

April 2026

Dean's Message

Our 2025-2026 program year is beginning to wind down, yet we seem to be busier than ever. A number of activities are on the horizon:

First, Chapter elections begin April 1. There is more information inside this issue beginning on page 7, including the nominees for Dean, Sub-Dean and Class of 2029. Please use the link you receive via email to cast your vote. Many thanks to those who have offered to serve in a Chapter leadership position!

Next, we have an exciting collaboration with the Bach Society on April 26, as three of our members present a Bach-centered organ concert. The article on page 10 provides more detail. Please note the need to reserve a ticket even though they are free.

Our closing banquet and presentation of the Avis Blewett Award will take place in May. More information may be found on page 2.

But that's not the end! We have an opportunity to reach out to the public regarding all things organ at the St. Louis Area History Showcase on June 6. Find more information on page 2.

Finally, organ aficionados from around the country (and the world, perhaps?) will **Meet Us in St. Louis** in July for the 2026 AGO National Convention.

May the approaching holy days provide refreshment and revitalization to our spirits, and a renewal of our musical energies.

Suzanne Manelli
Dean



Suzanne Manelli



Biff Hackman

Sub-Dean's Message

Greeting STL AGO,

I would like to thank Burnell Hackman and Peace Lutheran Church for hosting our March meeting with Dr. Karen Black. Her program on Women Composers provided insight and excellent repertoire suggestions. Thank you also to Michelle Sliger for organizing the Silent Auction that benefited the upcoming AGO National Convention. Thank you to everyone for your generous bids and donations! (See more information on page 3.)

We will meet for our Annual Closing Banquet on Monday, May 11 at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Creve Couer. The church is located at 808 North Mason Road. Dinner will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a program to follow at 7:30 p.m.. I hope to see everyone there!

On Saturday June 6 our Chapter will be participating in the "St. Louis History Showcase" at Jefferson Barracks Park. The event begins at 10:00 a.m. and lasts until 4:00 p.m. This event is a part of a celebration of America's 250th birthday. The event will feature living history demonstrations, hands-on activities, local historians, and historical societies. Our Chapter will have a booth with information about the organ and samples of pipes to show. If you have additional ideas for what could be displayed in our booth or would like to volunteer for a two-hour shift at the booth, please contact Biff Hackman (biffhackman@yahoo.com or 314-650-9413) or Suzanne Manelli (dean@agostlouis.org).

I wish everyone a Happy Easter!

Biff Hackman

Sub Dean, St. Louis Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

biffhackman@yahoo.com

314-650-9413

Photos from the March 1 organ recital at Peace Lutheran Church



Visiting with organist Karen Black



Host Burnell Hackman with organist Karen Black

A HUGE THANK YOU!

. . . to Bob, Rick, Nannette, Sharon, Burnell, Luella, Regina, St. Louis Cathedral Basilica, The Daily Bread, Whitetail Farm and Thrivent Financial for all of their contributions to our Silent Auction Fundraising Event.

Also, a HUGE thank you to everyone in attendance who purchased those 25 baskets and 9 bottles of wine to raise over \$1,100.00!! These proceeds will serve as a much appreciated contribution to the 2026 AGO National Convention.

Sincerely,
Michelle Sliger
Silent Auction Coordinator
Gifts and Grants Committee
2026 AGO National Convention



Browsing at the silent auction.



Items on display for the silent auction.



July 6 - 10, 2026

Convention attendance numbers continue to increase. I remind Chapter members that the Early Registration fee ends on March 31, 2026.

Your Steering Committee is working on final details for the Convention. The program book is in the final stages in preparation for it to be printed. Insurance forms for all venues are being prepared and the work goes on.

Soon a volunteer website will be launched. Please plan to give freely of your time so we can make the St. Louis Convention one people talk about in a positive way!

It's not too late to make a monetary contribution to support the Convention. Just visit agostl2026.org and click the donation tab. A great big thank you to those who have already generously donated to make this Convention possible!

The excitement for the Convention is growing. For the most up to date information, visit our Facebook page "AGO National Convention - St. Louis 2026." On this page each week we are featuring Organ Media Foundation videos of some of the organs being used at the Convention.

July is just around the corner!!!

Have a blessed Easter.

