

# CRESCENDO

DECEMBER 2009

VOLUME LXXII, NO. 4

NEWSLETTER OF THE PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

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The Philadelphia, Delaware, Lancaster, Lehigh Valley, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Southwest Jersey, Reading, and York Chapters of the American Guild of Organists present:

## January JumpStart

*a workshop for the church musician seeking new ideas for a new year*

**Saturday, January 16, 2010**

**8:15am – 4:00pm**

**Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, 625 Montgomery Ave, Bryn Mawr, PA**



John Walker

2010!! Where have those last 10 years gone? It's definitely time for that January "transfusion" of new ideas, exciting literature, old friends, new friends, and a gourmet luncheon together. So bundle up and join us on a blustery mid-January Saturday – this is our gift to all of you for your dedication to churches throughout the land. Venite to Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church!

This January, right after the morning workshop sessions, we will gather together in that beautiful sanctuary and lift our voices in praise to God. The Service of Morning Prayer will be led by The Reverend Dr. Thomas Troeger, Yale Divinity School, and Dr. John Walker, Peabody Institute. Dr. Troeger's message for us all will be "The Perfect Registration" – the interrelationship between word and music. And the preaching, the organ music, and the singing will be magnificent!

The morning and afternoon workshop sessions will be packed with talented presenters from across our region. They will be sharing their favorites, the Best of the Best (organ, choral, and handbell music), teaching us new techniques, elevating our expectations with new challenges, and inspiring us with new visions in our common mission as church musicians. Read on for the January Feast:

### **Organ Master Classes & Lecture/Demonstration**

Dr. John Walker, Peabody Institute. (Dr. Walker needs YOU as a Performer – see the box on page 4, and don't wait!)

### **Playing in Tune: Worship as the Ensemble of Word and Music**

Dr. Thomas Troeger, Yale Divinity School.

### **Cross-Cultural Music for Choirs and Congregations**

David Schelat, Wilmington, DE

### **Useful Organ Repertoire Review**

David Furniss, Lansdale.

### **Adapting Accompaniments and Conducting from the Console**

Dennis Elwell, Philadelphia.



Thomas Troeger



David Schelat

*Continued on page 4*

**CRESCENDO**, the official bulletin of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, is published monthly, September through June. All material for publication must reach the Editor by the 1st day of the month preceding the date of issue, i.e. November 1 for the December issue. This must be type written and e-mailed (text supplied in an attachment), or mailed. A hard copy should be included for display ads. Submissions become the property of the Philadelphia Chapter of the AGO and will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed and stamped envelope. **CRESCENDO** reserves the right to make editorial changes and to shorten articles to fit space limitations. Articles in *Crescendo* reflect the views of the writers and not necessarily those of the Guild. All advertising must be arranged through the Advertising Manager.

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Carl Gedeik, Editor, **CRESCENDO**  
215-247-6827  
email: [Crescendo@agophila.org](mailto:Crescendo@agophila.org)

Roy Harker, Publisher  
4514 Chester Ave, Philadelphia PA 19143-3707  
215-222-3831  
email: [Roy.Harker@agophila.org](mailto:Roy.Harker@agophila.org)

Katherine Reier, Circulation Coordinator  
215-517-4160  
email: [Katherine.Reier@agophila.org](mailto:Katherine.Reier@agophila.org)

**Calendar of Events**

Timothy M. Evers, Coordinator  
610-688-8700 x227  
email: [Tim.Evers@agophila.org](mailto:Tim.Evers@agophila.org)

**Positions Available/Substitute Listings**

Allen Popjoy, Coordinator  
610-269-7069  
email: [Allen.Popjoy@agophila.org](mailto:Allen.Popjoy@agophila.org)

