

February 2024

Dean's Corner

As I begin what is to be my final quarter (six months) as our Chapter Dean, I look back and feel that it has been a great two years so far. We've come through and out the other side of a pandemic, we've gone back to in-person events, and our churches have mostly returned to some sense of normalcy.



Jeffrey White—Dean

Coming up between now and the end of my term on June 30th, we will be getting the next program year established and approved, we will have a slate of candidates to present to the membership to vote on, and we may have another Avis Blewett Award recipient. It is not required to have one each year, but it will be up to the selection committee to make that determination. See more information about the Avis Blewett Award on page 6.

If you desire to take part in any of the above, please reach out to me at dean@agostlouis.org. This year, we will be electing the next Dean and Sub-Dean, as well as three Executive Committee members for the class of 2027. As always, you may review the Chapter Operating Guidelines on the website which have all the details regarding all positions within our Chapter leadership.

I hope that you had a wonderful Christmas holiday and I wish a Happy New Year to you all!

Jeffrey White
Dean, St. Louis AGO Chapter



Mary Beth Wittry
wittrym@stgabrielstl.org

rehearsals and the concert; she told me that she is using every stop on the organ! The concert will not only be a fun visual and gymnastics of two organists playing repertoire together at the console, but will also be an aural delight of sound color as well!

A blessed 2024 to all of you!

January is a welcome respite after the busyness of the Christmas season. I hope you all had a beautiful Christmas.

In just a few weeks, our duo concert (Dr. Ann Marie Rigler and Dr. Melody Steed) will be given at Third Baptist Church on **Sunday, February 11 at 3:00 p.m. Please note the date and time change of the concert.** This is a concert you won't want to miss. Dr. Rigler came to town last week for two days of registering the mighty Möller in preparation for intense



On March 18, we will have our Members' Recital, the first official "Pipes for Parkinsons", on the new Kegg organ at Little Flower Catholic Church in Richmond Heights. Bob Schneider, an organist himself, has initiated the idea of having a fund raiser for those struggling with this affliction; his beloved wife is suffering with the disease. He hopes to promote the idea of "Pipes for Parkinsons" not only locally, but nationally as well. At present, we have just one volunteer playing in the recital; we are hoping for several other performers. Please let me know as soon as possible if you would like to play. Practicing new repertoire is a fun project for the winter months! *N.B. There will be a dinner before the concert that evening.*

Our closing banquet on May 20 will be at St. Paul Evangelical Free Church in Creve Coeur. Betsy Stull will be our host.

I hope to see all of you on Sunday, February 11. Stay warm!

Mary Beth Wittry
 Sub-dean of the St. Louis Chapter of the AGO

Upcoming Programs

Monday, March 18 - 6:30 p.m.
 Dinner and Members' Recital
 "Pipes for Parkinsons" by Bob Schneider
 Venue: Little Flower Parish
 Host: Chuck Chauvin

Monday, May 20 - 6:30 p.m.
 Closing Banquet
 St. Paul Evangelical Free Church
 Host: Betsy Stull

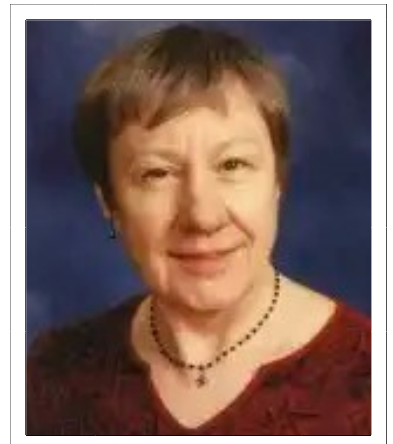
2024 NOMINEES

The following slate of nominees has been presented by the duly appointed nominating committee. We thank Cathy Bolduan, Cathy Cassy and Mike Kaberline for serving on that committee. Additional nominations may be made by petition if each petition is signed by five (5) Chapter members in good standing and submitted to the Chapter Secretary within thirty (30) days of the announcement of the slate to the Chapter membership but no later than March 15. The actual election will take place between March 15 and April 15. Instructions for voting will appear in the March issue of The OPUS.

