

# THE WINDCHEST

OMAHA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS



JULY 2020

Inside this Issue:

- 1 From the Dean
- 2 OrganFest
- 2 Jazz in June
- 3 Board Meeting Summary
- 4 2020-2021 Schedule
- 4 Statement from National
- 5 Black Composers
- 5 Open Positions
- 6 Contact Us

**facebook**

Please like the Omaha Chapter Facebook page. Information is posted regularly! Our page name is: Omaha Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

## FROM THE DEAN

It has been my pleasure over the last weeks to contact all 75 or so members of the Omaha Chapter. I wanted to reach out and get a feeling for how everyone is doing during this time of Pandemic. It was a surprise to hear that a couple of congregations never shut down and continued worship as before. Several have now opened cautiously during June. The greater majority of congregations remain closed, are live-streaming or recording. What a blessing technology has been during this time, to allow even those most vulnerable to be included in a worship service.

You may be interested to know I have actually talked to 50 members, received emails from 16 and there are 9 yet to respond. If that is you - please let me know how you are doing. Communication with friends and church members has never been more important. In my calls I was glad to talk with friends I haven't seen for a while, and "meet" several of our high school and college members.

## Member news:

Michael McCabe has retired and will be part time in Arizona. Michael - enjoy your new adventure. His cell phone and email remain the same.

Charles Cohen was visiting from his missionary work in Guatemala (actually stuck here longer than planned). He was brought up to date on all of our activities in Omaha. He leaves the end of June. His email is best for communication.

There has been at least one new baby born, one member's mother died, a couple of surgeries with good recoveries. A couple high schoolers are heading to college. Tim Schreiber is busy in Lawrence, working and practicing. Maybe you noticed the article in the May TAO about the reconstruction of the organ at Christ Cathedral in LA (former Crystal Cathedral). Brother William Woeger of St. Cecilia Cathedral was the head liturgical designer for the cathedral space. Congratulations to him.

Ryan Luckey reports that Bedient Organs had been shut down but is beginning to open again. The new Buzard organ installation at

## JAZZ IN JUNE

The annual event "Jazz in June" in Lincoln, Nebraska that always draws a huge crowd is all online this year. This week's trio included the extremely talented jazz organist Mitch Towne as part of the Andrew Janak Trio! He often performs in Omaha.

You can view the performance here: <https://www.facebook.com/jazzinjuneunl/videos/15606232588247/> If you fast forward through the concert, you will find some good solo playing by Mitch.

If you are a classical organ aficionado, you may enjoy something a little out of the ordinary!

Countryside Community Church was closed down but is resuming. Pacific Hills Lutheran Church has hired a new organist, Zach Hastings, who begins July 5. I had a great talk with Linda Stanley on the road in Oklahoma (she drives cattle to market). I found several folks who are dual chapter members. It was a joy to hear all your news and I treasure being able to do this.

I hope this finds you well, practicing when you can, and preparing yourself for what worship will look like for a while. God will be with us, no matter what. On that we can rely.

*Jean Johnson*, Dean



The American Guild of Organists is thrilled to announce the first online OrganFest, which will take place July 20-24. Each evening's broadcast will premiere a new work which

had been commissioned for the 2020 National Convention in Atlanta, accompanied by interviews with the composers.

Featured performers will be Jens Korndörfer, Amanda Mole, Alan Morrison, Thomas Ospital, and Catherine Rodland. Additional recorded performances by recent international organ competition winners will be presented, and short presentations will share exciting news and updates from the AGO.

The daily YouTube premiere (8pm Eastern) and accompanying Festival website will be available at no charge.

OrganFest 2020 promises to be an exciting way to showcase our beloved instrument and the great work of the AGO. Please share this information widely with your music-loving friends.

While we are saddened by the cancellation of many musical events this spring and summer, including our National Convention in Atlanta, we look forward to celebrating the future of organ music together online next month.

## MISSION

The mission of the American Guild of Organists is to enrich lives through organ and choral music.

To achieve this, we:

- Encourage excellence in the performance of organ and choral music,
- Inspire, educate, and offer certification for organists and choral conductors,
- Provide networking, fellowship, and mutual support,
- Nurture future generations of organists,
- Promote the organ in its historic and evolving roles; and
- Engage wider audiences with organ and choral music.

## OMAHA AGO BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

Your Executive Board met June 23 to plan for the fall season. Four of the seven members are new to the board, so there has been time spent sharing plans for duties as to gifts of the members. The board will be reviewing the "Operating Procedures" for the chapter, which will then need to be voted on by the membership. The Achievement Awards set up by the National office last year are now on the national website. Omaha had been a pilot program for them last year.

Jean reported on the calls she had made to chapter members. There is need to update the national roster for the Omaha chapter. Further plans were made for programs beginning in the fall. September through November meetings will proceed as planned (presuming churches are available). It was decided to wait on plans for 2021 to see how the Pandemic has affected lives by then. The board is looking at what committees would be beneficial for the chapter. Calls will be made and we hope you say "yes" when asked to assist. There are plans being made specifically for our Young Organists, and attention to advertising rates for publications. The Directory this fall will probably be just member names and addresses as all other information is available on the website. Thanks to Jeff Hoffman for taking care of our publications.