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David Beatty  
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**T**he December issue of *Crescendo* arrives in the midst of one of the busiest times of the year for the church musician. During this season, the exalting of "tradition" is often paramount among congregation members, and among townspeople who may only pass through a narthex once or twice a year. While much of the music of the church may be unknown to the general population, there are a handful of Christmas carols that are now well known throughout this country. Traditional observances of the season continue to include Christmas Eve services, and within those services, the congregational hymnody will be largely comprised of the familiar carols that, from October onward, have been increasingly ubiquitous, embedded in department store soundtracks, elevator MUZAK, and in radio and television broadcasts. While the overuse (and, at times, abuse) of these tunes may callous some to their employment in worship, even among least-musically-literate congregations, the percentage of those that participate in the congregational song increases. For many congregations, the most vibrant singing will occur during those Christmas Eve services. Some individuals, for whatever reason disillusioned by organized religion, will still come to such a service just to sing the familiar carols.

While the familiarity of tradition may "make" Christmas for some service attendees, it does sometimes seem to shackle those of us in the church music business. Many of us have a wider exposure to "traditions", and recognize that some are national, some regional, and some are local.

In the church I attended as a child, it was a tradition that Mrs. Irene Beard would, during the Christmas season observances, read the nativity story from Luke. It was inconceivable (and considered downright rude) that anyone else be asked to read THAT lesson.

When I was in graduate school, it was a tradition, at the Kirkpatrick Chapel of Rutgers University, that "Christmas in Carol and Song" close with the Reverend Brad Abernathy reading Fra Giovanni's "Letter to a Friend", followed by the choir singing "The Death of David" from Honegger's *King David*. The rest of the music and the lessons might vary, but those were fixed.

In Germany, "Vom Himmel hoch" is among the best known carols. In France, noels (such as set by D'Aquin, Dupré, Lebeque, and countless others) are the core of the "traditional" music of the season. Here in Philadelphia, one congregation had a tradition of including David Hurd's setting of "A Stable Lamp is Lighted" in its annual Christmas Carol service.

*Continued on page 11*



David Beatty

**CHAPTER EVENTS IN REVIEW**



*Barry Rose and Matthew Glandorf at St. Mark's Church, Philadelphia.*

**Philadelphia, PA, October 3, 2009.** Chapter members attended open rehearsals, a lecture, and services conducted by Barry Rose, OBE, during a weekend visit hosted by St. Mark's Church, Philadelphia. Matthew Glandorf, the church's Organist and Choirmaster, accompanied the Church Choir in works by Stanford, Piccolo, and Dr. Rose's anthem, *O Lord our Governor*. On Sunday afternoon, St. Mark's held an outdoor Blessing of the Pets and reception to celebrate St. Francis Day. The animals were invited to join the musicians and congregation in the church for a very cheerful service of Evensong that concluded the weekend activities.

—Elizabeth Cochran



January JumpStart  
Continued from page 1

### I Have to Play a Gospel Hymn - Help!

Michael Krentz, Philadelphia

### AGO Exams: The Proof is in the Pudding

Ethel Geist, Abington

### SATB Choral Reading Session : Three's Company, Four's a Blessing!

Ted Barr, Cherry Hill, NJ

### St. James Press: Choral reading and samples

Victor Fields, York

### Toys, Tunes, and Children's Choirs

Rosemary Fraley, Shillington

### Handbells I & II – the Basics and Beyond

Marcia Summers Mau, West Chester

### Concert Series: Reach Out and Grab that 21st-Century Audience

Paul Fleckenstein, Wilmington, DE

Is your head spinning with the possibilities? And if we still haven't met your needs, you can request them for 2011 – we do read those evaluations! Young's Music Store (Whitehall, PA) will be returning to set up their music store on-site where you can browse and spend your Christmas money. The good news is that this year the music packets for the choral reading sessions are free.

Don't forget to bring music scores and CDs which you no longer use and donate them to the Used Music Table. Donations will help defray the costs of the Jumpstart.