DEAN

SUZANNE MANELLI

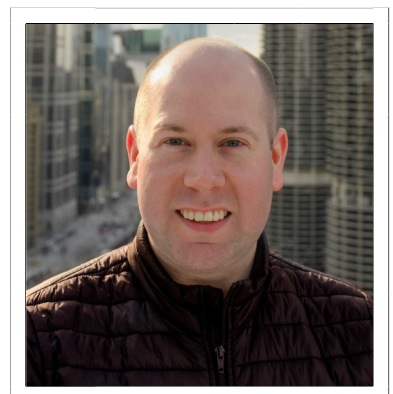
Suzanne Manelli earned a Bachelor of Music Education degree from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, majoring in piano and bassoon. Subsequently, she had a 40-year career in Information Technology at state government, Anheuser-Busch and Centene Corporation, retiring for the third and last time in 2020. Suzanne became an organist because there was a vacancy at her church and "well, you play piano, so....". Fortunately, her father, a lifelong organist, helped Suzanne get started and develop a library. In addition, other organizations - such as the AGO! - have provided on-going educational opportunities, materials, and conferences that have contributed greatly to her development and that of many others. Suzanne currently plays at St. John's Lutheran Church in South City, leads a tiny choir, and looks for ways to develop and engage the musical talents they have. She enjoys swimming as much as possible in the summer and also teaches YogAlign.



SUB-DEAN

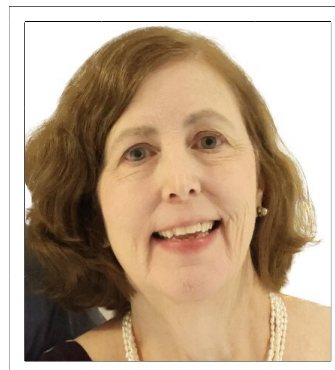
BIFF HACKMAN

Biff Hackman, while not an organist himself, has been fascinated by the instrument and surrounded by church music his entire life. A member of the St. Louis Chapter since 2018, Biff has attended meetings and events since 2008. He has attended several Regional and National Conventions and will be Hotel Chair for the 2026 Convention to be held in St. Louis. He currently spends his days as a Revenue Manager for Lodging Hospitality Management, a local hotel management company. If elected Sub-Dean, Biff looks forward to offering varied Chapter programs that will give members the opportunity to explore new or once familiar spaces and topics.



NOMINEES CONTINUED**CLASS OF 2027****MARY HITCHCOCK-REINHART**

Mary Hitchcock-Reinhart is a music therapist at Ranken Jordan Pediatric Bridge Hospital. Mary has degrees in Music Education, Church Music, and Music Therapy from Texas Christian University, Scarritt Graduate School, and Maryville University respectively. Mary's organ teachers have included Emmet Smith and Wilma Jensen. Originally from Maryland, Mary was an Orioles fan growing up but now cheers on the Cardinals and TCU Horned Frogs. Mary and husband Ted have two grown daughters, and will have a son-in-law as of June 8. Formerly, Mary was organist and director of traditional worship at Salem UMC and now substitutes on organ benches in the area.

**EARL NAYLOR**

Earl Naylor is organist and director of music for the First Unitarian Universalist Church of St. Louis and Temple Emanuel Reform Jewish Congregation in St. Louis County. A Past Dean of the St. Louis Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, Mr. Naylor was also chairman of the Organ Historical Society National Convention when it was held in St. Louis.

