

March 2024

Dean's Corner

Dear Colleagues -

It's a very strange feeling this year - I feel as though we just put the Christmas decorations away, and now Easter is upon us this month! Our Executive Board has a few tasks in the coming weeks. First, we approved a quarter-page ad for the San Francisco convention booklet on behalf of the Chapter. This is in addition to the free ad we get for the 2026 Convention. I hope that you will still consider attending the SFAGO Convention. We have a good number of St. Louis folks going this year!



Jeffrey White—Dean

Second, we have our upcoming election. I highly encourage everyone to vote when the election opens up in April. I wish to thank those who have volunteered to run for office. We also have our program committee hard at work planning for the 2024/2025 season. We'll be able to present the full slate of wonderful opportunities at the closing banquet in May. Lastly, a committee has been formed to nominate an Avis Blewett Award candidate for board approval. This award is not required to be given every year, but we do like to try to do so. Rumor Control also has it that Avis will be making a number of appearances at the 2026 Convention...

The Executive Committee will meet on Monday, March 18 at 5:00 p.m. A dinner for all Chapter members begins at 6:30 p.m. followed by the Members' Recital at 7:30 p.m. All these events will be held at Little Flower Catholic Church. (See more details on page 5.) This is a great chance to hear and/or play the new Kegg organ. Contact Mary Beth Wittry if you would like to play something for our members!

I hope you all have a wonderful Easter season, and I look forward to our next gathering!

Jeffrey White
Dean, St. Louis AGO Chapter



Mary Beth Wittry
wittrym@stgabrielstl.org

First of all, a joyful Lent to all of you!

Last Sunday, February 11, we were presented a lovely concert by duo organists, Dr. Ann Rigler and Dr. Melody Steed, on the beautiful Kilgen/Möller organ at Third Baptist Church. It was a very interesting program with music by Charles Callahan, David Briggs, Gustav Merkel, Charles Henri Valentin Alkan, Robin Dinda, and Naji Hakim. Our performers serenaded us with lush orchestral sounds and harmonies as well as very rhythmic and lively pieces, including one duet which was all pedals. It was fascinating to watch, and as a page turner, sometimes even a bit daunting!

On Monday, March 18, after our Chapter dinner, we will hear our Members' Recital at Little Flower Catholic Church in Richmond Heights. (See more details on page 5.) This recital will

be dedicated to those suffering with the debilitating Parkinson's disease; there will be a free will offering to benefit that cause. Bob Schneider has worked very hard to promote this concert to the broader community in support of those affected by the disease. Below is a note from Bob to our Chapter. I hope you can attend and bring a friend with you!

Blessings!

Mary Beth Wittry

Sub-dean for the St. Louis Chapter of the AGO

*Dear AGO members, St. Louis Chapter
 Happy New Year!*

Several months ago, I contacted Mary Beth Wittry with this idea. My wife, JoAnn, was diagnosed with Parkinson's 7 years ago, and I've been her caregiver for the last 2. It's been a challenge, but drawn us closer. Now, more of my time is spent at home, no longer traveling for work. Back in the 70s I had the privilege of studying organ briefly with Cathy Bolduan and also with the late Ronald Arnatt. My renewed interest in organ music 50 years later combined with JoAnn's condition was my motivation. After many conversations, I'm convinced this is worthwhile, with an unlimited potential to do good. Parkinson's is a very cruel disease, and does NOT improve over time (learn about PD online). I'm reaching out to organists, singers, choirs, soloists with accompanists, bands, and anyone with "pipes".

We're all here only for a short time. This is an opportunity for some of you to share your love and passion for music with others, while at the same time, helping those who will likely never have the abilities that you've been blessed with, to have hope and a better quality of life. There is no deadline to meet. This project will grow and succeed as quickly as it deserves to.

THE GOAL? To raise awareness (and donations) for the American Parkinson's Disease Association St. Louis Chapter. THE COURSE OF ACTION? "FULL ORGAN" !!!!!!! YOU choose the time and place. Think outside the BACHS! Share a 1-hour program with a fellow-musician. St. Louis is full of talented musicians who know how to network. Eventually, if we make enough beautiful music HERE, I can see this idea expanding nationwide. As a percentage of the human species, the number of organ enthusiasts is infinitesimal (just a fancy way of saying we're rare). I trust some of you will be inspired enough to join us on this journey, and I thank you in advance.