The January Jumpstart brochure is inserted with this Crescendo issue. Get a jumpstart on the Jumpstart and write or email the registrar, Paul Marchesano today: 4818 A Florence Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19143-3421 or [JanuaryJumpStart@agophila.org](mailto:JanuaryJumpStart@agophila.org). Questions? Contact Sue Petura, coordinator, at [spetura@aem-inc.com](mailto:spetura@aem-inc.com) or 610-247-8598.

#### JANUARY JUMPSTART – Organ Master Class Performers:

Plan to bring that special Sunday morning prelude with you, and come sit on the organ bench with this year's master teacher, Dr. John Walker. Dr. Walker has taught at the Manhattan School of Music, Duquesne University, and currently at the Peabody Institute. So play any music, anything you use for a prelude on a Sunday. 3 minutes, max. Or play an excerpt of a larger work. He will give you feedback on registration, technique, and musical communication. Plus you will be playing that magnificent Rieger Organ at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church! What an awesome experience!

This is your year to take the January plunge! Send your selection to the Master Class coordinator, Alan Morrison, at [alanmorrison@comcast.net](mailto:alanmorrison@comcast.net) or 215-360-8336.

Please respond by December 15, 2009, to allow for practice time coordination on the Rieger Organ.



## REGISTRATION

# January JumpStart

*a workshop for the church musician  
seeking new ideas for a new year*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

I am an AGO member. Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

I will attend the workshops on 1/16/10  
(free to AGO members, \$30 for others)

I will attend the luncheon  
(\$15 for everyone) (brown-bagging is OK)

I am enclosing a check for the proper amount made  
payable to AGO Philadelphia

I will pay that day (we trust you!)  
(cash, checks, or money orders – no credit cards)

Please tear off and mail to:

Paul Marchesano  
4818-A Florence Ave  
Philadelphia, PA 19143-3421

Or e-mail your registration to Mr. Marchesano:  
[JanuaryJumpStart@agophila.org](mailto:JanuaryJumpStart@agophila.org)

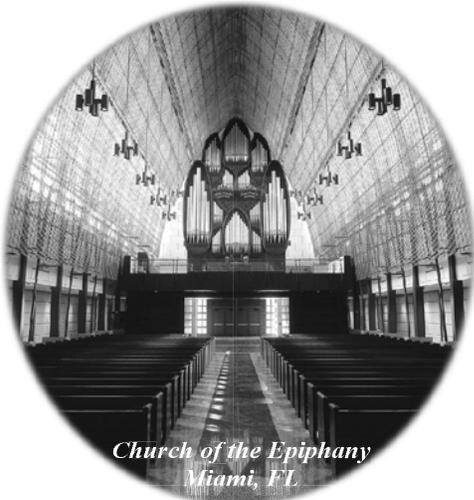
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**CHAPTER EVENTS**

**2009-2010 PROGRAM YEAR**

**Sunday, 27 September, 2009, 4:00 pm**  
 First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia  
 Evensong and Installation of Officers

**Saturday, 3 October, 2009, 11:00 am**  
 St. Mark's Locust St., Philadelphia  
 A weekend with Barry Rose

**Sunday, 8 November, 2009, 4:00 pm**  
 St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Chestnut Hill  
 Members Recital: Music of Felix Mendelssohn

**Sunday, January 3, 2010**  
 A Holiday Party  
 Pot-luck Dinner and Christmas Conviviality  
 Home of Roy Harker and Bob Ranando, Philadelphia, PA

**Saturday, 16 January, 2010**  
 Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church  
 January Jumpstart

**Sunday, 28 February, 2010, 4:00 pm**  
 Grace Epiphany, Mt. Airy  
 Chapter and Regional competition winner, Tom Sheehan, in concert

**Sunday, 18 April, 2010, 4:00 pm**  
 Trinity Lutheran, Lansdale  
 Recital: Isabelle Demers

**Saturday, 8 May, 2010 (tentative)**  
 An Introduction to the Organ for children

**Sunday, 13 June, 2010**  
 End of Season Celebration  
 Spirit of Philadelphia Cruise (tentative)

**Kimmel Center Presents: Master Musicians: Organ**  
 Co-sponsored by the  
 Philadelphia Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