**SPENCER SMITH**

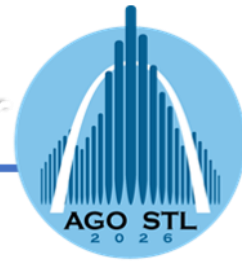
Spencer Smith has been the Minister of Music at Second Presbyterian Church in St. Louis since July 2022. At Second Church, Spencer directs adult choir, Second Church Chorale and handbell choir, and leads worship from both the organ and the piano. In addition to worship, he also directs the Coutts Music Series, which includes programs in various genres of music. Outside of his duties at Second Church, Spencer is also a tenor, pianist, and conductor. As a singer he is a full member of the St. Louis Chamber Chorus, and participates in projects with the South Dakota based choral ensemble Transept. As a collaborative pianist, Spencer has accompanied a variety of different ensembles including choirs, soloists, chamber music ensembles, and choral workshops throughout Eastern South Dakota and Northwestern Iowa at the high school and collegiate level. Smith is a member of area organizations including the American Guild of Organists. Spencer was previously the Director of Music & Arts Ministry at First Congregational Church in Sioux Falls, SD.

In May 2020, Spencer received a Master's Degree in Music with a specialization in Conducting, studying under Dr. David Holdhusen and Dr. Timothy Campbell at the University of South Dakota. Smith received a Bachelor's degree in Piano Performance from the University of South Dakota in the spring of 2017 where he studied piano with Dr. Susanne Skyrn and collaborative piano and chamber music with Dr. Susan Keith Gray. He studied organ under the direction of Dr. Larry Schou.



Convention Coordinator

2026 National Convention



During February a Trio of National Officers/Staff will be in St. Louis to review our plans and budget for the 2026 Convention. Their goal is to help us make the Convention one of interest to the organ community and financially responsible.

After receiving recommendations from the Trio the Steering Committee will gather to discuss and make changes as appropriate. Burnell Hackman will then travel to a National Council meeting in late April to present the Convention details to the National Council. After we receive their approval, we can begin issuing contracts and discussing details of the Convention.

The Gifts and Grants Committee is working on a Riverboat Cruise sometime this Spring to announce Convention details.

Plans are progressing at an appropriate pace. We look forward to the Trio visit to see what they think of the plans.

Burnell Hackman
Convention Coordinator
Agostl2026@agostlouis.org
314.650.9415

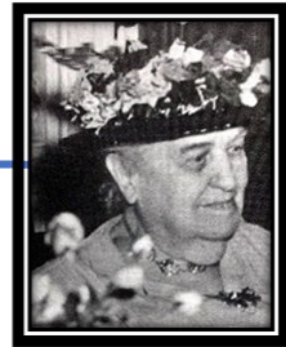


You may be asking “What happened to the February Flourish?” The February Flourish Committee has elected to postpone this year’s event until next year. The team is looking into restructuring the Flourish to provide more opportunities for attendees. Many of the team members also are serving on the 2026 Convention steering committee, which is quite a large and time-consuming task.

If you have things you would like to see in future Flourishes, please let the Executive committee know. Suzanne Chisum has agreed to be the point person.

AVIS BLEWETT AWARD

ST. LOUIS AGO CHAPTER



The Avis H. Blewett Award may be given annually to a person who meets the qualifications set forth under the guidelines given below. The Award process will include approval of the recipient at the March Executive Committee meeting and presentation of the Award at the annual meeting.

Guidelines:

The nominee should have made a significant contribution to the field of sacred music in the metropolitan Saint Louis area. Nominees may include church/synagogue/temple musicians, teachers, composers, or others. (Sacred music is defined as music that falls within the charter of the American Guild of Organists.)

The awardee will receive an inscribed plaque or framed certificate. Guild Members will receive one year National AGO and Saint Louis Chapter membership. Non Guild members will receive a one-year subscription to The American Organist Magazine, and a one-year subscription to The OPUS. The format of the award may vary, as appropriate. A record shall be kept of the awardees and the status of their awards.

Nominations are to be submitted by **March 1** to a member of the Avis H. Blewett Award Committee (appointed by the Dean and listed below.) This Committee will select and recommend the awardee(s), if any.

The Executive Committee will approve or reject the proposed awardee(s) at its March 18, 2024 meeting.

The award may be presented at the annual meeting. Current and past Avis Blewett Award recipients will be invited to the annual meeting as guests of the Chapter and their individual dinners will be provided at Chapter expense.

