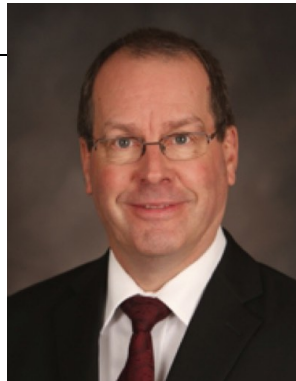


Dean's Column

David Jenkins

State of the Chapter Address

I was very happy to see the thirty folks who joined the chapter member virtual meeting on Sunday, October 18. We had no idea what to expect. However, I believe the meeting went well. Thanks to all of you who sent me positive messages in response, and followed up on some of the ideas discussed in the open forum section. I am glad to see that so many of you are anxious to gather together as a



community, even if it means by long distance. I am also grateful to the following: Pastor John Setterlund, who offered the commissioning of officers; Elizabeth George from the national office, who encouraged us and reported on AGO resources; Michael Caraher, who performed beautifully via YouTube; and to Jeremy Haug, who made the technology run smoothly.

In offering my state of the chapter talk, it was my aim to keep everything in the right perspective. We are justified in complaining about how the pandemic has halted or drastically altered our usual programs and events, and how it has prevented us from going out to concerts to enjoy music and to see our friends and colleagues. However, the pandemic has had a serious, even life and death, impact on all of us.

In April we lost one of our members, Dave Goulette, to complications from the COVID-19 virus. He was a longtime friend to many of us, and he had a significant impact on his church and community throughout his lifetime. We also had noted the loss of our faithful and long serving former chaplain Mike Edwins. We have had numerous other members get sick, some of them seriously. Others have lost their jobs and had their jobs cut back, and some have suffered other financial and personal hardships. We've had to care for vulnerable family members, support the essential workers and teachers among us. Family weddings and funerals have been delayed or reduced in scale. Our young people have suffered disruptions to their education or nascent careers.

So, I am inclined to keep my attitude sober, and my focus first of all on what is most important: family and friends; our well-being as individuals and as a community; how we can be a positive force in a society that seems at times to be pulling apart. Our chapter will carry on, and we will be creative in fulfilling our mission. Our first priority should be to take care of ourselves and each other.

Let me begin by talking about the effects of the pandemic on our programming, activities, our finances. Then I will turn to how we have responded in ways that will help us forward our mission, serve our members, and promote our vocations. The 2019-2020 program year started well. Last fall we had a great opening concert of Scandinavian organ music presented by James Hicks at Central Lutheran Church, followed by a Nordic-themed dinner. We had some exciting

Chapter Events 2020-2021

No events have been scheduled at this time.

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events at Northrop Auditorium featuring the restored pipe organ there, including performances by Branford Marsalis and Jean-Willy Kuntz, and Christmas music by the Chenaults. In the winter we had the rare opportunity to hear a concert of three Vienne symphonies performed by Eric Plutz at the Basilica of Saint Mary. Our perennially successful outreach to youth, the *Pipe Organ Discovery Day*, was hosted by Bethlehem and Bethel Lutheran Churches in Minneapolis. Then the pandemic restrictions took effect. We were obliged to cancel several events, including the *Bach Birthday Bash*, the *Student Organ Playing Competition*, and the annual *Members Recital*.

However, the biggest concern in the spring was around the planning for the 2021 regional convention. In the face of an uncertain course for the pandemic, our own steering and program committee members were not willing to make the commitment to continue the planning for the convention. After quite a bit of consultation and work with the national committee on conventions, and with the national competitions committee, we cancelled the convention, and offered to sponsor the convention in 2023 instead. That proposal was accepted by the national committee, and they helped us renegotiate our contract with the hotel. Because of the hard work already done by the steering and program committees, we will be able to hit the ground running, and build on the planning already underway.

In May, the board made a significant commitment to supporting members and providing for the future of the chapter by voting to use reserve funds to renew all members' national and local dues for one year. Connected with that budget decision was the establishment of a Members Relief Fund, which made grants available to members facing financial hardship. I'm grateful for the generous donations from members, and I'm glad we could help a few members. We also assembled a group to call as many members as we could reach, to find out how they were doing, and ask how the AGO could support them. The reports from the callers were that the outreach was very much appreciated.

Now we are moving forward again! The Program Committee is undertaking a major initiative to produce a documentary celebrating the Northrop pipe organ. The 25-minute video will include a performance by U of M organ professor Dean Billmeyer, and interviews of chapter members connected to the instrument's history and restoration. The project represents a culmination of the ongoing partnership of our organist community with Northrop and the U of M. The video recording took place during the week of October 19. We will have some kind of splashy viewing party after the first of the year when the video is finished. The documentary will also be used for ongoing outreach and educational purposes, for promotion for the regional convention and for Northrop organ events, and will leave a creative, high quality, positive legacy from a unique and difficult time in the TCAGO's history.