Please be sure to read the letter from the National Office concerning Black Lives Matter.

The next meeting is July 7 and we welcome any questions or suggestions from members.

## AGO NATIONAL ONLINE PROGRAMMING

July 10: "A Smoother Experience for Substitute Organists"

July 23 and 30: "Virtual Choir for the Rest of Us"

<https://www.agohq.org/upcoming-ago-webinars/>

## ABENDMUSIK

Livestream events, including an organ recital by David von Behren on July 26. <https://www.abendmusik.org/season-index>

## 2020-2021 SCHEDULE

Omaha Chapter  
Opening Meeting -  
September 13

Elizabeth George,  
the AGO Director  
of Member

Engagement and  
Chapter

Development will  
be our speaker.

This will be held at  
Kountze Memorial  
Lutheran Church,  
2650

Farnam. Organist  
Mark Jones will

introduce

members to the  
organ there.

Outgoing board  
members J.

Gordon

Christensen, Gina

Simpson, Dirk

Lindner and Sonja

Lundgren will be

honored for their

service to the

Chapter. Time,

dinner plans to be  
determined.

The remainder of  
the season will be  
announced.

## STATEMENT FROM AGO NATIONAL

June 16, 2020

To All AGO Chapter Deans:

The American Guild of Organists recognizes and affirms that Black Lives Matter. We call upon every chapter and all of our members to speak out against racial bias and take action to make the world a better, safer, and more secure place for the members of the Black community.

Now is the time for us to search our souls for ways to be more caring, to be better brothers and sisters to our Black colleagues, and to demonstrate our unwavering support for their professional advancement and success.

The tragic murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, the equally senseless killing of Rayshard Brooks in Atlanta on June 12, and the death and injury of so many others are heartbreaking and inexcusable. We extend our condolences to their families and friends, and we stand in solidarity with the countless thousands of people around the world who have marched to protest systemic racism against the African-American community.

It is our turn to step up to the challenge. We must listen to diverse voices in crafting solutions to our problems. We must reach out to find new partners to help us chart the best path forward. We must engage.

Sincerely yours,

Michael Bedford, AAGO, ChM  
President

James E. Thomashower, CAE  
Executive Director

AGO

## WEBINAR

Please use this link to access the recording and handouts

for *Putting It Together: Tools for Choral Recording and*

*Collaboration* [https://www.agohq.org/chapter-](https://www.agohq.org/chapter-leadership-)

[leadership-](https://www.agohq.org/chapter-leadership-)

[toolkits/](https://www.agohq.org/chapter-leadership-) . They are

located in the **Leadership Talks** toolkit. Be sure to share this information with your members.

Kudos to

Southeast Regional

Councillor Sue

Mitchell-Wallace

for her amazing

presentation and

many thanks to all

for the positive

feedback I received

from those who

attended this

webinar!

[https://www.agohq](https://www.agohq.org/chapter-leadership-)

[.org/chapter-](https://www.agohq.org/chapter-leadership-)

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[toolkits/](https://www.agohq.org/chapter-leadership-)

## OPEN POSITIONS

Please visit the Omaha AGO website [www.omahaago.org/open-positions](http://www.omahaago.org/open-positions) for details regarding the following open positions in the area.

### **Immaculate Conception Chapel**

also known as Dowd Chapel on the Boys Town Campus, is seeking an organist. The organist for Dowd Chapel is responsible for 3 masses on Sunday 8, 9:30 and 11am, holidays and holy days. During the school year, there is a student choir that sings at the 9:30 mass and rehearses on Wednesday evening. The choir has a director and the organist accompanies. Service music consists of four hymns and the ordinary. Preludes and postludes are expected. Compensation is based on skill and experience. If interested in the position, please contact Catherine Keisling at [Catherine.keisling@boystown.org](mailto:Catherine.keisling@boystown.org)

### **Ralston United Church of Christ - Organist**

7638 Maywood Street, Ralston, NE 68127

[lynettejanssen@cox.net](mailto:lynettejanssen@cox.net)

### **St. Paul Lutheran Church, ELCA – Organist, Treynor, Iowa**

Contact Pastor Meyer at (402) 800-7531 or [cmeyerspl@gmail.com](mailto:cmeyerspl@gmail.com)

## ORGAN MUSIC BY BLACK COMPOSERS

Jack Mohlenhoff

There is quite a bit of focus these days on the contributions of Black musicians, and I realize how woefully ignorant I am when it comes to organ repertoire by Black composers. I consulted with Marvin Mills—a classmate and friend from Westminster Choir College who has done presentations on organ music by Black composers as well as organ music based on spirituals. Here is a link to materials he prepared for a presentation he did for Potomac AGO including a bibliography of music by African-American Composers others based on Spirituals. <https://www.marvinmills.net/black-composers/organ/potomac-ago/>

Marvin Mills is organist at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Kensington, Maryland. He is also music director of the acclaimed National Spiritual Ensemble, and guest artist with the Ritz Chamber Players, based in Jacksonville, Florida. Previous positions include Associate Minister of Music at National City Christian Church, Director of Music at All Souls Church, Unitarian, and University Organist at Howard University, all in Washington, DC. For more about Marvin, visit his website [www.marvinmills.net](http://www.marvinmills.net).

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