**Saturday, 17 October, 2009, 3:00pm**  
 OLIVIER LATRY

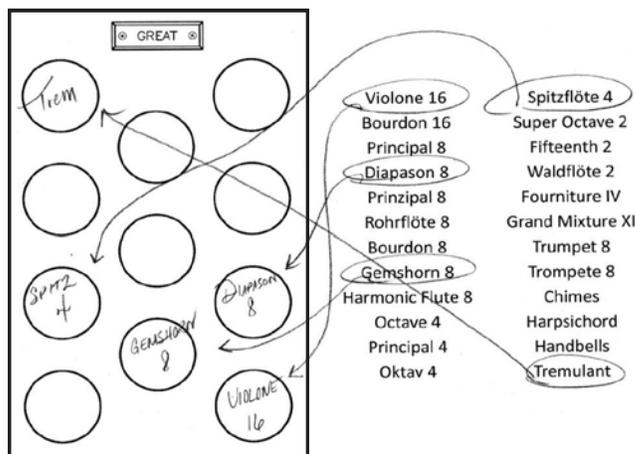
**Saturday, 6 March, 2010, 3:00pm**  
 CAMERON CARPENTER

**Saturday, 8 May, 2010, 3:00pm**  
 PAUL JACOBS

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The American Guild of Organists Philadelphia Chapter's lively concern for education and outreach previously prompted the formation of an Endowment Fund. The purpose of this fund is to expand programs for leadership development among AGO members, to educate new organists, and to cultivate new audiences for organ and choral music. This fund is prudently administered by the Chapter's Endowment Committee. Tax-deductible contributions to the Endowment Fund are invested in perpetuity to produce continuing income support for the Chapter's educational programs and projects. Contributions may be accepted in the form of cash, stocks, bonds, real estate, or other assets. You are also encouraged to consider including the AGO Philadelphia Chapter in your will and bequests. Prior consultation with your financial advisor and/or legal counsel is advised. For providing your gifts or seeking further information, please contact the Chair of the Endowment Committee by e-mail at [David.Furniss@agophila.org](mailto:David.Furniss@agophila.org).

## SUBSTITUTE LIST

ALLEN POPJOY, COORDINATOR  
 610-269-7069 ALLEN.POPJOY@AGOPHILA.ORG

*This list is published as a courtesy to the chapter membership. Only members of the Philadelphia AGO Chapter available for regularly-scheduled services are listed. Although the AGO assumes no responsibility for the musicianship or reliability of substitute organists, Guild certificates and other degree programs indicate preparation beyond the minimum.*

Substitute	Location	Phone Number
Frederick K. Astmann	Cherry Hill, NJ	856-424-3820
Robert A. Bader	Philadelphia, PA	215-413-0326
Debra S. Bacak	Sellersville, PA	215-257-0553
Dr. David P. Beatty	Hanover, MD	215-518-1025
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Joanne K. Owen	Pilesgrove, NJ	856-769-3212
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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 5:00 PM

Taize service, preceded by Advent Quiet Day. St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 630 E Cathedral Rd, Philadelphia PA 215.482.6300

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 7:30 PM

Handel's *Messiah*, part one and selections from parts two and three. The Wayne Oratorio Society, a ministry of Wayne Presbyterian Church. 180 voice choir & professional orchestra and soloists. Free will offering. Handicapped accessible. Wayne Presbyterian Church, 125 E. Lancaster Ave, Wayne PA 610.688.8700 [www.waynepres.org](http://www.waynepres.org)

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 8:00 PM

"Ancient Voices," The University of Pennsylvania's early music vocal ensemble. Music of the Virgin Mary by Praetorius, Dufay, Fayrfax, Verdelot, and Sweelinck. Grace Epiphany Church, 224 E. Gowen Ave, Mt. Airy PA 215.248.2950 [www.grace-epi.org](http://www.grace-epi.org)

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2:00 PM

The Annual Frederick Maxson/Walter Baker Memorial Recital, First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, 17th & Sansom St. Rebecca Carr, soprano, Alan Morrison, piano & organ, in a Winter/Christmas themed program of music. Free of charge.

