

THE COUPLER

THE DEAN'S MESSAGE



Dear DC AGO members,
A new year is upon us. If you can believe it, 2024 is here! It seems as if each year flies by. I hope the new year brings you all good health and prosperity.

Like many of you, I enjoy taking this time to assess my goals and personal habits. Recently, I have found great profit in applying the Pareto Principle to my evaluations. Often referred to as the 80/20 principle, it states that 80% of any output or results comes from 20% of the input or action. It is named after the Italian economist Vilfredo Federico Damaso Pareto, who noticed one day that 20% of the pea plants in his garden generated 80% of the healthy pea pods.

This observation caused him to think about uneven distribution. He thought about wealth and discovered that 80% of the land in Italy was owned by just 20% of the population. He investigated different industries and found that 80% of production typically came from just 20% of the companies. This "universal truth" about the
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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT ON GRACE OH



Grace plays Jehan Alain's Trois Danses in a concert in Taiwan in September under her original painting.

How did you become interested in the organ?

During high school, my father, an architect, designed the university chapel at Keimyung University in Korea. The mesmerizing sound of the organ during a visit inspired me to pursue a career as an organist.

What is your educational and professional background?

I began playing the piano at a young age, dedicating extensive hours to practice, even up to 13 hours a day at the age of 10. Despite initially studying non-musical subjects at a competitive boarding high school in Korea, my passion for the organ was ignited at the Keimyung Chapel. I decided to become an organist, winning a national competition just eight months after starting lessons.

I earned a full scholarship at Keimyung University, completing the bachelor's program in three years. During my family's one-year stay in the United States, where my father was a visiting scholar at the University of Pennsylvania, I received private lessons from Stefan Engels.

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THE COUPLER

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Send submissions to
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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT ON GRACE OH

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Later, I moved to the U.S., completing a master's degree at Westminster Choir College with Ken Cowan and a graduate performance diploma at Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University with Donald Sutherland.



GRACE WORKED AS A BARISTA AT HER FATHER'S SPECIALTY COFFEE SHOP IN KOREA IN SEPTEMBER.

I then started work on a doctor of musical arts degree at Catholic University of America with Jeremy Filsell.

After a year of DMA studies, I moved to Korea and Japan due to my husband's work. In Japan, I served as an organist at Yokohama Christ Church (Anglican) and studied with Yukiko Yamada and Rie Hiroe of the University of Tokyo.

Awarded the Deutschland Stipendium for three consecutive years, I achieved Konzert Examen from the Robert Schumann Hochschule Düsseldorf, Germany, under Jürgen Kursawa, receiving the two highest distinctions. I participated in various

competitions, including the Joseph Gabler International Organ Competition, Germany (first prize), L. Folcioni International Organ Competition, Italy (first prize), and secured second place and a special prize in the International Baroque Competition in München. I am grateful for the invaluable learning and experiences in my life.

What are the organ's biggest challenges and joys for you?

When engaging with music, I naturally pay detailed attention to factors like exact pitch of A440, tone color, volume, key weight, performance position and more. However, I often find that approaching the organ requires a broader perspective. The challenge lies in quickly adapting to various elements, including different pitches, acoustics, keyboard weights, changes in hand keyboard positions, and piston positions, all of which vary from one place to another. Recognizing that good registration forms the foundation of skillful playing, I invest significant time in creating optimal registrations. The greatest joy comes from practicing alone in a quiet church or cathedral – time spent in prayer and organ practice feels like a special gift from God, bringing joy, peace and healing.

Why are you an AGO member?

When I started working as an organist at First Presbyterian Church in Annapolis, I received an email from Betsy Lord, dean of the Annapolis chapter at the time, inviting me to join. During the

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application process, I discovered that dual chapter membership was an option. Since I missed the time of being active in DC in 2012-2013, I decided to become a dual chapter member by joining the DC chapter as well.

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

I strive to maximize my time with my children. During moments of quiet solitude, typically early in the morning or late at night, I thoroughly enjoy playing the piano, drawing and indulging in books and poetry.

What's an interesting fact you would like people to know about you?

-- I find solace in solitude as an introvert, not particularly inclined toward social interactions or quick text replies.

-- Growing up in a family that traveled to more than 40 countries, including across the United States, has left a lasting impact on me. As I age, the memories of those experiences become more vivid, inspiring me through the recollection of feelings, air, sounds, images and temperatures.