Jeffrey White
Dean, St. Louis AGO Chapter

The 2024 Avis Blewett Award Committee:
Dawn Riske, Chair
Bill Sullivan
Sharon Whitlock

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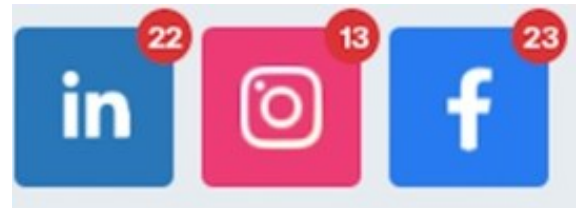
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| | |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| Feb 7 | Mighty Mendelssohn |
| Feb 14 | Silvery Silbermanns |
| Feb 18 | Chorales and Hymns |
| Feb 25 | African-American Composers |

Sponsorship opportunities are available.
Email koi@kingofinstruments.show.

CHAPTER SOCIAL MEDIA

The St. Louis Chapter has a presence on social media with Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn pages. If you need assistance in locating the groups or how to follow them, please contact Suzanne Chisum at suzchisum@gmail.com.



San Francisco, California, June 30-July 4, 2024

(hosted by San Francisco and Palo Alto Chapters)

Visit the convention website at www.sfago2024.org.

Concert Calendar

Check the Concerts and Events section of the Chapter website (www.agostlouis.org) for the most current list of upcoming events. When visiting that page, be sure to click on the heading of each concert listing for full details. As of press time here is some of what you will find.

February 4 - 3:00 PM

ORGAN RECITAL: DAVID SINDEN

St. Peter's Episcopal Church 110 N Warson Road, St. Louis, MO

Early Music Missouri presents "The Baroque Organ: Music by Frescobaldi, Bach, Byrd and Marchand"

February 10 - 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

WORKSHOP: "SOUNDTRACKS: FILM MUSIC, LITURGY, COMMUNITY"

Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church 9450 Clayton Road, St. Louis, MO

February 11 - 10:30 AM

HYMN FESTIVAL: "HOW BRIGHTLY SHINES"

Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church 9450 Clayton Road, St. Louis, MO

February 14 - 11:00 AM

MIDWEEK LENTEN RECITAL: BURNELL HACKMAN

Peace Lutheran Church 737 Barracksvue Road, St. Louis, MO

February 21 - 11:00 AM

MIDWEEK LENTEN RECITAL: MATTHEW GERHARDT

Peace Lutheran Church 737 Barracksvue Road, St. Louis, MO

February 28 - 11:00 AM

MIDWEEK LENTEN RECITAL: KEVIN HUCKSHOLD

Peace Lutheran Church 737 Barracksvue Road, St. Louis, MO

March 3 - 3:00 PM

CONCERT: MASTERS OF ENGLISH POLYPHONY

St. Peter's Episcopal Church 110 N Warson Road, St. Louis, MO

Motets & Masses by Dunstaple, Taverner and Byrd

Early Music Missouri Vocal Ensemble

March 6 - 11:00 AM

MIDWEEK LENTEN RECITAL: ELIN GOMEZ

Peace Lutheran Church 737 Barracksvue Road, St. Louis, MO

(Continued on page 9)

(Concert Calendar continued from page 8)

2024 is the Year of Mark. Gospel readings for worship are chosen from this, the briefest of all the Gospels. *The Song of Mark* is a musical by Marty Haugen which is based on the life of Jesus as recounted in the Gospel of Mark. Musicians from a variety of parishes are coming together to perform this musical at three locations during Lent. The *Song of Mark* is presented with the support of the Saint Louis Chapter of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. Performances are free and open to the public. A free-will offering will be received at each performance. The ensemble for the March 1 performance will include the five rank Wicks organ.

