



Letter from our Dean

During this difficult time some AGO chapters seem to have thrown in the towel with regard to programming, waiting for the uncertain date when restrictions on in-person meetings are no longer needed. Your board is working hard to ensure that ours is **not** such a chapter. Those of you who attended our virtual opening meeting were treated to wonderful playing by three of our members, Dalaie Choi, David Hearn, and Gabe Benton, learned about valuable resources from Elizabeth George, and enjoyed fellowship with friends. In this column I want to call your attention to some of the resources Elizabeth mentioned.

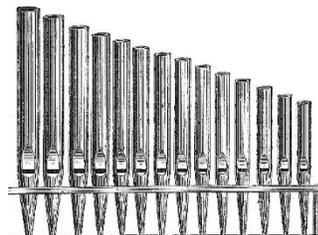
The starting point is Elizabeth's candid recognition that the national AGO website is difficult to navigate. The large bequests the AGO received in recent years have allowed hiring additional staff, including technical resources. The good news is that a redesign of the national website is promised in the near future. Nevertheless, during the pandemic era we need immediate access to the available resources more than ever.

I urge you to go to the website at agohq.org. Move the cursor over the Membership tab and then scroll down to Chapter Leadership Toolkits. Two more options will appear: *Chapter Leadership Webinars* and *Online Programming for Chapters*. If you have persevered this far, you will be rewarded with a rich array of resources, and I won't make this column inordinately long by listing all of them, but it certainly will be worth your time to explore what is there.

Elizabeth also talked about a different kind of resource. I'm encouraged by the good response to membership renewal, but we want to be sure that no one is deterred from maintaining membership because of financial hardship caused by the pandemic. During the superb OrganFest 2020 in July, funds were raised to help members suffering financial loss defray the cost of continuing their participation in the AGO. If you fall into this category, please contact any of your chapter officers. And if you didn't catch OrganFest 2020 in July, you can still watch it at <https://www.agohq.org/organfest-2020/>.

We have the tools to continue until we can gather together in person again. Let's use them.

— Bill Robinson



Delaware AGO Chapter Officers

Bill Robinson, *dean*

David Schelat, *subdean*

Don MacFarland, *secretary*

Mike Bareham, *treasurer/registrar*

Members-at-large

Melissa Heieie

Joanne Hensch

Steven Patchel, *newsletter*

Jane van Valkenburg



Two Delaware Chapter Members featured in this issue

David Bowsbey
Anthony Thurman

From our Sub-dean

Our superb program committee of Barbara Bayers, Gabriel Benton, Kathy Harris, Steven Patchel, Jane Van Valkenburg, and myself worked hard on a creative, expansive, and varied calendar of meetings for us this season. Bravo to each member of that superb committee!

Sadly, our present world has conspired against us, and your board has thoughtfully and wisely decided to move to virtual programs this season. Our energetic committee will begin meeting again to plan a virtual season. Stay tuned for this!

Our next meeting has already been decided, however, thanks to Jane Van Valkenburg, and I hope you will be as excited about it as I am! We will meet via Zoom on October 24 at 10:00 a.m. and watch together a short video of the history of what we know today as Old Swede's Church. This was to be the site of our in-person October meeting. After we see this historic church on video and hear its fascinating story, we will share stories of the history of our own churches.

While your church is undoubtedly not as old as Old Swede's (since it was the first church to be founded in this area), your church certainly has an interesting story that we'd love to hear. Why and when was it founded? What unique twists and turns has it made since its beginnings? Is there anything unusual about its history or its members?

And, of course, tell us about the history of its music program!

You will be sent a Zoom link the week of October 19. See you then!

— David Schelat

For Sale



I'm looking to sell my home organ for \$150 (but can negotiate a price). It's a Baldwin; the stops, keys and pedals work (one pedal is a bit sticky though). Overall good shape. The sound quality is not the best, but for practicing at home, it is great. See pictures. Contact gracemcconkie@gmail.com Pike Creek area near Goldey-Beacom College.

DELAWARE AGO Fall Events

Saturday

October 24 @ 10:00 a.m.
Video History of Old Swede's Church and discussion of the history of our own churches
Via Zoom link

November 14 @ 10:30 a.m.
Zoom Brunch



Something for everyone!
AGOYO virtual program year 20-21

FRIDAYS AT NOON EST

videos will be premiered at:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/GuildofOrganists>

August 14- Organ crawl: West Point Chapel

September 11- Workshop:
Church musicians and technology

September 25- Panel: Organists of colors

October 9- Panel: The Global Organist

November 13- Organ crawl: Longwood Gardens

December 11- Organ factory tour: Austin Organ Co.

January 8- Webinar:

Young conductors/organists guide to church music

February 12- Organ crawl: Wanamaker

March 12- Panel:

Board positions in the guild/serving in leadership roles

April 9- Organ factory tour: Taylor & Boody

May 7, 14, 21, 28- Young organist recitals

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Email us at:
conveneragoyo@gmail.com

<https://www.agohq.org/ago-young-organists/>



MEMBERS

SPOTLIGHT *by Joanne Hench*

David Bowlsbey, Director of Music, retired
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Wilmington



JH: Where were you born?