-- My father manages a specialty coffee shop in Korea, where he also imparts knowledge on roasting and trains baristas. I've been influenced by this and hold European Barista and Japanese UCC coffee certifications.

-- Similar to John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," I see the ultimate goal in my life as evolving into a true Christian over time.

Tell us a funny/odd thing that happened when you were on an organ bench.

I was once asked to play "Whatever Lola Wants, Lola Gets" on the organ for a funeral on Good Friday. Without knowing the music or having a score, I had to listen to it several times on YouTube. I couldn't help but wonder why God tasked me with playing this song during Holy Week.

Nevertheless, I arranged it as closely as possible, and I was relieved and grateful that the family was pleased with the outcome.

Oh to be featured in January's Music at the Monastery

Grace Oh will be the featured recitalist Jan. 14 at this month's Music at the Monastery program. Together with the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land, the DC AGO is proud to support this series of community outreach musical events. Chapter members present these events on the second Sunday of each month from September to May at 4 p.m. For more information on recitals, go to myfranciscan.org and click on the music tab. The monastery is at 1400 Quincy St. NE.

Other upcoming recitals are:

Feb. 11: Carol Feather (Trinity Presbyterian, Arlington, VA)

March 10: David Beatty (freelance organist, Annapolis, MD)

April 14: Nathan Ringkamp (St. Dominic Church, Washington, DC)

May 12: Iris Lan (freelance organist, Washington, DC)

The Monastery's Lively-Fulcher pipe organ was built in 1998 and contains 40 ranks of pipes over three manuals and pedal.

**POTOMAC CHAPTER
AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS**

**ANNUAL 12TH NIGHT
Celebration**

Monday | 8th | January
7:00 PM | 2024

All Saint's Episcopal Chevy Chase
3 Chevy Chase Circle - 20815

 **PRELUDE CONCERT AT 7PM**
Abigail Wood, Organist

CHORAL EVENSONG AT 7:30PM
FESTIVE RECEPTION AT 8PM



Twelfth Night Celebration

DC chapter members are invited to join the Potomac chapter for the annual Twelfth Night Celebration on Monday, Jan. 8, at All Saints Episcopal Church just over the DC border at 3 Chevy Chase Circle.

A concert will be presented by Abigail Wood, who placed first in the Quimby organ competition sponsored by the Potomac, DC, Northern Virginia and Winchester chapters. She is an organ performance major at Syracuse University studying with Dr. Anne Laver.

The 7 pm concert will be followed by choral evensong at 7:30 and a festive reception at 8 pm.

No RSVP is necessary.

Go to dcago.org for:

A continually updated list of organ recitals in our area, including our chapter's Music at the Monastery programs.

A plethora of job openings.

Names of substitute organists awaiting your call.

A list of organ teachers in the area.

Access to Couplers from prior months and years.

CHRIST CHURCH ON CAPITOL HILL

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Marvin Mills



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CASAVANT FRÈRES PIPE ORGAN, OPUS 3914

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2024

4:00 PM

FREE ADMISSION ~ RECEPTION FOLLOWS

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ORGAN EVENTS

Monday, Jan. 8, 7 pm: Twelfth Night celebration hosted by the Potomac Chapter at All Saints Episcopal Church, Chevy Chase, MD. 7 pm prelude; 7:30 pm Evensong and 8 pm reception. <https://www.potomacago.com>.

Sunday, Jan. 14, 4 pm: Grace Oh (First Presbyterian, Annapolis, MD) performs as part of Music at the Monastery, the members' recital series of the DC AGO chapter. Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land, 1400 Quincy St. NE.



Friday, Jan. 19, 8 pm: Dr. John J. Mitchell, left, performs on the Lively-Fulcher organ at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Arlington, VA. Venue host is Dr. Gregory Hooker, CAGO. A Northern Virginia AGO chapter program. <https://jjmitchellorganist.com> <https://www.stmarysarlington.org>.

Sunday, Feb. 4, 4 pm: Marvin Mills performs on the Casavant organ (Opus 3914) at Christ Church on Capitol Hill, 620 G St. SE. A reception follows.

Sunday, Feb. 11, 4 pm: Carol Feather (Trinity Presbyterian, Arlington, VA) performs as part of Music at the Monastery, the members' recital series of the DC AGO chapter. Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land, 1400 Quincy St. NE.

Sunday, Feb. 18, 2 pm: Kola Olowabi, University of Notre Dame organ professor, plays a Presidents Day recital at Washington National Cathedral, 3101 Wisconsin Ave. NW.

