

January 2015

The Grand Rapids Chapter of the American Guild of Organists presents...

THE CIPHER

GUEST EDITORIAL BY NORMA DE WAAL MALEFYT

For those of us who work in church and school settings, we have the opportunity of celebrating two beginnings each year – the beginning of a church season or school semester in September and another new start with the turn of the calendar year in January.

As Emily Brink wrote in the December CIPHER, there are new opportunities to explore worship and music January 29-31 at the Calvin Symposium on Worship. While Eileen Guenther will be coming to lead her sectionals these days and to speak to our chapter at our Monday meeting February 2, she will no longer be playing for worship services at the symposium due to her fall and resulting broken leg. David Cherwien has graciously consented to be a service organist in her place at the symposium. He will be playing at the 8:30 Thursday morning and [repeated] 7:30 evening worship service in the college chapel – these are open without charge to the public. He is also planning and playing a Vesper Service with Awet Andemicael. This service, entitled *Singing the Story: Hymns for Holy Week* will also be held in the college chapel, at 4:30 on Thursday and repeated on Friday, January 29 and 30. This Vesper service is also open to our AGO chapter members free of charge.

After the yeoman's schedule most of us keep through December, it is very renewing and refreshing to worship and be ministered to through services and sectionals where we can rest, reflect and gain fresh perspective as we look to continue our work in the new year.

If we as worship leaders feel the need for a time of refreshment, I believe our congregations also can benefit from a time to examine and explore their worship lives as a means of renewing commitments and refreshing their perspectives for their worship. For the past 12+ years, the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship has been able to offer a grants program with funds provided by the Lilly Foundation for congregations who desire to do just that! This broadly ecumenical program enables churches and schools to fund learning and worship opportunities over the course of a year on aspects of the worship life based on their own congregational need and focus.

You may find the following summaries of past grants helpful as you envision whether your congregation could benefit from such an experience:

Grace Lutheran Church, 2011

To engage a growing, diverse congregation in singing the Psalms in order to promote confident, prayerful Psalm singing at home and in worship that will give them tools to understand themselves as an important voice in the story of scripture rooted in baptismal identity.

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Mark Your Calendars
for the
February Program on
Monday, February 2
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Our Saviour Episcopal, 2010

To develop assessment and formation tools for worship by engaging in meaningful reflection and collaboration with seven congregations that will create a pattern of continual reflection, assessment, engagement, discussion and practice regarding music for church members and leaders.

Christ the King Presbyterian Church, 2009

To immerse the congregation in the Psalms of Ascent with the help of linguists, musicians, visual artists and pastors that will help the congregation form faith, identity and tradition in modern life.

Faith Lutheran Church, 2009

To promote unity across groups separated by age and tradition by studying selected hymns and integrating those hymns in four different weekly worship services using visual art, dramatic readings, special music, and Bible study.

Calvary Third United Presbyterian Church, 2008

To study and respond to the Psalms through prayer and jazz music in both corporate worship and small groups during the entire year.

American Lutheran Church, 2013

To help us learn about and celebrate the church year in an intentional way so that we may live more deeply into those rhythms.

Many churches have found the process to be valuable – I would encourage you to consider the opportunity over this year with the goal of applying for a grant in 2016.

For more complete information, visit <http://worship.calvin.edu/grants/>

GRAGO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENT

1. Please consider submitting the following announcement for inclusion in the Sunday bulletins of your church for January 25 and February 1.

Dr. Eileen Guenther, past-president of the American Guild of Organists and author of the recent book *Rivals or a Team (Clergy-Musician Relationships in the 21st Century)*, will speak on this topic on Monday evening, February 2. She will speak in Kretschmer Recital Hall at Aquinas College at 8:00 p.m. Clergy, church musicians, worship leaders, worship committee members, seminary students, and any other interested persons are cordially invited to attend free of charge.

2. Due to increased membership, an addendum will be published to the 2014/2015 GRAGO Chapter Directory. Please send any corrections or changes to our Registrar, Larry Biser (lgbiser@att.net).

GRAGO PRESENTS AUTHOR EILEEN GUENTHER



Former President of the AGO

Author of *Rivals or a Team?*
(Clergy-Musician Relationships)

Kretschmer Recital Hall, Aquinas College
Monday, February 2, 8:00 p.m.

Dr. Eileen Guenther is Professor of Church Music at Wesley Theological Seminary, where she teaches music and worship courses and is Director of Chapel Music. Her role as teacher extends to churches and musical and denominational organizations, where she leads workshops on music and social justice, global music, Spirituals, and clergy-music relations.

Her book on clergy-musician relations, *Rival or a Team: Clergy-Musician Relationships in the 21st Century*, was published in June, 2012 by MorningStar Music Publishers. It has received a great deal of media attention and interviews with Eileen have been published in a variety of venues from blogs and denominational newsletters to *The Huffington Post* and *Christian*

Century. Her book on *The Power of Spirituals* is in progress and will be published by MorningStar Music Publishers in the near future.