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 4:00 PM

The Many Moods of Christmas. Choir, Orchestra, Handbells & Organ, H. Ray Hunsicker, Conductor. Free admission. Reception following. Calvary Lutheran Church, Rosedale Ave & New St, West Chester PA 610.696.2475

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 5:00 PM

An Advent Procession. The St. Martin's Choir, Ken Lovett, director. Music of Frank Boles, Paul Christiansen, Orlando di Lasso, Stephen Paulus, John Tavener. Handicap accessible; childcare provided. Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Willow Grove Ave & St Martin's Ln, Chestnut Hill PA 215.247.7466 [www.StMartinEC.org](http://www.StMartinEC.org)

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 5:00 PM

Nicolas Henry Christianson, cello. J. S. Bach's Chorale Preludes *Wachet Auf, Ruft Uns Die Stimme, Gottes, Sohn Ist Kommen, Christum Wir Sollen Loben Schon* and *In Dulci Jubilo* transcribed for cello and organ, Adagio from *Toccata in C*. Free-will offering. Philadelphia Cathedral (Episcopal), 3723 Chestnut St (38th & Chestnut), Philadelphia PA 215.386.0234 x104 [www.philadelphiacathedral.org](http://www.philadelphiacathedral.org)

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 7:00 PM

Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Performing Arts. Touring Choir and Women's Choir with David Macbeth, director. Recent performance included Lincoln Center. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 1335 Old Carriage Rd, Northampton, PA 610.262.9517

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 7:30 PM

Handel's *Messiah*, part one and selections from parts two and three. The Wayne Oratorio Society, a ministry of Wayne Presbyterian Church. 180 voice choir & professional orchestra and soloists. Free will offering. Handicapped accessible. Wayne Presbyterian Church, 125 E. Lancaster Ave, Wayne PA 610.688.8700 [www.waynepres.org](http://www.waynepres.org)

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 4:00 PM

An Advent Service of Lessons and Carols led by Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church's Senior Choir, Youth Chorale, Alleluia Singers, and Handbell Choirs. Free will offering. Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, 625 Montgomery Ave, Bryn Mawr PA 610.525.2821 [www.bmpc.org/finearts](http://www.bmpc.org/finearts)

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 4:30 PM

Christmas by Candlelight: We Sing in Joy! Children, youth and adult choirs, orchestra, bells and organ featuring selections from Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*. Free-will offering. Free childcare. Handicapped accessible. Abington Presbyterian Church, 1082 Old York Rd, Abington PA 215.887.4530 [www.apcusa.org/MusicatAbington](http://www.apcusa.org/MusicatAbington)

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 7:00 PM

Christmas by Candlelight: We Sing in Joy! Children, youth and adult choirs, orchestra, bells and organ featuring selections from Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*. Free-will offering. Free childcare. Handicapped accessible. Abington Presbyterian Church, 1082 Old York Rd, Abington PA 215.887.4530 [www.apcusa.org/MusicatAbington](http://www.apcusa.org/MusicatAbington)

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 4:15 PM

Holiday concert. 4:15 PM recital by organist Kevin O'Malia and carillonneur Janet Tebbel. 5:00PM Christmas Candlelight Service with Chancel and Children's Choirs in seasonal anthems and carols by Mendelssohn, Haydn, Walton, Handel, Halley. Kevin O'Malia conducts with Scott Myers, organ. Congregational Advent and Christmas carols. First United Methodist Church. 6001 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA. 19144. 215-438-3677.