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RENAISSANCE QUANTUM
 BY ALLEN

Considering the turnout of stalwart members at the recent Katelyn Emerson organ concert at Northrop Auditorium, there seems to be interest in revisiting the question of sponsoring public events. As Michael Barone would say, "We are a risky, frisky bunch." The combination of live and virtual viewing options seemed especially attractive, and resulted in an expanded, even international, audience for the event.

Meanwhile the other committees are hard at work. The *Young Organist Playing Competition* will be held in a virtual format this spring. The Historic Concerns Committee is working on updates to the Organ Pages. The Education Committee is at work on some kind of virtual replacement to the *Pipe Organ Discovery Day*. Our Registrar is working toward implementing the Oncard registration system and assisting our members. The Composition Competition Committee is preparing to announce a new competition. The *Pipedreams* Scholarship Committee is adapting its processes. The Board is rolling out a series of small group meetings by neighborhood, to help keep us connected and offer each other support. I am probably forgetting all that is happening behind the scenes, and I am not intentionally trying to leave anyone out. There are lots of moving parts to our chapter!

I can never say thank you enough to the board and committee members, the officers, and all the volunteers who really make our chapter great. Way back in May I asked everyone: "What are you doing to take care of yourself today?" Yes, we have all been turning inward, marshalling our energy, cocooning with close family and friends to take care of ourselves in the midst of lots of uncertainty. In the commissioning of chapter officers and board members, Pastor John reminded us that the mission of the AGO is to foster a thriving community of musicians who share their knowledge and inspire passion for the organ. We are challenged right now to avoid isolation, and the feelings of helplessness or hopelessness that isolation can generate. Certainly, one of the things we can do to take care of ourselves right now is to keep connected to our AGO community.

* * *

In her talk at the chapter meeting, Elizabeth George directed us to online resources and webinars that can help us stay inspired, professionally active, and connected to the AGO. Here are some links to [past](#) and [upcoming](#) programs sponsored on the national website.

The TCAGO annual meeting was conducted virtually on October 18 via Zoom. If you were not able to attend, you may view the meeting recording [here](#).



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National Lutheran Choir Goes Virtual

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

Unable to sing live concerts, the National Lutheran Choir has adopted pop music studio techniques. The Choir will continue the tradition of its highly-acclaimed All Saints concerts beginning November 1, but with a significant twist: Not only will the performances shift from live to online, but the music itself has been composed, sung, recorded and engineered in ways that profoundly change the classic choral experience. "It turns out that, with the pandemic, we can do some things virtually that we can't do live," said David Cherwien, the NLC's artistic director.

As humanity gasps for breath, the concert's theme couldn't be more timely. *Breathe on Me, Breath of God* is a 19th-century hymn text that Cherwien couldn't shake from his mind as the pandemic persisted, and as the struggle for social justice surged in the wake of George Floyd's death by choking – and then as unprecedented wildfires and smoke smothered the Western U.S.

In response, the choir commissioned new works composed for the All Saints remembrance by artist-in-residence Paul Rudoj. Included is a haunting reimagining of the *Breathe on Me* theme which invites listeners to experience hope floating over the top of anguish, much of the anguish supplied by the labored breaths of the choir.

The pieces were crafted specifically for the time of COVID-19 with the safety of singers in mind. Much of the music was recorded solo, or in small groups, sometimes in odd, acoustic-friendly places (an airplane hangar, for example). It was then assembled in the editing room. "What happens in post-production is as important as the singing itself," said Rudoj.

The Feast of All Saints, a Christian remembrance of those who have died, is especially palpable this year. Thousands of people have died without funerals or celebrations of their lives, leaving behind a deeper grief and hollow places in the hearts of many loved ones. The NLC's *Breathe on Me, Breath of God* concert attempts to fill that tragic void with an exhalation of hope.

The concert, free of charge, will be available for [streaming](#) starting November 1 at 4:00 p.m., and available throughout the Fall.

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VocalEssence On Demand

2020-2021 Season

The day is finally here! VocalEssence announces its 2020-2021 season, broadcast in high-definition video to our new website – VocalEssence On Demand. Watch as much as you want, whenever you want.

Eight new performances will stream from October 2020 to June 2021. Watch performances when they premiere or, once released, when it's most convenient for you.

