



**The Executive Committee of
Grand Rapids AGO
2023-2024**

Officers

[Carol McNally](#), Dean

[Matthew Jakubisin](#), Sub-Dean

[Chris Witte](#), Treasurer/Membership

[Alexis VanZalen](#), Secretary

Council Members at Large

[Larry Biser](#)

[Barbara Dulmage](#)

[Chan Gyu Jang](#)

[Jordan Malone](#)

Members Ex-Officio

[Dennis Buteyn](#),
Webmaster, Cipher Editor

[Peter Kurdziel](#)
Competitions

[Rebecca Snippe](#)
Competitions

[Rhonda Edginton](#)
Education Coordinator

[The Rev. Dr. John D. Witvliet](#)
Chaplain

THE CIPHER

November 2023

Happy November! I hope this newsletter finds you well as we experience the beauty of autumn and start thinking about the holidays.

Thanks to everyone who attended Richard Elliott's recital at Mayflower Congregational in October. It was a wonderful evening filled with lively music. We extend a special thanks to the staff and community at Mayflower, especially Julia Brown, director of music and organist, for allowing us this collaboration with the "Mondays at Mayflower" concert series.

This month our chapter celebrates young organists. Many of us share similar experiences when we first started studying the organ or got our first church gig: a teacher, a mentor, or a minister who was willing to give an extra lesson, take a risk by letting us play the voluntary, or simply listen to us practice. This kind of support for our young organists is essential not just for the future of our profession, but so the young musicians who are currently studying and serving in the community might feel valued and empowered throughout their education and careers.

One way you can show your support of our local young organists is by attending this month's program. Our annual **Young Organist Recital is on Monday November 13 at First Park Congregational**. The recital begins at 7:00pm featuring organists Olivia Amting, Maria Boot, Helen Drost, Jordan Malone, and Stephen Rumler-McClusky. We hope to see you there!

Matthew Jakubisin
GRAGO Sub-Dean



Recap of October Program

Monday, October 9, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Mayflower Congregational Church

The Grand Rapids Chapter of the American Guild of Organists joined *Mondays at Mayflower* in the sanctuary of Mayflower Church to enjoy a concert played by Richard Elliott, Principal Organist of the Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square, Salt Lake City. The church was filled to near capacity and enjoyed, in addition to members of the church and GRAGO, a number of LDS visitors from as far away as Ohio and Illinois. Dr. Elliott played a program which highlighted several composers of Michigan, including William Balcom, James Biery, and Percy Grainger, who spent time teaching at Interlochen Arts Academy. Leo Sowerby, a native of our city, was also represented. The program opened with Antony Baldwin's Mr. Theo Saunders, His Trumpet Tune, and included Bach and Franck selections as well as S. Andrew Lloyd, who has performed on the Great Organ of The Tabernacle at Temple Square. The concert, on the Tellers/Lauck instrument of five Manuals and 93 ranks, concluded with a rousing performance of Richard Wagner's *The Ride of the Valkyries* as arranged by E.H. Lemare. Our thanks to Dr. Julia Brown and Mayflower for making this concert a reality!



Monthly programs for 2023 – 2024

Here is the lineup of AGO meetings for this season, 2023-2024. Our meetings take place at various venues throughout the area and are typically the third Monday evening of the month although there are exceptions.

Monday, November 13, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Young Organists' Recital

First (Park) Congregational Church
10 East Park Place NE
Grand Rapids MI 49503

Five young organists of the Grand Rapids AGO Chapter will perform in recital on November 13 at First Park Congregational Church in Grand Rapids. The performers represent a diverse group of musicians studying and working in various denominations throughout West Michigan. Organists Olivia Amting, Maria Boot, Helen Drost, Jordan Malone, and Stephen Rumler-McClusky will offer a varied program of music on Park's 2005 Muller organ. Come celebrate the dedication of local young organists and enjoy their music in this historic downtown church.

The program begins at 7:00 p.m. on Monday November 13, 2023. First Park Congregational is located at 10 East Park Place NE in Grand Rapids. Parking is available in the lot south of the church between Park Place and Ransom Ave.



Olivia Amting, a native of Marshall, Michigan, is a first-generation undergraduate student at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids studying Church Music on the piano and organ. Growing up she sang in the choirs and cantored for weekend masses at her home parish. Gradually, Olivia grew in love with her faith because of music. As a result, she has felt called to share Christ's love with others and to worship Him through her God given gifts.