Burnell Hackman

Convention Coordinator

A message from the Chair of the 2026 Convention Worship Committee:

In a few months, the 2026 AGO National Convention will be here in the "Show Me" state. We will have a great opportunity to show our Convention guests where we pray, how we lead music and the instrument(s) we use. It is likely that many Convention attendees will be in St. Louis by the morning of Sunday, July 5 - so let's welcome them with Midwestern kindness and hospitality. A further aspect characteristic of Midwestern life is adequate preparation - and so you are invited to help prepare a list of worship opportunities that can be shared with our Convention guests, mindful of their respective faith practices. If you and your congregation or church would like to invite Convention attendees to join you for worship on July 5, please contact Fr. Jeremy Secrist, Worship Committee Chair. You can contact him at jasecrist@yahoo.com or 573-797-0592. Let's offer our AGO colleagues from across the county a warm and prayerful welcome.

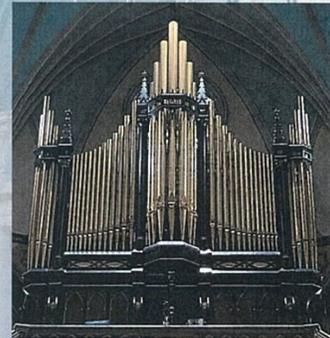


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Meet me in St. Louis!

Wicks is proud to have a part in the upcoming 2026 National Convention! Registration begins Fall 2025, but in the meantime, here is a small preview of some of our local instruments...

St. Alphonsus Liguori Catholic Church



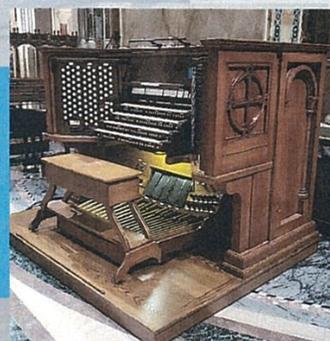
Pilgrim Congregational Church



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WELCOME
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We welcome these most recent colleagues to join our Chapter:

David McCain

Colton Pyle

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at kingofinstruments.show**

Apr 5 Buzard Organ Company
Apr 12 Handel Organ Concertos
Apr 19 Mighty Mendelssohn
Apr 26 Flentrop Orgelbouw

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

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2026 NOMINEES

The time for our annual elections has arrived. You will receive an online ballot via email by April 1. You will have one week to submit your completed ballot online. If you prefer to receive a paper ballot, please contact Registrar Regina Morris (morrisrp@swbell.net) as soon as possible to ensure your return ballot will be received by April 15. To save on the cost of mailing paper ballots, you are urged to PLEASE submit your vote online via the link you will receive in the email. All voting must be completed by April 15. Once again, here are the nominees:

DEAN DAWN RISKE

Deaconess Dawn Riske serves as Director of Music Ministries at Christ the King Parish in University City. She also accompanies the weekly Hispanic Mass at St. Joseph, Manchester and teaches private music lessons. Her degrees in Music and Theology from Aquinas Institute and Valparaiso University provide a solid foundation upon which to build her ministry of music and liturgy. Directing choirs of all ages, planning liturgies, and leading music in worship provide her with a true sense of vocation. She treasures ecumenism and connecting with Latino and African American faith communities through music. Dawn is a Colleague of the AGO as well as a past Dean of the American Guild of Organists (2014-2016) and served as Director of the St. Louis Chapter February Flourish for many years. She also appreciates the collegiality provided by the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. Her professional colleagues in the American Guild of Organists leave her feeling a sense of awe and gratitude. Gardening, reading, and cooking are favorite activities when she is not visiting with friends and family—or even when she is!



SUB-DEAN DAVID SINDEN



Noted for his “centered leadership and solid musicianship,” David Sinden has been the Organist and Director of Music at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in St. Louis since 2015. His recording with the St. Peter’s Choir, *Longing for Home* (Regent Records, 2020), has been met with widespread acclaim. Prior to his current appointment, Mr. Sinden served in the same capacity at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Capitol Square, in Richmond, Virginia. While in Virginia, he was the Artistic Director of the Central Virginia Masterworks Chorale for three seasons and served on the Standing Committee for Liturgy and Church Music for the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia.

Mr. Sinden has held leadership positions in several AGO chapters. His recent service includes the New Music and Program Committees for the 2026 AGO National Convention. He has previously served on the Program and Executive Committees of the St. Louis and Richmond Chapters and is a former Dean of the Indianapolis Chapter.

Mr. Sinden has appeared at conventions of the Hymn Society of the United States and Canada and the Anglican Association of Musicians. He holds degrees in music from Oberlin College and Indiana University.

