

Lehigh Valley Chapter

American Guild of Organists

December 2024

www.lvago.org



Chapter Officers 2024-2025

Dean: Susan Frickert
484-788-9476

sfrickert2001@yahoo.com

Sub Dean: Janice Butz
610-730-0328

janicebutz@gmail.com

Secretary: Linda Maule
610-258-5006
maule@ptd.net

Treasurer: Stephen Bueker
610-438-3766
sfbueker@rcn.com

Executive Committee

Robert Riday (2025)

Michael Fister (2025)

Marisa Deshler (2026)

Jeffrey Raub (2026)

Charles Glandorf (2027)

Gary Raish (2027)

Dean's Article

As I write this article, Thanksgiving Day is only about a week away, with an unusually early Advent season on its heels. I am reminded of two favorite mantras: "Develop an attitude of gratitude." and "People who feel appreciated always do more than is expected." Am I truly grateful for the wonderful adults, youth and children who make singing in our choirs a priority, who so generously give their time and talents? Do they know how much they are treasured by our congregation and by me? People need to hear how much they're appreciated as well as see by our actions that we are grateful for them. Lots of us pray with our choirs, probably not as much as we should. But do we pray for them when they aren't listening? I started praying every night for my choirs years back - mostly as choirs, but every once in a while by my singers' names. I ask God to bless them and to help them in whatever way they need it, naming a medical issue or family concern with which they're struggling. I always make it a habit to relay to my singers any word of appreciation from congregational members. I try to find something at each rehearsal with which to thank them - "Wow, you really nailed that anthem on Sunday!", "Thanks for working so hard at rehearsal tonight.", even if it's just "Thanks for everyone being here a little early tonight so we could start on time." I love spoiling my choirs with a dish of dark chocolates on the piano, or a popsicle break on a hot night, or some unexpected treats near a holiday. I always have water bottles, tissues, and various flavors of cough drops (including sugar-free) on hand. I give them a choir schedule so they know well in advance what I expect of them and they know I value their time. While we're at it, consider creating opportunities to thank your pastor and staff for their support, too. We're all on God's same team! Watch future newsletters for details about our Organist/Clergy Dinner with theologian and writer Karyn Wisemen on May 18. Our chapter is subsidizing the cost so that we can afford to "treat" our pastors. Ask her/him to save the date for you now before the Christmas crazies hit!

Our prayers and love are with Jacqueline Kuba, whose beloved husband, Robert passed into eternal glory on November 6, 2024.

Your LVAGO officers and executive board wish you a Blessed Christmas and a Prosperous 2025!

*May your hands and feet be nimble,
and your choirs remain healthy and joyous!*



Reflections from Our November Chapter Event

It was a beautiful autumn day on Saturday, November 9, when our Lehigh Valley Chapter members traveled to Union Lutheran Church in Schnecksville for a wonderful afternoon to learn tips on how choir directors can be both musical leaders and effective communicators. Our clinician for the afternoon was Sun Min Lee, formerly Professor of Practice of Choral Arts at Lehigh University and conductor of Dolce, Lehigh's Treble Choir. Prior to her time at Lehigh, she was a member of the conducting faculty at Westminster Choir College and currently serves as music director at Praise Presbyterian Church in New Jersey. After a series of vocal exercises and warm-ups, she then illustrated conducting techniques as the group of 30-plus singers read through several choral anthems. And then the baton was passed on to our own Board member Bob Riday as he rose to the podium to showcase his own conducting skills. Sun Min Lee's delightful and joyful personality, as well as her conducting insights and helpful techniques, kept everyone engaged as the two hours flew by for an enjoyable and informative afternoon. Thanks goes to our Dean, Susan Frickert, and Union Lutheran Church for hosting the event.



Sun Min Lee leading us in choral warm-ups

Sun Min Lee sharing insights into being an effective choral director



The demonstration choir of 30-plus voices

January

January JumpStart

Saturday, January 25, 2025, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church
625 Montgomery Ave., Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

After the busyness of the Christmas season, take time to be rejuvenated for the start of a new year by attending January Jumpstart sponsored by the Philadelphia AGO Chapter (and also supported by our own Lehigh Valley Chapter!). This all-day event features outstanding clinicians, among them Rollo Dilworth sharing warmup activities for choirs, Jeffrey Brillhart showcasing techniques on adapting piano accompaniments for the organ, David Storey discussing how to make minor repairs on the pipe organ, and Maxine Thévenot leading a choral reading session for Eastertide. Featured organist Renée Anne Louprette will offer an organ masterclass as well as present the concluding organ recital. In celebration of the 20th year of January Jumpstart, there will also be the premiere of five hymn preludes by regional composers who were commissioned to write organ works for the anniversary.