Maria Boot has been a glad student of music for most of her 19 years, beginning with piano lessons around age 6 which continued throughout her school years. She has played the French horn in the West Michigan Homeschool Fine Arts bands and in the Foundation Brass Band; she has also participated in several choirs over the years, currently singing in the Choral Ambassadors and Zeeland Civic Chorus. Piano has remained her focal instrument; she has served numerous times as an accompanist for choirs and soloists, played for a couple weddings, performed a joint senior recital with her cousin, and enjoys assisting in worship services on Sundays. Her organ instruction began last year, when she took part in the Summer Organ Encounter and she has taken lessons off and on ever since. So far, her playing has only reached public ears during the small recital at the conclusion of the SOE, and when she was accompanist for a choir over this past summer and played organ for one song on the program. She hopes to improve her skills speedily to be able to play at church. Maria is thankful for the talents and teachers God has blessed her with, and as long as she has the strength and ability, she will continue to praise Him with music.



Helen Drost received first place in the Annamae Rotman Young Organist Competition in Spring of 2023. She is currently in her senior year of high school. Sacred music, both on the organ and vocally, is among her many passions and interests. She has been playing the organ for a little over a year and currently studies with AGO member, Jonathan Bading. Helen plans to continue her education in Catholic sacred music at the university level next fall.



Jordan Malone, recently graduated Aquinas College with a (BM) in Liturgical music. Jordan has studied organ (Larry Biser and Dr. Kenneth Bos), piano (Mary Hurd), composition (Dr. Mark Webb), conducting (Dr. Stephen Barton), and voice (Scott Bosscher and Barbara Witham McCargar). He currently serves as the Director of Sacred Music at St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church & School. Outside of his ministry he enjoys lawnscapeing, bike riding, wine tasting, and attempting home DIY repairs.



Stephen Rumler-McClusky lives in Holland, serving as Music Director at Grace Episcopal Church (Holland) and Dance Accompanist at Hope College. Stephen earned their bachelor's degree from Aquinas College in 2020 and has since continued studies in piano with Stephanie Pestana and organ with Peter Kurdziel. Stephen is passionate about building relationships with the greater community through music and dialogue and advocating for LGBTQ+ rights.

Saturday, December 31, 2023, 7:30 p.m.

New Year's Eve Concert

**Central Reformed Church
10 College Avenue N.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49503**

There is no shortage of organists who make their instruments roar; and while her power was never in question, Demers made the instrument sing.” (Peter Reed, Classical Source.com, England, 2016)

With playing described as having “bracing virtuosity” (Chicago Classical Review) and being “fearless and extraordinary” (Amarillo-Globe News), Isabelle Demers has enraptured critics, presenters, and audience members around the globe.

She has appeared in recital throughout Europe, Oman, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada, including at the Cathedrals of Cologne and Regensburg (Germany); the ElbPhilharmonie (Hamburg); the Royal Festival Hall, St. Paul’s Cathedral, Westminster Cathedral, and Westminster Abbey (London); City Hall (Stockholm); the Royal Opera House of Muscat (Oman); the Forbidden City Concert Hall (Beijing, China); Victoria Hall (Singapore); Melbourne Town Hall (Australia); Auckland Town Hall (New Zealand); Disney Hall (Los Angeles), Davies Hall (San Francisco), the Meyerson Symphony Center (Dallas), the Kimmel Center, and the Wanamaker Organ at Macy’s (Philadelphia); and the Maison Symphonique (Montréal).



Dr. Demers is in continual high demand by her colleagues as witnessed by performances for numerous regional and national conventions of the American Guild of Organists, the Institute of Organ Builders and International Society of Organbuilders, the Royal Canadian College of Organists, and the Organ Historical Society. She has released multiple CD recordings on the Acis and Pro Organo labels. Her latest CD, recorded at Chicago’s Rockefeller Chapel, was released in January 2020, and includes works of Reger, Laurin, Dupré, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, and Macmillan.

A native of Québec and a doctoral graduate of the Juilliard School, Dr. Demers is Associate Professor of Organ at McGill University (Montréal, Québec). She was formerly the Joyce Bowden Chair in Organ and Head of the Organ Program at Baylor University (Waco, Texas).