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 5:00 PM

Festival of Lessons and Carols. Cathedral Singers directed by Rieyhee Hong. Favorite choral works by David White, Herbert Howells, Norman Warren, David Hurd and Harold Darke. Reception following. Philadelphia Cathedral (Episcopal), 3723 Chestnut St (38th & Chestnut), Philadelphia PA 215.386.0234 x104 [www.philadelphiacathedral.org](http://www.philadelphiacathedral.org)

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 7:30 PM

Noel, Noel, a candlelight Christmas concert. Sanctuary Choir, Chamber Chorale, Alma Zensen, director; Christopher Garven, organ; Bethany Brooks, piano; harp, oboe, flute, trumpets. Free-will offering. Reception follows. Media Presbyterian Church, 30 E. Baltimore Ave., Media, PA 610.566.3944 [www.mediapresbyterian.org](http://www.mediapresbyterian.org)

## POSITIONS AVAILABLE

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610-521-1626  
www.ChristChurchRidleyPark.org

Two Sunday services; one mid-week rehearsal; one adult choir. We are looking for an organist and choirmaster who has a good background in church music and the Anglican liturgy and is at home with more traditional hymnody and organ repertoire. Wonderful congregation and beautiful sanctuary designed by Theophilus Chandler/George Natress. Superb 3-manual, 74-stop pipe/digital Cornel Zimmer, 2003, featured on the cover of the Diapason magazine. Salary: \$17,000 - \$19,000. 4 weeks paid vacation. Send resume to Fr. Douglas Tompkins, Rector, at above address, or fax to 610-521-4988, or e-mail to dg.tompkins@verizon.net. Position description soon to be posted on web site.

### DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES/CANTOR

Christ Ascension Lutheran Church  
8300 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA, 19118  
215-247-4233  
www.christascension.org

A Director of Music Ministries / Cantor is sought for Christ Ascension Lutheran Church, in the Chestnut Hill section of Philadelphia, PA, Pastor Martin Lohrmann. This leader of assembly song will plan and coordinate the entire music program of the congregation; be responsible for musical leadership at one eucharist each Sunday and all festival services; lead the adult choir and the children's choir; and fulfill attendant musical responsibilities as laid out in the contract. Immediate needs include providing guidance with the replacement of the organ. Familiarity with Evangelical Lutheran Worship resources is expected. Christ Ascension, a Reconciling in Christ congregation of the ELCA, sings with gusto. For this part-time position of approximately 10-12 hours a week, available November 2009, a salary of \$12,500 is currently offered. For full details, contact Denise at office@christascension.org

### ORGANIST

Elverson United Methodist Church  
32 E. Main St., Elverson, PA 19520  
610-286-9460

Elverson United Methodist Church seeks an organist to play at our Sunday service and specially designated services. The organist will also accompany the choir, attend weekly rehearsals and work as a team with the music director. Approximately 6 hours per week, Pipe organ. Salary is \$6,000. Interested candidates should forward their resume to Mr. Victor Pronesti at vfpronesti@dejazzd.com or mail it to the church address above.

### ORGANIST

St Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
20 Church Rd., Hellertown, PA 18055

St Luke's Church at Old Williams is looking for a part-time organist for an average of 6-10 hours a week, to include one choir practice and one Sunday service. There may also be special festival services throughout the year.

Organist is to provide preludes, offertories and postludes appropriate to the day / liturgical season. We need a person who can work as a team member and minister of music with the pastor and worship and music committee and choir director to assist the congregation to engage in worship through music.

The instrument is a three-manual Allen Renaissance organ, and includes a MIDI unit. Church also has a Yamaha Clavinova which is used for choir accompaniment. Organist may also serve in other capacities in future. This is a salaried position. Send resume and three references. Inquiries at 484-661-1927.

### DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

St John's United Church of Christ  
315 Gay Street, Phoenixville, PA 19460  
610-933-5311

St. John's United Church of Christ is seeking a Director of Music with full responsibility for the music program including: playing the organ for 10:45 am service and for special services throughout the church year, selecting and preparing preludes and postludes appropriate to the day / liturgical season and selecting anthems for and directing the adult chancel choir, a youth choir, and a handbell choir. Church has a two manual Austin pipe organ. Current salary is \$14,500.00 with paid vacation. Applicants should send a resume and letter of interest to Organist Search c/o Ruth Brobst, St John's UCC, 315 Gay Street, Phoenixville, PA 19460 or reply via e-mail: gruber@stjohnsucc.com

### ORGANIST/CHOIR DIRECTOR

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Folcroft, PA  
610- 583-4977

St. John's is seeking a church musician to provide musical leadership to enhance our worship experience.