Cost of the event is \$55.00 for AGO members and includes lunch. Registration must be made on-line at <https://pcagoo.wildapricot.org/event-5878865>. Our LVAGO Chapter will arrange carpooling for those who wish to attend. If you're interested in sharing a ride, contact Board member Jeffrey Raub at raub-jeffrey@gmail.com or 484-541-8322, no later than Wednesday, 1/22.

February

Mark Miller Workshop and Concert

Saturday, February 22, 2025

Workshop 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Light meal;
Concert at 6:00 p.m.

at Christ Lutheran Church, 1245 Hamilton St., \Allentown, PA 18102

March

A Celebration of J.S.B.

Sunday, March 23, 2025

Commentary by Shelly Moorman-Stahlman

April

No LVAGO Event

May

Organist/Clergy Dinner and

The Rev. Dr. Karyn Wiseman

Sunday, May 18, 2025

Carriage House, Hellertown

A Day In the Life...

by Bob Riday

Typical question from a friend in October or November: "Hey, how's your Holiday shopping and planning going"?

Unexpected answer from a church choir director/organist, speaking very quickly and somewhat out of breath, of course: "Most of the choir music for Advent has arrived, but one is back ordered. I'm still waiting for two of our handbell Christmas selections, but all the brass parts have arrived, although our horn player's instrument is still in the shop. Rehearsals for Advent and Christmas Eve music have already begun. The Cantata Rehearsals are going well, but I haven't had the entire choir at one rehearsal yet. No idea yet what to order for Epiphany, but I have several catalogs at home open on the table. Oh, yeah, I need to (hopefully) reschedule the piano tuning because the property committee scheduled a work day at the same time as my tuning (scheduled weeks ago), and will be lowering the eight chandeliers in the sanctuary to replace bulbs and clean the globes, so the piano will need to be covered, and it will be loud in there. And, my assistant organist just told me he will be out of town (Germany, really out of town!) for Advent Sunday 4 and Christmas Eve. (Hmmm...now that I will be playing that service, where did I put my Robert Hobby hymn modulation book?) Finally, to my friend who stated the original question above: Ohhhhh! You meant that kind of shopping and planning! Like actual gifts to wrap for family and friends?"

The above scenario is far from being a complaint about the life of a busy church choir director or organist. It is simply an explanation of perhaps why we tend to actually celebrate Christmas in January! For many of us, it is not uncommon to continue adding decorations to the house in January. It finally feels like Christmas, and we now have a little time (at least before we start planning for Lent and Easter!) to do some Holiday celebrating. Many of we church musicians see Epiphany as the grand culmination of the Christmas season, which it truly and authentically is, with the visit by the Three Kings to the Christ Child.

With all our hectic and crazy lives in November and December, let's not forget that we now enter the season of Advent. Let's all try to keep that in mind as we drive kids from here to there, and scatter around to rehearsals and meetings, that all of our preparations are not for the concert, choir anthem, Cantata, wrapped gift, or dinner party, but rather in preparation to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child.

Many (most?) of we organists and choir directors look forward to singing Joy To The World with our congregations as our last hymn on the Fourth Sunday of

Advent. It will then be Christmas! Until then, enjoy the Advent (not Christmas!) music and hymns as we all prepare.

Merry Christmas to all! (But let's experience Advent first!)

Upcoming Concert

December 15 (Sunday) 4 p.m.

The Princeton Singers

the Singers return with their annual concert

A Rose in Winter

songs of the season to warm the heart
and ring in the joys of Christmas

St. Anne Catholic Church

450 E. Washinton Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18017

LVAGO Organist Substitute List

If you would like to be included in the Organist Substitute List please forward your Name, Contact Information (phone/email) and Availability (Sundays, weekdays, etc) to Stephen Bueker, 2520 Clark Place, Easton, PA 18040; sfbueker@rcn.com.