Friday, February 23, 2024 - 7:30 PM

St. Joseph Church, 567 St. Joseph Lane in Manchester

Sunday, February 25, 2024 - 2:30 PM

St. Joan of Arc Church, 5800 Oleatha in South City

Friday, March 1, 2024 - 7:00 PM

Christ the King Church, 7316 Balson in University City

Looking ahead—St. Louis concert organist Dennis Bergin will present an organ concert, "MUSIC of RESURRECTION, at Twin Oaks Presbyterian Church on Friday, June 14, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. The program will feature organ music by Dietrich Buxtehude, Johann Pachelbel, Louis Vierne, Charles Tournemire, Jan Bender, Marcel Dupre, and Dennis Bergin. The church address is: Twin Oaks Presbyterian Church, 1230 Big Bend Road, Ballwin, Missouri 63021. The program is free and open to the public. For information: (636) 861-1870.

If you or your church has an organ/musical event that you would like to have included in the calendar, **please** send an email to David Sinden at events@agostlouis.org. You are also advised to "cc" Brent Johnson at brent@brentmjohnson.net.



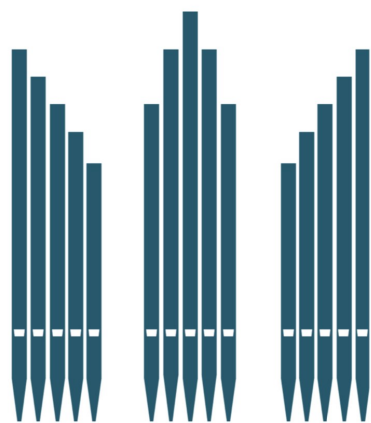
The Hymn Society invites current students (full- or part-time) in organ performance, in church music with an organ concentration, or in an equivalent program, to apply for the Hartung Organ Scholarship to attend their Annual Conference, which will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, from July 14-17, 2024. The winner of this scholarship will receive free registration, on-campus housing, and meals for the conference, and will perform the pre-conference organ recital on Sunday, July 14, at 4:00 pm. Application deadline is April 1, 2024.

Complete information may be found [here](#).

Woman Composer Sunday: Honoring Trailblazers and Inspiring New Generations

AGO Task Force for Gender Equity

Monday, Feb. 12, 6:00 p.m.



WOMAN COMPOSER SUNDAY

What are you going to play on Woman Composer Sunday, March 10? Join us for this interactive webinar as we share plans for the third annual event, organized by the AGO and the U.K. Society of Women Organists.

In addition to repertoire and helpful resources, participants will be introduced to three trailblazing women composers:

Dr. Lynn Loewi will discuss British organist and composer Elizabeth Stirling (1819-1895), who was profiled in the January issue of *The American Organist*.

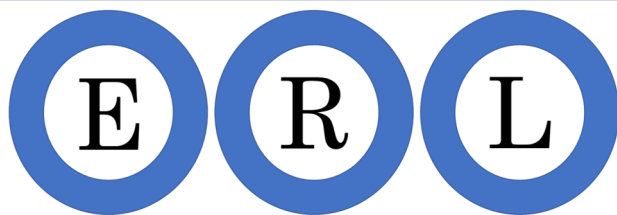
AGO President Eileen Hunt will interview Dr. Grace Wiersma, daughter of Dr. Roberta Bitgood, organist, composer, and first female president of the AGO (1975-1981).

Michelle Kardos will have a conversation with contemporary composer Dr. Martha Sobaje.

This webinar is presented by the AGO Task Force for Gender Equity, Dr. Nancy Cooper, director.

[Click here](#) to register. *Can't attend live? Go ahead and register, and we'll send you the recording.*

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EDUCATIONAL

RESOURCES

LIBRARY

Don't forget about our Chapter 's Educational Resources Library which contains many print and recorded materials for your use. To see a complete list and to make arrangements to borrow an item, visit our Chapter website at www.agostlouis.org and click on "Educational Resources."

A small sample of what is available.