Friday, Feb. 24, 8 pm: Christa Rakich, right, performs on the Pasi organ at St. George's Episcopal Church, Arlington, VA. A Northern Virginia AGO chapter program. <https://www.oberlin.edu/christa-rakich>



Sunday, March 3, 8 pm: Gabriel Galdo performs on the new Kegg organ at the Chapel of Christ the King at Christendom College, Front Royal, VA. Music from Elgar Sonata No. 2, Reger, Hakim. Co-hosted by the Northern Virginia and Winchester AGO chapters. Facebook: <https://fb.me/e/1ut8ldIK4>

Monday, March 4, 12:10 pm: The Bach Consort presents *Sehet! Wir gehen hinauf gen Jerusalem*, BWV 159 in St. Mark's Capitol Hill's Downtown Cantata Series. Organist Jeffrey Kempes performs. **The program repeats Tuesday, March 5, 12:10 pm at Church of the Epiphany, 1317 G St. NW.**

Sunday, March 10, 4 pm: David Beatty (freelance organist, Annapolis, MD) performs as part of Music at the Monastery, the members' recital series of the DC AGO chapter. Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land at 1400 Quincy St. NE.

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ORGAN EVENTS

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Sunday, March 31, 2 pm: Thomas Sheehan plays an Easter recital at the National Cathedral, 3101 Wisconsin Ave. NW. No tickets required.

Monday, April 8, 12:10 pm: The Bach Consort presents *Ich lebe, mein Herze, zu deinem Ergötzen*, BWV 145 and organist John Walhausen performs as part of St. Mark's Capitol Hill Downtown Cantata Series.

The program repeats Tuesday, April 9, 12:10 pm at Church of the Epiphany, 1317 G St. NW.

Sunday, April 14, 4 pm: Nathan Ringkamp (St. Dominic Church, DC) performs as part of Music at the Monastery, the members' recital series of the DC AGO chapter. Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land at 1400 Quincy St. NE.

Friday, April 19, 8 pm: Janet Yieh, CAGO, performs on the Pasi organ at St. George Episcopal Church, Arlington, VA. Northern Virginia AGO chapter event. Venue Host: Dr. Benjamin J. Keseley.

JANET YIEH organist - Janet Yieh Organist, Home

Our Pipe Organ, Pasi Op. 28 – Music at Saint George's (saintgeorgesmusic.org)

Facebook: <https://fb.me/e/1myqYAhdx>

MUSIC AT MIDDAY TO RESUME IN FEBRUARY

There are no Music at Midday concerts in January. The spring season begins Friday, Feb. 2, with a recital for Black History Month performed by Roy Belfield Jr. Music at Midday generally occurs Fridays from 12:15 to 1 pm at National City Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 5 Thomas Circle NW. Free admission; donations gratefully accepted.



Free Lowrey "Holiday" Organ 1996-1998

Includes the original manual and many floppy disks containing songs to be played back on the organ. The sound is large and fills a room very well. The bass pedals all work, but sometimes you have to wiggle a pedal a little for it to sound. There is one dead key -- the highest F on the bottom keyboard. Contact Scott Flory at scott@theflorys.net. Pick up in Fairfax. https://reverb.com/item/70234611-lowrey-holiday-organ-1996-1998?utm_source=rev-ios-app&utm_medium=ios-share&utm_campaign=listing&utm_content=70234611

DEAN'S MESSAGE

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imbalance of inputs and outputs became known as the Pareto Principle, or the 80/20 rule.

How might the 80/20 rule impact your goalsetting this year? What are the 20% of your possessions you get the most value out of? What do you spend 20% of your time doing that gives you 80% of your fulfillment? Who are the 20% of people you're close to who make you the happiest? If you are a freelancer or entrepreneur, who are your best and most loyal clients or collaborators? How can you focus on strengthening those long-term relationships? Are there tasks or projects among the 80% that you can delegate or that you should drop?

I hope continuing to support and promote your local AGO chapter events will fall within your 20%! We have many wonderful activities lined up for 2024, starting with the annual Twelfth Night program hosted by the Potomac Chapter on Monday, Jan. 8, featuring a 30-minute prelude concert by Abigail Wood, the most recent winner of the Quimby Competition.

We will have several opportunities to explore the wonderful instruments of this city through a variety of organ crawls this spring, and our season will culminate with our annual Juneteenth Festival featuring a full day of workshops, presentations and concert performance focused on music by black composers.