May God bless you now and in the coming years.

Bob Schneider, AGO friend 14 January, 2024

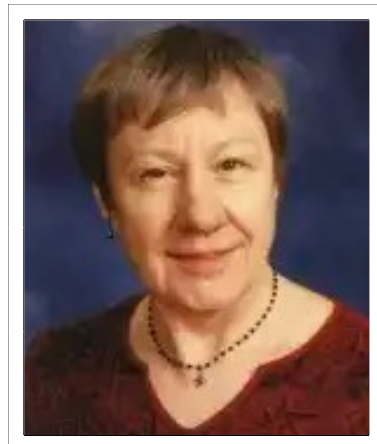
2024 NOMINEES

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 beginning April 1. Instructions for voting will appear in the April issue of The OPUS.

DEAN

SUZANNE MANELLI

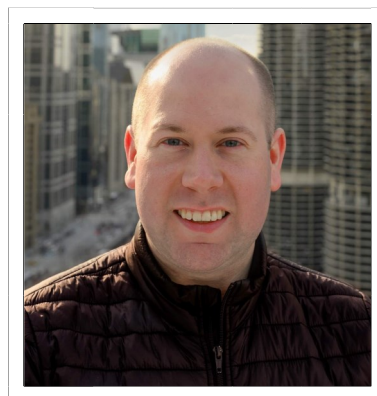
Suzanne Manelli earned a Bachelor of Music Education degree from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, majoring in piano and bassoon. Subsequently, she had a 40-year career in Information Technology at state government, Anheuser-Busch and Centene Corporation, retiring for the third and last time in 2020. 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 YogaAlign.



SUB-DEAN

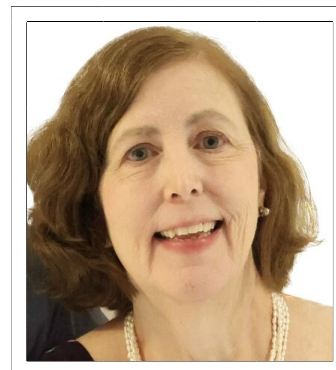
BIFF HACKMAN

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.



MARCH CHAPTER EVENT

“Pipes for Parkinsons”
Members’ Recital

Monday, March 18
Little Flower Parish
1264 Arch Terrace
Richmond Heights, MO
Chuck Chauvin, Host

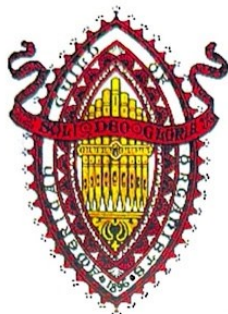
5:00 p.m.—Executive Board
6:30 p.m.—Dinner*
7:30 p.m.—Recital

*For dinner reservations please
RSVP by March 14 by contacting
Cathy Bolduan at 314.853.5011 or
kathleen.bolduan@gmail.com.

MAY CHAPTER EVENT

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

Some photos from the Organ Duo Recital on February 11 at Third Baptist Church.



SAINT LOUIS CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS
presents the Duo Concert of

Ann Marie Rigler and Melody Steed
Third Baptist Church, Saint Louis, Missouri
Sunday, February 11, 2024, 3:00 p.m.

Variations on VENI, CREATOR SPIRITUS

The Emerald Isle

Sonata #1 D-Moll, Opus 30

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro con fuoco

Rhapsody on English Hymn Tunes

Bombardo-Carillon

Max Cat Rag

Rhapsody

David Briggs
(b. 1962)

Charles Callahan
(1951-2023)

Gustav Merkel
(1827-1885)

Charles Callahan

Charles Henri Valentin Alkan
(1813-1888)

Robin Dinda
(b. 1959)

Naji Hakim
(b. 1955)



Dr. Melody Steed and Dr. Ann Marie Rigler



Convention Coordinator

2026 National Convention



A Trio from the National AGO Headquarters visited St. Louis on February 7 – 9, 2024. Actually it was a Duet as one member of the Trio was ill and could not make the trip.