David Bowlsbey: Wilmington, DE.

JH: At what age did you begin piano?

DB: I began at age five when my parents realized I was teaching myself to play by ear.

JH: Organ?

DB: I began to study organ at age fourteen.

JH: What influences did my home church have on my choice of music as a career?

DB: As a young child, I always ran up to the organ after the service to watch the organist play the postlude. I was fascinated that someone could play a keyboard with their feet. Over time, I began to realize that my favorite activities were related to music, both at church and at school.

JH: When did you first play in church?

DB: As an early teen, I was called on to play the organ in worship on Youth Sunday, when the youth group led the service. Shortly thereafter, I was hired by a nearby church to be the organist for their Sunday evening service. A year later, my home church hired me to be their regular organist, a position I held until I left for college.

JH: How long have you worked as a church music professional?

DB: 55 years.

JH: Full time? Part time?

DB: My church music positions have always been part time. As we know, part time positions can take up as much of our time as we will permit. There is always more that can be done.

JH: Have you held other positions outside the church?

DB: I taught public school music for 35 years. During that time I taught the whole gamut—vocal/classroom/instrumental, elementary and secondary, concluding as music department coordinator.

JH: How do you see the future of music in the church?

DB: I've learned that change is the one thing we can count on. Aspects of worship and hymnody that we've grown to love will not continue the way we've known. In most of our churches the basic structures of liturgy will remain steadfast, but the musical materials that support them will change.

This is what I've seen in my time. Some of the new material delights and some disappoints. I miss some of the hymnody that has fallen into disuse, but that makes me like every other person who has enjoyed a long and rich worship life. Change, however, is not only inevitable, it is necessary. Each generation must nurture and encourage Christian songwriters who have a song that must be sung.

A particular curiosity for me is how the current pandemic will permanently impact the church music world. Most of us, whether we previously used technology to a great extent or not, are now of necessity using it in ways never before imagined.

In what ways will it make permanent changes? In our music training we are taught values that help us discern worthy material from that which is not. It is our privilege to observe how God is moving next generations.



F. Anthony Thurman

Westminster Presbyterian Church, Wilmington

I was born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and raised on a small family farm. Both my mother and grandmother played the piano. As a child, I thought everyone did so and begged for a piano teacher so I could learn, too. At age six, I began weekly piano lessons and studied privately through high school.

My piano teacher, who was the organist at my family's home church, would ask me to play a prelude or offertory on the piano from time to time. My grandmother played piano for a small country church and invited me to play there, too, so playing for church just came naturally for me.

My mother found an organ teacher for me at Western Kentucky University, a college music major, Ted Barr. At my second or third lesson, recognizing my commitment to the organ, Ted declared that I would be an organ major and that he would help me prepare for college auditions. Ted was so successful in his role as teacher and mentor that I was offered full scholarships to all five universities where I auditioned.

My undergraduate and graduate degrees in organ performance and church music were completed at the University of Louisville, where I studied with Melvin Dickinson. I was the winner of AGO chapter competitions and a regional finalist in NYACOP. In 1987, I won both the MTNA/Wurlitzer National Organ Competition in New York City and the National Undergraduate Organ Competition at the First Presbyterian Church in Ottumwa, Iowa.

After graduation, I held a full-time church position in Louisville and made annual recital tours in Europe. After three years of monthly trips from Kentucky to New York City to study with McNeil Robinson, I decided to move to New York and became Neil's doctoral assistant at the Manhattan School of Music. I earned my doctor of musical arts degree there in 1999.

While in New York, I was music director at the Irvington Presbyterian Church in Westchester County, where I oversaw the selection and installation of a new Klais organ and tower bells by Whitechapel. I was associate director of community outreach and the graduate program in orchestral performance at the Manhattan School of Music, and director of development and communications at AGO National Headquarters, a position I have held for 22 years. I was on the steering committee for the 1996 AGO Centennial National Convention and treasurer of the New York City chapter for 15 years following.

My husband, Ted, and I lived in Cherry Hill, N.J., for ten years where I worked from my AGO home office, and for the last four years, was music director and organist at The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown (Northwest Philadelphia). The opportunity to become director of music and organist at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Wilmington led us to decide to move to Delaware. We love our new home and AGO home office in The First State!

The coronavirus pandemic has hurled us into new ways of music ministry through virtual services and concerts, while challenging us to figure out new ways to incorporate ensembles when in-person worship resumes. No one could have ever imagined that singers could be identified as potential "super spreaders" of a deadly disease. How singing choirs and congregations can participate again is dependent on having a vaccine and cure. I remind myself every day that the smartest scientists in the world are working on this, so it is only a matter of time until we can sing together again.