In her recent book, Dr. Guenther explores how leaders in the church should relate to one another. She includes some of the horror stories caused by musical elitism or the pursuit of pastoral power. She goes on, however, to suggest paths to positive partnerships, based on respect for the complementary role of one's colleagues.

This is a topic of relevance not only for clergy and musicians, but also for seminary students, worship leaders, and worship committee members. Please invite your colleagues and persons in your congregation who would profit from a presentation of this sort. Consider inviting one or two persons of your church as your dinner guests as well.

The schedule for the evening is:

- 5:30 – Executive Committee Meeting
- 6:30 – Punch Bowl Reception
- 7:00 – Dinner
- 8:00 – Eileen Guenther

If you do not receive a phone call asking for your dinner reservation, please call Errol Shewman at 456-9232.

CHRISTOPHER DEKKER AWARDED PRESITGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP



Chris Dekker, an organist in Sacred Music at Notre Dame's Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) program, has been awarded a scholarship from the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts.

The scholarship recognizes an undergraduate or graduate music student who intends to pursue a career in sacred music and who demonstrates "evidence of exceptional musical or artistic talent, effective leadership ability, and outstanding promise of future usefulness to the Church."

Dekker said he is very honored to have been recognized in this way. "Not only does it positively affirm my work, but it serves as a catalyst to move forward with confidence in the future.

"During the course of my Notre Dame studies and beyond, I intend to pursue my music and scholarship in a way that affirms the Fellowship's decision."

A graduate of Hope College and Central Michigan University, Dekker said he came to Notre Dame for his doctorate degree because of the "stellar reputation" of the Sacred Music program, and particularly to work with Craig Cramer, professor of music and award-winning organist.

"Craig's teaching has really been revolutionary," Dekker said. "The faculty members in sacred music are incredible and very well-rounded, so it's been a real blessing to study with them."

The Doctor of Musical Arts is a three-year, fully funded program for organists or choral conductors. DMA students receive rigorous training in areas such as musicology, ethnomusicology, historical performance practices, Church music traditions, theology, and music in interdisciplinary arts. The program challenges students to position the music they perform in its religious context as well as its historical, theoretical, aesthetic, and social dimensions.

In addition to coursework, each doctoral student gives a yearly recital and writes a thesis. Students also complete paid internships to enhance the music ministries of local churches.

A second-year Ph.D. student, Dekker said he is considering working as an organist at a church or cathedral or teaching organ at the college level once he completes his degree. While he is not yet certain which path he will pursue, he said he is "confident that opportunities will abound" because of the excellent reputation of the program and the real-world knowledge he is acquiring.

Led by world-renowned scholars, and supported by major grants from the Lilly Endowment and the Mellon Foundation, Sacred Music at Notre Dame is reinvigorating sacred music through new graduate programs and initiatives such as the Notre Dame Children's Choir and the Sacred Music Drama Project.

(Article is from <http://al.nd.edu/news/52982-sacred-music-graduate-student-awarded-scholarship/>)

The Executive Committee of the
Grand Rapids AGO
2014–2015

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The purpose of the American Guild of Organists is to promote the organ in its historic and evolving roles, to encourage excellence in the performance of organ and choral music, and to provide a forum for mutual support, inspiration, education, and certification of Guild members. Members of the American Guild of Organists are bound by the Code of Ethics and guided by the Code of Standards.

ADVERTISING IN THE CIPHER

If you would like to advertise an event in the Cipher, please send it Michael Adams (pastoralmusician007@gmail.com). The Cipher is published monthly around the beginning of the month. If you have photos you would like to include please send them as well as they would be most appreciated.

Thank you!

UPCOMING GRAGO PROGRAMS

Monday, February 2, 2015—Eileen Guenther on Clergy-Musician Relationships
Eileen Guenther, former President of the AGO, will speak to the chapter on Clergy and Musician Relations. You are encouraged to bring your clergy to this meeting.

Monday, March 16, 2015—Organ Concerti of Johann Sebastian Bach
The Organ Concerti of Johann Sebastian Bach. Organists – Stephanie Pestana, Karl Schrock, Norma De Waal Malefyt, and Larry Visser.

Monday, April 20, 2015—Rotman and Quimby Organ Competitions
The Rotman and Quimby Organ Competitions at Calvin Christian Reformed Church. Bruce Klanderman and Joan Ringerwole are the competitions coordinators.

Monday, May 18, 2015—A House Organ Crawl and Party
We will visit two home organ installations: At the Chalet of Fred and Lynn Keller, and the home of Jim and Jeanne Ransford we will have the opportunity to play their instruments and will also have an end of the year party for the chapter.