Rightfully Hers: Commemorating 100 years of women's voices through song

Release date: Sunday, October 18

Chorus & Ensemble Singers Series

Imagine: Discover beauty in winter holidays

Release date: Saturday, November 28

Singers Of This Age Series

Welcome Christmas: Behold the wonder of Christmas with familiar favorites

Release date: Sunday, December 6

Chorus & Ensemble Singers Series

Believe: Let freedom ring in the land

Release date: Saturday, January 16

Singers Of This Age Series

Create: Help shape a world where all can live out their dreams

Release date: Saturday, March 6

Singers Of This Age Series

WITNESS: Power of art to change the world

Release date: Sunday, March 14

Chorus & Ensemble Singers Series

Celebrate: Celebrating Mexico through dance and song

Release date: Saturday, May 1

Singers Of This Age Series

Singing the World Awake: Showcasing the rich tapestry of music in Minnesota

Release date: Thursday, June 17

Chorus & Ensemble Singers Series

For more information and subscription prices, visit

[VocalEssence On Demand](#).

Calendar of Events

November

Monday, November 2, 7:30 p.m.

All Souls' Day Recital

Christopher Ganza, organist

Cathedral of Saint Paul

239 Selby Avenue, Saint Paul

Wednesday, November 18, 12:30 p.m.

St. Olaf Organ Series

Jacob Benda, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church,

Minneapolis

St. Olaf Catholic Church

215 South Eighth Street, Minneapolis

December

Wednesday, December 16, 12:30 p.m.

St. Olaf Organ Series

John Varona, Christ United Methodist Church,

Rochester

St. Olaf Catholic Church

215 South Eighth Street, Minneapolis

February

Wednesday, February 24, 12:30 p.m.

St. Olaf Organ Series

Kris Rizzotto, Lake of the Isles Lutheran Church,

Minneapolis

St. Olaf Catholic Church

215 South Eighth Street, Minneapolis

March

Wednesday, March 24, 12:30 p.m.

St. Olaf Organ Series

Richard Gray, St. John the Evangelist

Episcopal Church, Saint Paul

St. Olaf Catholic Church

215 South Eighth Street, Minneapolis

April

Tuesday, April 13, 7:30 p.m.

Symphonic Bach

Paul Jacobs, organist

Northrop Auditorium, University of Minnesota

84 Church Street SE, Minneapolis

Wednesday, April 21, 12:30 p.m.

St. Olaf Organ Series

Dean Billmeyer, University Organist and

Professor of Music, University of Minnesota

St. Olaf Catholic Church

215 South Eighth Street, Minneapolis

May

Wednesday, May 19, 12:30 p.m.

St. Olaf Organ Series

Jessica Park, Chapel of St. Thomas Aquinas,

University of St. Thomas

St. Olaf Catholic Church

215 South Eighth Street, Minneapolis

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Pipenotes

Pipenotes is the official publication of the Twin Cities Chapter, American Guild of Organists, and is published nine times a year, September through June. December and January is a combined issue.

Deadline date

Information for *Pipenotes* should be received no later than the fifteenth of the month preceding publication.

Materials may be sent to [Merritt Nequette](#), editor.

Letters to the Editor

Signed Letters to the Editor are always welcome.

Mail letters to [Merritt Nequette](#),
 2748 Lexington Avenue N., Saint Paul MN 55113

TCAGO Event Promotion via Pipedreams

A comprehensive listing of organ events statewide is available online via the *Pipedreams Organ Calendar*. Information there is only as good as the information provided to it, so you are encouraged to send event listings for inclusion at the earliest possible time.

For both on-air and website listings of organ-related activities, *please send information to Pipedreams* host (and longtime TCAGO member) [Michael Barone](#), or by mail to: *Pipedreams* Calendar, 480 Cedar St., Saint Paul, MN 55101. In a pinch, you may call 651-290-1539.

You are also encouraged to regularly request organ selections on the *Friday Favorites* show with [Steven Staruch](#). Help promote the inclusion of more organ music in MPR's programming.

NOTE: It is requested that you include this text in printed programs for any local organ concerts you play or present:

Enjoy the gamut of the pipe organ experience...from ancient to modern, sacred to secular, classical to popular...with weekly broadcasts of *Pipedreams* from American Public Media. Broadcasts in the Twin Cities are heard Sunday mornings (6-8 a.m.) on KSJN-99.5FM and other stations in the Classical MPR network. For your convenience, *Pipedreams* also is globally available 24/7 at www.pipedreams.org or www.yourclassical.org/pipedreams.

Unfortunately, the former Classical MPR Online Calendar has been terminated, though you can send non-organ-related church music series information directly to your favorite Classical MPR host and cross your fingers.