I encourage you to stay engaged with us in 2024 and to share your thoughts, ideas and events so we can support one another in our various ministry journeys. Feel free to continue to make liberal use of our chapter email, dcagochapter@gmail.com.

I wish you much success in your musical and academic ventures this new year, and I look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming chapter events.

Grace & peace,
Paul Byssainthe, Jr.

Organist seeking help with research project

Tony Carson, an organist and doctor of ministry student at United Seminary of the Twin Cities in St. Paul, MN, is asking for input.

For his dissertation, he is researching the question: "What practical knowledge and skills do church organists need in order to meet the music ministry needs in their congregational setting?"

"Who better to answer such a question than those playing for church each Sunday? In addition to the knowledge and skills, I would ask that you include information about your training, experience and career (if other than being a professional organist). Please indicate your willingness to participate in a follow-up interview. My contact email is dtony1964@msn.com."

JOB OPENINGS

District of Columbia

Organ scholar: Washington National Cathedral. \$50,000-60,000 annually. Two-year position starting in July. Click [here](#).

Musician for 4th and 5th Sundays: St. John CME Church. \$400 per week. Click [here](#).

Adjunct professor of music/applied organ: University of DC. \$50 per contract hour. Click [here](#).

Music professor: Catholic University. Click [here](#).

Maryland

Director of music ministries: St. John's Episcopal Church, Norwood Parish, Chevy Chase. Full-time. \$64,000-\$113,500 annually. Click [here](#).

Organist/pianist: Neelsville Presbyterian Church. \$12,100-15,000 annually. Click [here](#).

Minister of music: Episcopal Church of the Ascension, Gaithersburg. Casavant pipe organ. \$20,000-24,000 annually. Contact the church.

Director of music ministry: Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Silver Spring. \$20,000-24,000 annually. Contact the church.

Interim organist: Village at Rockville. Part-time. \$300 per service. [Click here](#)

Music director: Channing Memorial Church, Unitarian Universalist, Ellicott City. Part-time. \$9,800 to 10,800 for a 10-month period. [Click here](#).

Director of music: Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, College Park. Full-time. From \$50,000 annually. Click [here](#).

Music director: First Baptist Church of Suitland. Part-time. \$18,000-20,000 annually. Click [here](#).

Virginia

Organist: St. John's Episcopal Church, Arlington. \$10,800-13,500 annually. Click [here](#).

Director of music and organist: St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Arlington. Part-time. \$20,000-\$24,000 annually. Click [here](#).

Organist: Fredericksburg United Methodist Church. Hybrid organ by R.A. Colby Organs Inc. \$25,000-30,000 annually. Send resume and recording (video preferred) to davidkirven@fumcva.org.

Music director: Friendship United Methodist Church, Falls Church. Part-time. Click [here](#).

New member

We welcome Peter H. Dierkes to our chapter as a transfer from the San Jose, CA, chapter.

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: 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 and send them to DC AGO, c/o Robert Church, 3562 13th St NW, Washington, DC 20010.

LIFE MEMBERS

Blanche Curfman

Nancy Dodge

Robert Grogan

Eileen Guenther

Irv Lawless

Kenneth Lowenberg

Donald Sutherland

David Hearn (deceased)

Albert Russell (deceased)



Acoustical Design
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Acoustic Design Services

Acoustical Design Collaborative, Ltd is an independent consulting firm specializing in ecclesiastical spaces where natural acoustics for music and unobtrusive amplified speech are essential for traditional worship celebration. Services provided to building committees, architects, and organ builders include:

- **Acoustic & Audio-Visual Systems Design**
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- **Choir & Organ Space Planning**
- **Speech Intelligibility Assessment**
- **Sound System Tuning & Adjustment**
- **Expert Opinion, Peer Review & Client Advocacy**

We strive to provide professional advice based on prudent design criteria, cost-effective solutions, clear concise recommendations, and open communication, delivered in a timely and economical manner.

A strong personal involvement characterizes our services. After understanding the design issue, we use a systematic technical approach, tempered with practical experience to provide a range of options factoring budget and aesthetic concerns that are concisely summarized to facilitate informed decisions.

Your acoustic challenge may be one we have already solved. Please contact us to see how our combined 45 years of consulting and university acoustics teaching can improve your house of worship.

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Your Sound...Our Passion

info@akustx.com