Following the meeting we received the following email from James Thomashower, Executive Director of the American Guild of Organists.

Dear Burnell and Esteemed Members of the St. Louis Steering Committee,

Thank you all very much for giving up some personal time last Thursday and/or Friday to meet with Valerie Franzen and me, a duet in lieu of our normal "Trio" meeting, as Councillor for Conventions Nicole Marane was recovering from illness. Valerie and I found the meetings to be tremendously helpful and informative. I hope we left you feeling encouraged and supported. We are proud of the work you have done to prepare for the 2026 convention, and we are confident it is going to be a very successful event that will draw an enthusiastic crowd to St. Louis.

Committees that need advance planning have worked very diligently and the Duet was impressed with their work. The Committees whose work has yet to begin were encouraged and given some helpful suggestions. One major committee, the Facilities Committee, will begin contacting local churches and other venues to check availability and their willingness to host a national convention recital or concert.

In April Burnell Hackman, Convention Coordinator, will attend a meeting of the AGO National Council in Atlanta, Georgia to present our schedule and budget. Following their approval, we will have a “reveal” party where we can share plans for the 2026 National Convention.

The Gifts and Grants Committee is busy working on Convention finances. One way to support the Convention at this point is to give financially. Whether it is toward the 2026 Club or an amount higher or lower, we need you give! Please visit the St. Louis Chapter’s website (www.agostlouis.org) and click on the “2026 National Convention” tab. We are in the process of launching our 2026 website (www.agostl2026.org) so watch for more details!

A special thank you to all who have already given so many hours for the Convention. We will need every Chapter member pitching in to make the St. Louis National AGO Convention one attendees will remember fondly.

Two new members have joined our Steering Committee! There will be more details in the April OPUS.

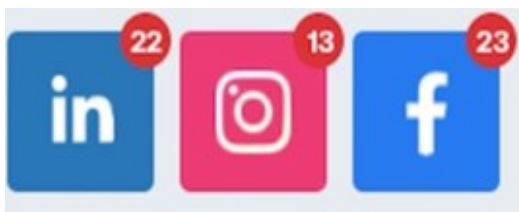
Burnell Hackman
Convention Coordinator
Agostl2026@agostlouis.org



Bill Bust, former head of the Service Department at Wicks Organ Company is looking to donate his collection of 200 LP albums of classical organ music. Call or text your interest to Bill Bust at 618-654-3937 or email him at wfbust@hotmail.com.

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.



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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.

Friday, March 1 - 7:00 PM

[MUSICAL: THE SONG OF MARK](#)

Christ the King Church, 7361 Balson Avenue, University City

Sunday, March 3 - 2:00 PM

[CONCERT: ST. CHARLES COUNTY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA](#)

Dardenne Presbyterian Church, 7400 S Outer 364, Dardenne Prairie

Sunday, March 3 - 3:00 PM

[CONCERT: MASTERS OF ENGLISH POLYPHONY](#)

Early Music Missouri Vocal Ensemble

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

Wednesday, March 6 - 11:00 AM

[MIDWEEK LENTEN RECITAL – ELIN GOMEZ HOGAN](#)

Peace Lutheran Church , 737 Barracksview Road

Wednesday, March 13 - 11:00 AM

[LENTEN RECITAL – NANCY PETERSON](#)

Peace Lutheran Church, 737 Barracksview Road

Wednesday, March 20 - 11:00 AM

[LENTEN RECITAL – MICHELLE SLINGER](#)

Peace Lutheran Church, 737 Barracksview Road

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.

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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

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Simeon A. Layne, Jr.

Placement

Denis J. Doelling

Professional Concerns Liaison

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Mary Beth Wittry

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THE OPUS

The Official Publication
of the St. Louis Chapter
of the American Guild of Organists
3526 Oxford Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63143-4209
January 2024 - Vol 40, No. 6

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 April issue is March 15.

Send address changes or mailing label requests to:

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