

February 2015

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

THE CIPHER

AN INTERVIEW WITH OUR FEBRUARY SPEAKER

Eileen Guenther, former president of the American Guild of Organists, reveals behind-the-scenes church struggles in her new book, "Rivals or a Team?: Clergy-Musician Relationships in the Twenty-First Century." Guenther, an associate professor of church music at Washington's Wesley Theological Seminary and the former organist at Foundry United Methodist Church, talked with Religion News Service about her findings and advice. Some answers have been edited for length and clarity.

Q: You titled your book "Rivals or a Team?" From your research, which is a better description of most clergy-musician relationships?

A: I would say that rivals may well be the most prevalent, but team is our aspiration.

Q: Why is it so difficult for musicians and ministers to get along and not have an intense rivalry?

A: Part of it is lack of understanding of roles. Part of it is control. Each of us is used to kind of being in control in our area, but sometimes if the roles haven't been clarified, then the control issues become simply that, rather than sorting out, 'OK, who's going to choose the hymn?' That's one of the really big issues.

Q: Who should choose the hymns?

A: It should be done collaboratively, among staff members, with clergy. We have two services at Wesley and both of them are team planned, with teams. If liturgy is the work of people, then the planning of the liturgy needs not to be done in somebody's office alone with their cup of coffee.

Q: You say that the future of the church may well be at stake if clergy and musicians don't learn to understand each other better. Is it really that dire?

A: I think it is. In general, the mainline church is having a very difficult time these days. And the role of music in worship is so critical: 40 to 60 percent of a service is going to be musical. People can tell when things aren't going well among members of the staff. I think everything has to be done intentionally, with collegiality and spirituality and a view of what we are all about for people to continue to attend church. People may well attend for a fine sermon and not very good music or vice versa. But what really builds in success is when people are working together and the sung word and the spoken word are in partnership.

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Mark Your Calendars
for the
February Program on
Monday, February 2
(see page 2)



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Q: Your book is sprinkled with testimonies from musicians labeled "name withheld" who tell of unexpected firings or verbal abuse. What story did you find the most gripping?

A: Two of them actually put their names on them: Ted Gustin (now in Alexandria, Va.) found out that his job was open from the website at church. And Robert Young (now in Salisbury, Md.) talked about a clergyman who, when there was a point of disagreement, he stuck his finger in Robert's face and said, "If you do not obey, I will do with you as I do with my wife."

There was one "name withheld" who actually went to counseling and was diagnosed with something like post-traumatic stress disorder.

Q: You also had many who said they had great relationships -- sometimes decades long -- at one or many churches. What's the secret?

A: I think it probably is mutual respect with allied things like when you respect each other, you work together, you talk together, you care about each other, you appreciate each other's discipline. If there's some kind of a problem you address it. You don't let it just escalate. You spend time together. Respect kind of is a snapshot that has lots of other little pixels in it.

Q: Should ministers of music be members of the churches that pay them?

A: I think it's better not. I don't think it's impossible, but it does blur a little bit of a boundary in terms of employment. I have not ever joined the church. I've been an associate member but not a full member of where I work. I just didn't feel like totally joining was something that felt quite right.



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.

The schedule for the evening is:

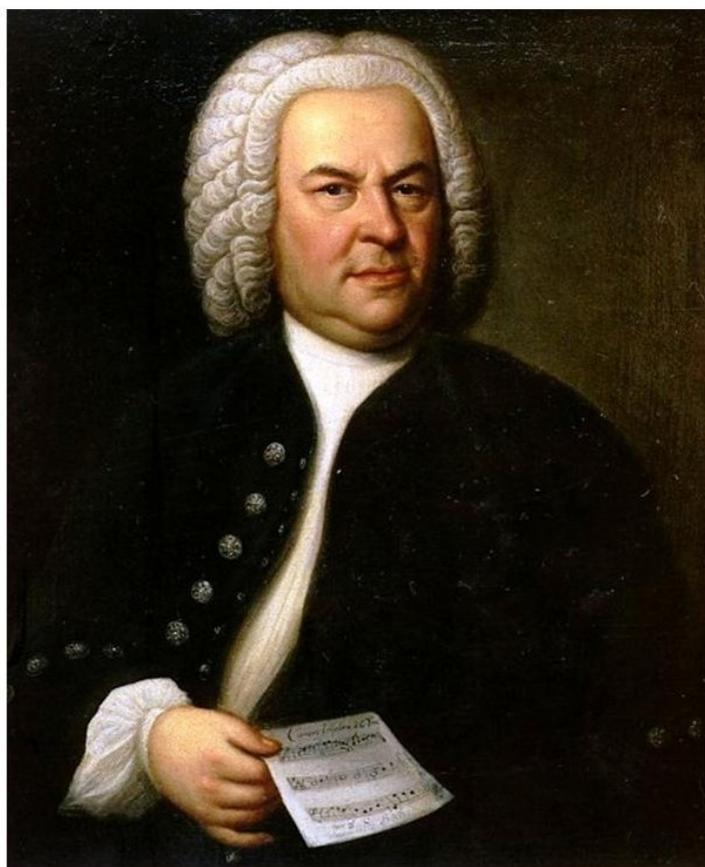
- 5:30 – Executive Committee Meeting
- 6:30 – Punch Bowl Reception
- 7:00 – Dinner
- 8:00 – Eileen Guenther