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Improvisation in Service Playing | Trenney, Tom |
| Improvising: How to Master the Art | Hancock, Gerre |
| Manual on Hymn Playing | Heller, David |
| Mini-Course in Basic Organ Registration, A | Woolard, Margot Ann G. |
| Mini-Course in Creative Hymn Playing | Ferguson, John |
| Mini-Course on Creative Hymn-Playing | Ferguson, John |
| Mini-Course on Hymn-Playing | Woolard, Margot Ann G. |

Jim Germann shares his article from Reed Organ Society Newsletter:

I recently visited a pipe organ builder in Victoria, Texas who contacted the Reed Organ Society about liquidating his collection of organs, tools, and supplies. The builder is Russell Franklin whose shop and warehouse is actually near Inez, Texas which is on the gulf coast about halfway between Corpus Christi and Houston.

Mr. Franklin is a delightful gentleman who has been installing and repairing pipe organs in South Texas since 1986. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of area organs and churches and loves to reminisce about his work over the years. Sadly, recent health challenges have necessitated the closing of his business. His website is still up and running and can be viewed at www.franklinpipeorgans.com.

Along the way, he has also restored many reed organs as well, and is a past member of the Reed Organ Society.

The liquidation of his business is a significant undertaking given that the business occupies several thousand square feet of warehouse space that is full-to-overflowing with instruments, tools, books, and supplies. It is estimated that about 75% of the items for liquidation are pipe organs and pipe organ related items, but Mr. Franklin has at least a dozen reed organs along with reed organ tools and supplies such as glue pots, bellows cloth, reed hooks, books on organ repair, blowers, organ benches and stools, and the like.

The pipe organs and supplies are currently being advertised in *The Diapason* and on the pipe organ clearinghouse website, but Mr. Franklin also wants to ensure that Reed Organ Society members are aware of all the reed organs/supplies that are available.

Time is of the essence given that Mr. Franklin must vacate his place of business by about June 1, 2024. Given that he is retiring, he would certainly accept a nominal amount for any of the items, but he mostly wishes to see the organs and supplies go to good homes rather than being taken to the dump. (I think he would give many items, including organs, away for free...)

Mr. Franklin's phone number is 361-571-2310 and/or he may be contacted at russell@franklinpipeorgans.com.

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Our thanks to Sharon Whitlock for hosting this year's Epiphany Party at her home. Nine Chapter members and along with three spouses were in attendance with many tasty treats to enjoy. Three members of Sharon's children's choir stopped in to entertain us. In turn, they were entertained with an organ demonstration by Bill Sullivan. After several hours of merriment the weather outside turned—well, maybe not frightful, but snowy—and the group reluctantly began to head home. Below are some photos from the evening.

A few of those in attendance circled around just some of the tasty treats.



Sharon Whitlock accompanying some of her children's choir members who eagerly sang for us.

Bill Sullivan demonstrating the organ for some (perhaps) future organists.



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2023-2024 Chapter Leadership Team

OFFICERS:

Dean - Jeff White
 Sub-Dean - Mary Beth Wittry
 Secretary - Gaye Anderson
 Treasurer - Mike Kaberline
 Past Dean - Rick Burk

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Class of 2024

Sarah Bereza
 Chuck Chauvin
 Jill Griffin

Class of 2025

Suzanne Chisum
 Bob Raymond
 David Sinden

Class of 2026

Stephen Jones
 Mark Lawson
 Sharon Whitlock

APPOINTED POSITIONS:

2026 Convention Coordinator

Burnell Hackman

Auditor

Denis J. Doelling

Certification Coordinator

Brent Johnson

Dinner Reservations

Dr. Cathy Bolduan

Directory Editors

Jeff White & Regina Morris

Educational Resources

Dr. Barbara Raedeke

Historian

Randy Zerkel

Membership Coordinator

Mary Beth Wittry

OPUS Editor

Rick Burk

Photographer

Simeon A. Layne, Jr.

Placement

Denis J. Doelling

Professional Concerns Liaison

Shawn Portell

Programs

Mary Beth Wittry

Publicity Liaison

Dawn Riske

Registrar

Regina Morris

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Suzanne Chisum

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You are invited to submit material for publication consideration.
Material and calendar items should be e-mailed to newsletter@agostlouis.org.

Copy deadline for the March issue is February 15.

Send address changes or mailing label requests to:

**Regina Morris
3526 Oxford Blvd
St. Louis MO 63143-4209**