Sunday, January 22, 2024, 7:00 p.m.**Member Recital**

**Grace Episcopal Church
1815 Hall St. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506**

Members of the Grand Rapids Chapter of the American Guild of Organists present a program featuring Baroque music.

**Monday, February 19, 2024**

**Dinner – 6:00 p.m.
Program – 7:00 p.m.**

The Organ Music of Larry Visser

**LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church
107 LaGrave Avenue SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503**

Dr. Larry Visser, Minister of Music at LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church and long-time member of the American Guild of Organists, presents a program of his organ compositions.



Larry Visser's musical career combines a church position, performing, and composing. He has been Minister of Music and Organist at LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church in downtown, Grand Rapids, Michigan since 1999. In this role, he plays the organ for a majority of services, accompanies choirs, and oversees the administration of the church's extensive music ministry. Larry has produced several recordings during his tenure at the church—two solo organ discs and three additional recordings, each dedicated to a specific season of the liturgical church year—that feature the church's vocal and handbell choirs and instrumentalists.

Larry's formal education took place at Calvin College (BA, 1989, Music History, Theory, and Composition) and the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance (MM, 1991, Church Music and Organ; DMA, 1995, Organ Performance). Upon graduating from Calvin College, Larry was awarded the highest honor given by the Music Department, the Anna Bruinsma Award. While a student at the U of M, Larry served as a graduate student teaching assistant, took harpsichord lessons, and participated in the world's most prestigious organ competition, the Grand Prix de Chartres in Paris and Chartres,

France, at which he was awarded a finalist medal. His organ teachers were Dr. John Hamersma and Dr. James Kibbie. From 2003–2010, Larry served as an adjunct faculty member at Calvin College, teaching organ and studio classes.

Larry has been a published composer of organ and choral music since the mid 1990s. His organ music is published by Leupold Editions (a division of The Leupold Foundation) and MorningStar Music Publishers, and his choral music is represented in the GIA Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Music Series. His anthem “Peace I Give to You” has been sung by choirs around the globe.

During a 2014 sabbatical, Larry completed a collection of 200 descants for hymns in the 2013 hymnal “Lift Up Your Hearts: Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs.” Titled “Praise God in the Heights: Descants by Larry Visser,” the collection was published by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. In 2019, he was the recipient of two-first prize awards in hymn tune competitions sponsored by the Eastman School of Music (the Utech Hymn Tune Competition) and the St. Joseph’s Mercy School in Navan, Ireland. Larry holds memberships in the Grand Rapids Chapter of the American Guild of Organists and the Hymn Society in North America and Canada.

Monday, April 15, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

**Trinity Lutheran Church
2700 Fulton Street East
Grand Rapids, MI 49506**

Annamae Rotman Young Organist Competitions

The **Annamae Rotman Young Organist Competition** was founded in 2013 by Dr. Richard Rotman in honor of his mother and is an annual competition. Eligibility – A competitor must be 24 years of age or under as of August 1 of the competition year and be a resident of Kent County, MI or any county adjacent to Kent County and/or a resident student attending a junior high school, senior high school, college, or university in Kent County or any county adjacent to Kent County (Ottawa, Muskegon, Newaygo, Montcalm, Ionia, Barry, or Allegan Counties)

For more information visit grago.org/competitions/



The Fourth Annual Joy Huttar Memorial Recital
Featuring Concert Organist

Dr. Jonathan Schakel



Grace Episcopal Church
555 Michigan Ave • Holland, MI

Sunday, November 5 at 3:00 PM

Free Admission



Cantus

"These boys can rock, swing, groove, and boogie, as well as do their standard shift of classical and contemporary music. They can, in short, do pretty much anything."
Minnesota Public Radio



Sunday, November 12, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.
Free admission

*St. Mark's Episcopal Church
134 North Division Avenue
Grand Rapids, Michigan
www.stmarksgar.org*



WELCOME TO MONDAYS AT MAYFLOWER

This concert series is an expression of the talents and passions of this Church and is supported by the people of Mayflower as an offering to our community and beyond. We welcome all who come through our doors and pride ourselves in offering affordable live music by local and international musicians featuring the finest repertoire. We invite you to consider being a Friend of Mondays at Mayflower by contributing to the season. More information is included in this brochure.