Responsibilities include:

- Playing the organ or electric piano for all services throughout the church year (one Sunday morning service, mid-week Lenten services and other festival services throughout the year)

## TUESDAY NOON RECITALS



ANDREW HELLER, COORDINATOR  
610-789-0146, ANDREW.HELLER@AGOPHILA.ORG

### December, 2009

St. Basil the Great Roman Catholic Church  
2300 Kimberton Road  
Kimberton, PA. 19442  
610-933-2110

HOST ORGANIST: Mary Elizabeth Campbell

ORGAN: Rodgers

#### RECITALS:

December 1: Andrew Heller  
8: (no recital)  
15: Loretta Hartnett  
22: Mary Elizabeth Campbell  
29: (no recital)

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Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church  
625 Montgomery Avenue  
Bryn Mawr, PA

January 16, 2010  
8:15 am – 4:00 pm



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Dean's Message  
Continued from page 2

Many of us recognize that traditions evolve. Mrs. Beard and Reverend Abernathy have both passed away, but not before illness and infirmity prevented them from fulfilling their "traditional" roles. New community members and leaders will bring memories of traditions elsewhere, and cultural cross-pollination will at least be attempted. Some congregations are fertile ground for such new growth and evolution. In others the adherence to tradition may be reminiscent of the 1989 film, "Weekend at Bernie's", with some traditional elements present and "propped up" although they lack any life. Regardless of the degree of adherence, each church musician, especially in this Christmas season, must observe some elements of tradition.

Just as traditions of the Christmas season constrain the church musician, so do traditions of Thanksgiving dinner constrain the home cook.

In my family, Thanksgiving is observed by a gathering of my maternal relatives, typically at my mother's home. The attendance has evolved with birth, death, marriage, and engagement, but the basic pattern remains the same. My mother's brother, his wife, his three daughters and their families, along with my brother and his family, and I all descend on my mother's home in western Pennsylvania.

Over the last decade, I've managed to arrive a few days early to assist my mother with the preparations. The menu has always been an area of delicate balance and careful thought. There must be turkey, with plain bread stuffing (as my maternal grandmother made it), mashed potatoes, and gravy. Sweet potatoes, in some form, are essential, although most of my cousins and their families won't touch them. Cranberry sauce of two varieties must be present: homemade from whole cranberries, as well as the jelled, canned type (that MUST show evidence of the rings of the can). The latter is served sliced as uniform disks. We typically try to have some green vegetable, although food preferences severely limit the options. There must be several pumpkin pies, and a single pecan pie. However, for my cousin Janet, who despises pie, there must be a "non-pie" dessert.

As time has passed, my mother has, in some cases allowed, and in other cases endorsed, continuous improvement initiatives in the kitchen preparation. We have incorporated use of farm-fresh, free-range turkey, which we brine the day before, as replacement for the generic supermarket variety. The mashed potatoes are now cooked in their skins, and peeled hot, with careful attention to the manner and order in which butter and cream are added. The pecans are now toasted before introducing them into the pie. The stuffing is now preheated before placing it in the turkey cavity, to avoid health concerns.

Year after year, my mother keeps careful record of the volume of food prepared, the volume consumed, and the number of people in attendance, as well as an "after action review" of things that worked, and things that did not. This archive is reviewed prior to preparing the next year's meal.

The most noticeable result of this approach is that the quality of the meal, despite constraints on the items of the menu, is outstanding. The continuous refinement and improvement has both heightened the enjoyment for those around the table, as well as easing the preparation tasks for my mother and me. Yes, tradition may still force the passing of that jelled cranberry sauce,

but, by golly, those are the best mashed potatoes!