Dale Bonenberger	Mon-Fri	917 328-9041
Ruthann Brandt	Mon-Sat	610 262-3304
Janice Butz	Mon -Fri	610 882-9388
Alan Birney	Sun-Sat	610 653-8097
Ellen Erb	Mon-Sat	570 350-0343
Charles Glandorf	Mon-Sat	610 416-1055
Eric Gombert	Mon-Sat	610 435-1641
Gail Hanzl	Mon-Sat	610 264-5859
Susan Hartney	Mon-Sat	610 360-6934
Michael Huffman	Sun-Sat	610 794-6056
Joe Kaczmarek	Mon-Sat	484 433-4336
Jacqueline Kuba	Sun-Sat	570 386-4480
Michael Kuhnert	Mon-Sat	215 536-4345
Cristina Dinella Makowicz	Sun-Sat	585-732-8017
James Matz	Sun-Sat	610 367-8094
Linda Maule	Mon-Sat	610 258-5006
Richard McIntyre	Mon-Sat	908 283-4691
Jeffrey Raub	Saturday	484 541-8322
Michael Seroka	Mon-Sat	570 516-7207
Barbara Thomson	Sun-Sat	908 591-4499
Bruce Tonkin	Sun-Sat	610 220-5457
Matthew Wary	Mon-Sat	610 743-0921
Stephen Ziminsky	Mon-Fri	610 417-2669
Freda Zimmerman	Mon-Fri	610 381-3089

Positions Available

Organist(2)

Church: Concordia Lutheran Church, 2623 Brookside Road, Macungie, PA 18062

Website: www.concordia-macungie.com

Contact: Rev. Waldemar R. Vinovskis, 484-951-9441, WRVinovskis@gmail.com

Weekly services: 2, 3 during Lent/Advent

Ensembles: NA

Instruments: 2 manual Allen

Music budget: \$500

Weekly attendance: 120

Position fill date: January 1, 2025

Deadline: Open

Total hours per week: 3 for service playing

Salary: \$9500-\$15000

Weeks vacation: None listed

Benefits: book/music allowance

Notes: Concordia Lutheran Church is seeking an organist for Sunday morning worship starting January, 2025. Two services per week at 8:00 & 10:45 am. Wednesday evenings during Advent and Lent. Possible additional service as accompanist for choir rehearsals.

Organist(1)

Church: Annunciation BVM Church, 122 Union St., Catasaqua, PA 18032

Website: www.Annunciationbvm.net

Contact: Rev. Eric Tolentino, 610-264-0332, Kim.stmarys122@gmail.com

Weekly services: 3

Ensembles: 8-10 Adult Choir Members

Instruments: Diane Bish Model Organ, Piano

Music budget: \$300

Weekly attendance: 125

Position fill date: ASAP

Deadline: Open

Total hours per week: 5 (3 playing services, 1 leading rehearsal, 1 planning for rehearsals)

Salary: \$15000-\$17,000

Weeks vacation: None

Benefits: secretarial assistance, unemployment

Notes: Due to the nature and mission of the Catholic Church, all employees are bound to exhibit respect for the teachings and discipline of the Church regarding matters of faith and morals. Knowledge of liturgical practices, worship and special functions of the Catholic Church. A good knowledge of repertoire available for liturgical music programs for both organ

and congregation. A high degree of proficiency in the use of the organ as well as piano. An enthusiastic willingness to work with other people, good communication skills.

Organist(1)

Church: Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, 3355 MacArthur Road, Whitehall, PA 18052

Website: www.faithon145.org

Contact: Claudette Nia, 610-435-0452, claudette@faithon145.org

Weekly services: 1

Ensembles: 10-12 Adult Choir Members; Handbells only as needed to accompany

Instruments: New electronic Allen Symphonic III Organ, 3 manual

Music budget: \$1250

Weekly attendance: 70-90

Position fill date: Immediately

Deadline: ASAP

Total hours per week: 7 (2 playing services, 2 planning for rehearsals, 1 in meetings, 1-2 practicing)

Salary: \$10,000-\$12000

Weeks vacation: None

Benefits: secretarial assistance

Notes: Organist is only responsible for accompanying the choir and playing on Sunday



Newsletter Editor

Marta Oberlin, martasig@gmail.com

Placement Service

Please visit the Placement page on www.lvago.org for information and the Placement Service Information Sheet.

Newsletter Deadline

(January issue) Saturday, December 21, 2024