Welcome to this sacred space. May your lives be enriched, your imaginations expanded and your spirits filled. —Dr. Julia Brown, Director of Music and Organist



Mayflower Congregational Church
2345 Robinson Rd. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506

November 13 | 7pm **GRAND VALLEY** **BAROQUE and friends**

Virtuoso cellist Pablo Mahave-Veglia returns to Mayflower with a program of Antonio Vivaldi cello sonatas with a beefed-up continuo group: Gregory Crowell, harpsichord, Joel Spears, theorbo, Chris Belland, guitar and Kevin Flynn, cello. Published in Paris around 1740, at a time when the cello was a relatively “new” solo instrument, these sonatas display an astonishing variety and inventiveness, using the instrument’s possibilities to the utmost; both a technical and musical challenge for the performer, these works showcase all that we love about Vivaldi: an enormous range of emotional extremes, from deep heartfelt sadness to infectious joy.



MUSIC AT MID-DAY

First (Park) Congregational Church

**10 East Park Place NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503**

A Free Concert Series in the City

Concerts (12:15pm - 12:45pm) are free to all.

Announcing Music at Midday 2023-2024

Fall 2023

October 10 - Dr. Gregory Crowell, Harpsichord,

October 17 - Dr. Chris Dekker, Organ

October 24 - Grand Rapids Guitar Duo

October 31 - Roger MacNaughton with

Charlie Hoats, and Steve Anzivino

November 7 - Dr. Julia Brown, Organ

November 14 - Robert Edwards, Piano

November 21 - Eric Strand, Organ

November 28 - River Rogues

December 5 - Caledonia Choralaires

Spring 2024

March 12 - Dr. Larry Visser, Organ

March 19 - Karen Krummel, Cello; Phyllis Miner,
Piano

March 26 - No Concert Scheduled

April 2 - Mark Jackson, Baritone

April 9 - Phyllis Ann Miner and Robert Edwards,
Piano Duo

April 16 - Jonathan Tuuk, Organ

April 23 - Rhonda Edgington, Organ

April 30 - Bruce Robey and Friends

May 7 - Mary Rademacher

An optional \$7.00 lunch (11:15am - 1:15pm) is available
before or after the performance.

Soups, sandwiches, beverages, and cookies are served.

*Central United Methodist Church Vesper Series
and
Muskegon-Lakeshore Chapter of The American Guild of Organists
present*

Grace Jackson, organist



November 12, 2023

3:00 pm

*Central United Methodist Church
1011 Second Street*

Freewill Offering to benefit the AGO Young Artist Series

Reception following in Parish Hall



HOLLAND BACH SOCIETY

<https://hollandbachsociety.org>



EXPERIENCE THE MUSIC OF JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

PHOTO OF ST. THOMAS CHURCH IN LEIPZIG, GERMANY

The Holland Bach Society is looking forward to presenting its third season this coming November, and you are warmly invited. The Holland Bach Society was developed in 2021 to raise an awareness of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and to partner with local congregations in bringing these musically and theologically rich compositions to their existing worship services. This year, the Holland Bach Society will be presenting Bach's cantata *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben* along with selections from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, his Violin Concerto No. 2, majestic organ music, and more. Some of the finest musicians from the West Michigan area have teamed up to share these special events with the Grand Haven, Holland, and Zeeland communities. Come join us and bring a friend!

Sunday, November 12, 9:00 a.m. - First Presbyterian Church, Grand Haven, Mich.

Sunday, November 12, 5:00 p.m. - Second Reformed Church, Zeeland, Mich.

Sunday, November 19, 10:30 a.m. - 14th St. Christian Reformed Church, Holland, Mich.

Sunday, November 19, 5:00 p.m. - Pillar Church, Holland, Mich.

[HTTPS://HOLLANDBACHSOCIETY.ORG/EVENTS](https://hollandbachsociety.org/events)

REQUIEM

JOHN RUTTER

Performed by
Geneva Choir of First Presbyterian Church
St. Cecilia Choir of St. John's Episcopal
Requiem Chamber Ensemble
Diane Penning, soprano

NOVEMBER 5, 2023—4 PM

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
524 WASHINGTON AVENUE— GRAND HAVEN
DONATIONS ACCEPTED AT THE DOOR.