NOMINEES CONTINUED

CLASS OF 2029

KENDRA RUESLER

Kendra Ruesler serves as Associate Organist at Peace Lutheran Church. She has been an organist and choir accompanist at Peace for 20 years. She has served as a part-time organist or substitute at a variety of churches since 1985. Kendra studied organ at St. Paul's College in Concordia, Missouri and Southeast Missouri State University. She graduated from SEMO with a Business Education Degree. Kendra was a business teacher for 35 years before retiring in May 2023. In the past, she has served as Membership Coordinator for the St. Louis AGO Chapter. She is currently serving as Executive Secretary for the 2026 AGO Convention.



CONNOR SCOTT



Connor Scott completed his Doctorate of Musical Arts in Choral Music in August of 2025. His dissertation research focused on the French Royal Chapel during the reign of Louis XIV. His scholarly work includes editing the first edition of *grand motets* by Pascal Colasse (1649–1709). Dr. Scott serves as Director of Music: Organist & Choir Director at the historic Christ Church Cathedral (Episcopal) in downtown St. Louis, where he leads musical worship for a congregation celebrating over two centuries of ministry. In this role, he directs the Cathedral Choir, a concert series, performs on the renowned 1964 64-rank Aeolian-Skinner organ, and coordinates music for diocesan events and ordinations throughout the region. Dr. Scott proudly succeeds his mentor and organ professor, Organist & Choirmaster Canon Precentor William “Pat” Partridge, M.M., F.C.C.M. who held the position for 42 years, from 1981 to 2023.

ELIZABETH STULL

Elizabeth (Betsy) Stull holds a B.A. in English from William Jewell College, with a semester of literary study in Harlaxton, England. She was initially a Church Music/Organ major for 2 ½ years. She holds teaching certifications in English, music, and elementary education, and a Colleague certificate from the American Guild of Organists. A lover of both music and the written word, Elizabeth has authored hymns, songs, and educational materials, is a three-term alum of the Getty International Hymn Writing Collective and has recently piloted a 52-week musical catechism of which she is co-author. Over the years, she and her husband, James, have served at four area churches, leading traditional and contemporary services. She has been involved in church music throughout her life but felt that God led her back to the organ in 2018, when she signed her first contract. At that time, she joined the AGO, determined to improve her long-neglected skills, and found great fulfillment in returning to the organ.



BILL WADE



Bill Wade (he/him) is the Minister of Music/Organist St. Paul UCC, St. Louis and the Handbell Director at First Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood. Dr Wade is a retired family practice physician who holds a Master degree in Public Health from Saint Louis University College for Public Health and Social Justice and a Master of Music degree in organ performance from Webster University. Bill is a past Dean of the St. Louis Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, holds the AGO Colleague Certificate (CAGO), and is Chair and a charter member of the Handbell Association of Greater St. Louis. Bill has served as music director and organist in churches in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri and Illinois. Bill is a strong advocate for advancing the mission of the American Guild of Organists to foster a thriving community of musicians who share their knowledge and inspire passion for the organ. Bill also serves on the steering committee of the 2026 AGO National Convention as Transportation co-chair.

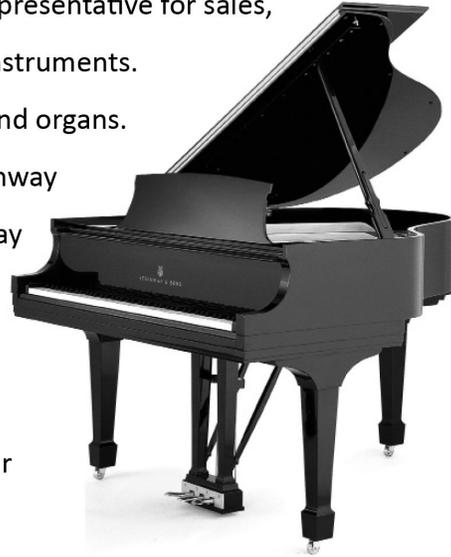
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Events Calendar

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, including contact information, driving directions, etc. There is much, much more information provided on the Chapter website for each of the events listed below.

If you or your church has a musical event that you would like to have included in the calendar, **please** send an email to events@agostlouis.org and "cc" brent@brentmjohanson.net.

April 3 - 12:00 PM

Concert: Requiem by John Rutter
First Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood
100 E Adams Ave, Kirkwood, MO

April 15 - 12:15 PM

Organ Recital: Sarah Bereza
First Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood
100 E Adams Ave, Kirkwood, MO

April 19 - 3:00 PM

PsalmFest
Hope Ev. Lutheran Church

St. Louis Chapter Participates in 2026 Bach Festival



Our St. Louis AGO Chapter is joining the Bach Society of Saint Louis for the 2026 St. Louis Bach Festival by providing a Baroque organ concert. Works of J. S. Bach and composers who inspired him will be presented on Sunday, April 26 at 3:00 p.m. at St. Peter's Episcopal Church. Chapter members Sarah Bereza, Matthew Gerhardt and David Sinden are the featured performers for

this event. Make plans now to hear the beautiful Mander organ render masterworks from the Baroque period.

