC. Log onto myfranciscan.org to view.

Sunday, Feb. 14, 4 pm: Carol Feather Martin (Trinity Presbyterian Church, Arlington, Va.) plays a livestream recital at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America in Northeast DC. Log onto myfranciscan.org to view.

Wednesday, Feb. 17, 12:40 pm: Joy-Leilani Garbutt plays a recital at St. Matthew's Cathedral, 1725 Rhode Island Ave. NW. Masks and social-distancing will be observed. Also to be [live-streamed](#). For more information, visit the Cathedral [website](#). Donations accepted, but not required.

Sunday, Feb. 21, 3:30 pm: David Lang plays a recital at St. Matthew's Cathedral, 1725 Rhode Island Ave. NW. Masks and social-distancing will be observed. Also to be [live-streamed](#). For more information, visit the Cathedral [website](#). Donations accepted, but not required.

Sunday, March 14, 4 pm: Brass of Peace (Sylvia Alimena and Lisa Tyler) plays a livestream recital at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America in Northeast DC. Log onto myfranciscan.org to view.

Members are encouraged to submit recitals and concerts to dcagochapter@gmail.com for public listing on the DC AGO website as well as in the newsletter.

Music at Midday

Fridays, 12:15-1 pm at National City Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 5 Thomas Circle NW. Concerts are offered live (social distancing in effect; masks required) and also broadcast on the NCCC [YouTube channel](#). Admission is free, though donations are accepted.

Dec. 4: "A Baroque Christmas" featuring organist **Kimberly Hess** of Arlington, Va.; soprano Erin Bullock; violinists Daniel Pierson and Mary Thulson; and cellist Timothy Thulson. Instrumental and vocal Christmas masterpieces by Bach, Corelli and Scarlatti.

Dec. 11: Eric Bowman, organist (Charles Town, WV)

Prelude on "Noel Nouvelet" – Malcolm Archer; Variations on a Burgundian Noel – Andre Fleury; See, Amid the Winter's Snow – arr. David Willcocks; Prelude on "Es ist ein Ros entsprungen" – Gordon Young; Fum, Fum, Fum – arr. Richard Lind; Improvisation on "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" – Myron Roberts

Dec. 18: Jackson Borges, organist (Rehoboth Beach, DE)

Noël in d – Louis-Claude d'Aquin; In the Bleak Midwinter – arr. Allen Orton Gibbs; Carol Rhapsody – Richard Purvis; Variations on "O Laufet, Ihr Hirten" – Max Drischner; Meditation on "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" – Jackson Borges; Toccata en Ré Majeur – Marcel Lanquetuit

December 25 – NO RECITAL (Christmas)

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Please advise the web administrator at pathenry33@gmail.com if any position has been filled.

Maryland

Organist, First Church of Christ Scientist, 7901 Connecticut Ave., Chevy Chase.

Organist will provide music for Sunday/Thanksgiving morning and Wednesday evening services. Position could be shared. Submit a resume, references and three recent recordings to Joan Beecham at jmckenzieb@hotmail.com or call 301- 929-8624.

Director of Music (organist/pianist/director of church choirs), Oxon Hill United Methodist Church, 6400 Livingston Road, Oxon Hill.

A minimum of a bachelor's degree in music or related training is preferred. Email cover letter and resume to oxonhillumcmd@gmail.com.

Virginia

Organist/pianist, Pender United Methodist Church, 12401 Alder Woods Drive, Fairfax

Minimum of 10 hours per week. Apply [here](#).

Part-time Catholic Mass pianist/organist, 1099 position with Music Ministry International at Fort Belvoir. Apply at <https://music-ministry.jobsoid.com>.

The Dean's Message from Page 1

involved in our journey these days, no doubt He - She - They will manifest in multiple amazing ways. But chances are, because of our mindset during the pandemic, it will be very messy for us to try to understand.

One good place I see the Divine in action these days is in my return to riding my bicycle. For several years in Atlanta and LA, I got around by bike and, when needed, by public transit. I called it "Car-free, Care-free." Others (and myself at times) called it stupid.

Back in March, when there were so few cars on the road, I found it safe again to venture out into the streets, and I gradually built up my endurance for the small seat and lack of suspension on my road bike. I also found that my extra-sensory alertness returned as well as a trust of my balance and focus. This is one demonstrable good thing to come of all this chaos.

Even in the midst of the illness, anxiety, grief and pain, we have recently been reminded to take time to be thankful. And in looking ahead to the upcoming holidays, we are again reminded that even in the midst of craziness, we must find a way to be grateful for Yahweh's movement and presence in ways we do not yet understand.

I encourage you in the coming days to seek out God's movement in unprecedented ways, as well as to stay in touch with family and friends, to get some exercise, and get in some good time singing and playing.

All the best,
Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah,

David Houston

Want to help?

Our board members are steadily working to rebuild our chapter but we could use some help. Would you be willing to serve on a committee or as an adviser on either short- or long-term projects? If so, please contact us at dcagochapter@gmail.com.

Another way you can help is to encourage other organists to join the AGO. You can direct them to our website, www.dcago.org, where they can find issues of the Coupler (under the Media tab), upcoming events, job openings and a link to initiate their memberships (under the Membership tab).

Acoustic Design Services

Acoustical Design Collaborative, Ltd specializes in ecclesiastical spaces where natural acoustics for music and unobtrusive amplified speech are essential for worship celebration. We have completed over 90 successful projects involving the following services:

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- **Organ Space Planning**

We strive to provide our clients with professional advice based on prudent design criteria, cost-effective solutions, clear concise recommendations, open communication, all delivered in a timely manner. Please contact us to see how we can provide 'heavenly sounds' for your Sanctuary.



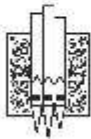
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2020 AGO Online Auction

The auction is open until 6 pm Dec. 4! [Please click here.](#)

This biennial event is a benefit for the AGO Annual Fund and supports educational programs and online resources for organists at every level of ability.

Please be generous and also share this worthy cause with your friends, family, students, and colleagues. Here they will find a wide range of gifts and stocking stuffers for Christmas.

THE COUPLER

Promote your event, product or cause with an advertisement in The Coupler, the official publication of the District of Columbia Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Rates are: full page (4 issues), \$100; half-page (4 issues), \$50; quarter page (4 issues), \$25. Email advertising requests to dcagochapter@gmail.com with "The Coupler" in the subject field. Make checks payable to DC Chapter, American Guild of Organists.

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