So what does this have to do with church music? Even within the shackles of tradition, the constraints on repertoire, with requests for MUZAK favorite carols, it is possible to implement continuous improvement. You can find recipes (be it arrangements or improvisation patterns) for preparing the carols that can make those the BEST for your situation. That search for continuous improvement is key to the mission of the American Guild of Organists. May we never grow complacent! Even if Bernie is still propped up in a front pew, even if tradition forces the passing of the jelled cranberry sauce, even if *Silent Night* by candlelight must close every Christmas Eve service, you still have opportunity to make some aspect the very BEST! You and those you serve will be able to revel in the knowing that this year's "Joy to the World!" was the best, and you can quietly know that next year's will be even better! (And while serving up the BEST traditional elements, you may be able to sneak in a Brussels sprout or bit of sweetbreads for the true connoisseurs!)

Bon appétit, and Merry Christmas!

David

## A HOLIDAY PARTY!

**It's time to mark your calendar for a Holiday Party... after all our work is done so that we can relax and enjoy good friends and great food!**

The Date: **Sunday, January 3, 2010**

The Time: **5:00 to 8:00 p.m.**

The Location: **The home of Roy Harker**  
4514 Chester Avenue,  
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Your assignment for this event is ...

#1 – to come!!!

#2 – to pick a favorite food to bring.

#3 – to RSVP to Rae Ann Anderson at [rande84@verizon.net](mailto:rande84@verizon.net) by Monday, December 28 with your full name and names of any guests you may be bringing with you, and the food dish you plan to bring.

...

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 National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, Doylestown, PA

**Vincent M. Ryan**

Advent Lutheran Church, Harleysville, PA

Positions available  
 Continued from page 9

- Selecting and preparing preludes, offertories and postludes appropriate to the day/liturgical season
- Planning, in consultation with the pastor and worship and music committee, special services (i.e. Thanksgiving, Good Friday, weddings, funerals etc).
- Selecting anthems for and directing the choir.

The position involves approximately 6-10 hours per week (Sunday morning along with evening choir rehearsal during the week). Interested candidates should contact Pastor Cindy Ray at the number above.

• • •

**CHAPLAIN'S CORNER**

REV. BRUCE THORSEN CHAPLAIN@AGOPHILA.ORG

*But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart*  
 —Luke 2:19 NRSV

**T**reasured all these words...the words that tell the story. Is this not what Christmas is about, the story of Jesus coming to earth? These words in Luke 2 changed the world. All of the choral music and the hymns we sing have words. Many of the organ pieces we play are on a hymn tune, and often whatever verse comes to mind when the melody is heard in the composition is what speaks to the heart.

At our church for the Sunday School Christmas program, the leaders just want to tell the story from the Bible. It is such a 'nice' story that most people want to hear. Those words come back every year, but what difference do they make in our lives or in the lives of the people we work with or in the lives of those who find themselves in church only the one time of the year the story is told?

I see the challenge for us: what do we do anew or differently with those words and tunes? The story in and of itself does not change, but what new interpretation can we bring to our Christmas music that might help people hear, treasure, and ponder the words in their hearts as Mary did?

Mary was a poor peasant teenager thrust into a whole new life. It began when the Angel Gabriel came to tell her that she would bear a son and she would name him Jesus. He will reign as a king. She was overwhelmed and thought this must be a mistake, but she said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord, let it be according to your word.'

Following this encounter, she had a conversation with Elizabeth. In the midst of this conversation we hear Mary's "Song of Praise", the Magnificat. She expresses her praise, humbleness, and joy for being chosen for this special honor. We have not been called to do what Mary was called to do, yet we have been called to share the joy that these words of the Christmas story have brought to us with others, through our music.

Ponder these words, allow them to bring you joy, and then allow the joy to speak through the music we make this Advent/Christmas season.

Chaplain Bruce



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