Please note, tickets are required for this concert, as space is limited. Tickets are free or you may make a payment of your choosing. Reserve tickets online at bachsociety.org/baroqueorgan by clicking "RESERVE TICKETS". You can also find the event on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/share/1RLA9xtKpX/>.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church is located at 110 North Warson Road (at Ladue Road), St. Louis, 63124.

Open POSITIONS

For more details on these and other job opportunities, please visit the “Open Positions” section of our website at <https://www.agostlouis.org/job-openings/>.

(Please note that some positions may no longer be available past the time of going to press.)

ORGANIST/PIANIST

Resurrection Lutheran Church, 1211 W. Homer M Adams Pkwy, Godfrey IL is seeking an organist or pianist. Duties include playing hymns, Lutheran liturgies, and service music such as preludes, voluntaries and postludes. Sunday services are at 10:00 a.m. Additional services include mid-week services during Lent and Advent, Christmas Eve and special services as needed. Salary is \$150-200 per service based on experience. For more information or to apply please contact Neal at 618-433-1611 or Pastor Jan at 618-250-1608.

ORGANIST

Third Baptist Church in St. Louis invites applications from organists to join its music ministry team. The paid post of Principal Organist is offered on a part-time basis, with considerable flexibility for scheduling. Those interested in this opportunity should submit their resume with a cover letter and provide references who can address how they might best work in this collaborative environment. Applications should be sent to the Senior Pastor, Dr. Tommy Simons at tsimons@third-baptist.org.

ASSISTANT ORGANIST AND CHOIRMASTER

The Episcopal Parish of Alton is looking for an assistant organist and choirmaster. The Episcopal Parish of Alton is made up of St Paul’s Episcopal Church at 10 E 3rd St and Trinity Chapel at 1901 State St in Alton, IL. The Assistant Organist selected for this program will primarily play the new Viscount Cantorum Trio (3 manual) organ at Trinity Chapel. If you are interested in this position, please submit a cover letter and resume to episcopalalton@gmail.com. Should you have any questions, don’t hesitate to email the Parish Office or call us at 618-465-9149.

ORGANIST

Faith Lutheran Church (ELCA) in O’Fallon, IL is seeking an organist. More is available at <https://www.agostlouis.org/organist-3/>. Interested candidate should submit a cover letter, resume and two professional references to hirngcmte@faithofallon.org.

ORGANIST

First Presbyterian Church of Alton, IL is seeking a part-time organist and accompanist. If interested, contact firstpres1831@gmail.com or call 618-465-3592.

CHOIR DIRECTOR

Parkway United Church of Christ seeks a part-time choir director. If you feel that we could be a good fit for you and your gifts, please send a cover letter and resume to employment@parkwayucc.org. Please indicate that you are applying for the choir director position.

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III/32

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BOARD OFFICERS



2025-2026 Chapter Leadership Team

OFFICERS:

Dean - Suzanne Manelli
 Sub-Dean - Biff Hackman
 Secretary - Gaye Anderson
 Treasurer - Mike Kaberline
 Past Dean - Jeffrey White

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Class of 2026

Stephen Jones
 Mark Lawson
 Sharon Whitlock

Class of 2027

Mary Hitchcock-Reinhart
 Earl Naylor
 Spencer Smith

Class of 2028

Joseph Arndt
 Luella Foster
 Matthew Gerhardt

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

Membership Coordinator
 Cathy Cassy

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 Spencer Smith

OPUS Editor
 Rick Burk

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Simeon A. Layne, Jr.

Placement

Denis J. Doelling

Professional Concerns Liaison

Shawn Portell

Programs

Biff Hackman

Publicity Liaison

Dawn Riske

Registrar

Regina Morris

Social Media Communications

Suzanne Chisum

Webmaster

Brent Johnson



Check out our presence on Facebook



Consider following our “Saint Louis Chapter AGO American Guild of Organists” Facebook Page. View photos from the AGO Events and Meetings. Stay abreast of all the organ happenings in the St. Louis area.

Have you joined the STL AGO Member Group yet?

Our “AGO St. Louis Members” Group is a private group where you can find humor, post questions and ask questions of others in the St. Louis Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

For more information on either, please contact Suzanne Chisum at suzchisum@gmail.com.

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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 May issue is April 10.

Send address changes or mailing label requests to:

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