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

Bach Cantatas

Monday, March 16, 8:00 pm Calvin Chapel

Presented by the
Grand Rapids Chapter of
The American Guild of Organists



Conductor:

John Varineau

Soloists:

Rhonda Edgington

Karl Schrock

Norma de Waal Malefyt

Stephanie Pestana

This concert provides a unique opportunity to discover the music that Bach wrote for solo organ and orchestra. Tucked away in his seldom-heard church cantatas, these introductory sinfonias are some of Bach's most glorious music. Four highly-skilled West Michigan organists will perform four "concertos" made up of ten sinfonias. The orchestra is drawn from the Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra.

Plan to celebrate the week of Bach's birthday by attending this "planets-aligned" one hour event, open to the public, and free of charge.

An important workshop for church choir directors!

**CHORAL DIRECTORS WORKSHOP:
WORKING WITH AGING VOICES**

Saturday Morning: March 7th / 9am – Noon

**St. Paul the Apostle, GR
2750 Burton St. SE**

Clinician, Cal Langejans, is the founder of the Holland Choral, and served as its conductor from 1960 until 2000. He currently conducts the Evergreen Chorale—a well-balanced ensemble of 100+ voices, for singers 50 years of age and older—chosen by audition.

Aging is part of life. As singers get older it can become more and more difficult to consistently produce good vocal sounds, but it's not impossible. Choral directors are faced with bringing out the best possible sounds from their singers, including seniors. Younger choral directors often find themselves working with singers twice their own age or more. This workshop offers help, no matter which side of 50 we are on these days.

**CHORAL DIRECTORS FROM ALL SW MICHIGAN CHURCHES
ARE CORDIALLY INVITED**

For more information and registration details go to: www.npm-gr.org



Driving a long distance?

It might be worth your while to drive *to* and *from* Grand Rapids in daylight hours, while spending the night in a hotel. Go to www.hotels.com and you will find rooms in Grand Rapids beginning as low as **\$45 per night**.

UPCOMING HOLLAND AGO EVENTS

On Tuesday, Feb 3, at 7:30pm Dr. Huw Lewis of Hope College will speak with our chapter on the topic of Teaching ourselves and others. The talk will be held in the organ studio of Nykerk Music Building at Hope College. Anyone who has students or is a life-long learner should find this beneficial.

On Monday, Feb 23 at 7:30 pm, Bob Batistini will be speaking on New Hymns. This meeting (originally scheduled for November, but postponed due to weather) will take place at 14th Street CRC (14 W 14th St, Holland). Here is Bob's description of his presentation -

As organists we are often confronted by worshippers desiring more "contemporary" music. The solution is often to scheduling two services: traditional and contemporary. Perhaps there is another option that does not involve leaving the organ bench. By becoming acquainted with some of today's best hymn writers, we'll explore the practice of wedding 21st century hymn texts, to sturdy, time-tested tunes.

Also, on Sunday, Feb 22 at 7pm at Pillar Church, musicians from Pillar Church, Hope Church, Western Theological Seminary, and the Hope College chapel will join together to lead a hymn sing using the new joint RCA/CRC hymnal, Lift Up Your Voices. Joining together varying traditions of worship and congregational song, we will experience together how different congregations sing both well-know favorites, and new hymns, using the new hymnal.

COMING TO MUSIC AT MID DAY AT PARK CHURCH

**Free Concert begins at 12:15PM.
Lunch is available each week at 11:15AM (\$5).**

- Feb. 3 - Kevin Soodsma (organ)
- Feb. 10 - Kaylin Heath (coloratura) and Audra Erb (piano)
- Feb. 17 - The Chimes (vocal standards)
- Feb. 24 - Christopher Dekker (organ)
- Mar. 3 - Jeff Wyckoff and Luke Ellison (4-hand piano)
- Mar. 10 - Stephen Jones (Trumpet)
- Mar. 17 - Aquinas College Chamber Choir

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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 Rhonda Sider Edgington.

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.