



GRAND RAPIDS

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THE CIPHER

April 2026

Dear friends,

Happy almost Easter!

As we have journeyed through Lent, I have been reminded of what a wonderful place Grand Rapids is to be a musician, and especially a church musician. There have been so many opportunities to hear beautiful music at the symphony, in various midweek Lenten services or concerts and in churches on Sunday mornings. I hope you have taken advantage of a number of these offerings.

Because of Easter, we do not have an official GRAGO program for the month of April. Our final program of the year will be at Calvin University. On Monday, May 4th at 7:30 PM, Canadian organist Andre Knevel will present a recital centered around the Psalms. The program is offered in conjunction with the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship in celebration of Calvin's 150th anniversary. Please plan to attend what is shaping up to be a really enjoyable program.

You may know that we formed a Young Organists Committee last year. Primarily the initial job of this committee is to take over the reins of the Summer Organ Encounter, which GRAGO member Bob Houskamp has single-handedly funded and operated extremely successfully for 12 years! The program has continued to grow and we are excited to further that growth. In order to do that, we need your help. The most beneficial thing you can do is to advertise the Summer Organ Encounter to any high school piano students you know. This is a great opportunity to introduce them to the organ. Also, if you would be interested in contributing financially to this endeavor, there are a number of ways you can do that. You could consider sponsoring a young pianist you know personally. You could consider purchasing a pair of organ shoes for a student. Each student needs their own music and individual lessons are about \$50 each. These are all items that are needed in order to offer this experience free to interested pianists. The Summer Organ Encounter is one of the most concrete programs our chapter has that directly impacts the successful future of the instrument and profession which I know you love since you are members of the AGO! Please see the SOE flyer later in this newsletter. If you are interested in supporting this program, please contact any of our chapter officers or you may contact soewestmi@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Rob Hobgood



Report on March Event

Young Artist Recital: Chanmi Kim

On March 1, Chanmi Kim performed a recital at First Presbyterian Church on the four-manual, 53-rank organ, an instrument originally installed in 1937 by the Austin Organ Company and rebuilt by Lauck Pipe Organ Co. in 2010. For a number of years, the church's long-running *Community Artist Series* has featured a young organist as a part of their annual programming.

Chanmi Kim, originally from South Korea, studied piano, psychology, and child development during her undergraduate years. She was first introduced to the pipe organ as a piano major and later decided to pursue formal studies in the United States. She has a Master of Music in Church Music from Baylor University, where she studied with Dr. Jens Korndörfer. She is currently a student of Caroline Robinson in the doctoral program at the University of Michigan and serves as Organ Scholar at St. John's Episcopal Church in Detroit.



Ms. Kim is comfortable with a wide range of literature and selected an eclectic program that ranged from works of Sweelink and Bach to those of Demessieux and Messiaen. She also improvised a Romantic Adagio on *Abide with Me* and a French Toccata on *Old Hundredth*.

The Grand Rapids Chapter was pleased to co-sponsor this young artist concert in conjunction with First Presbyterian Church.

Submitted by Ronald Krebs

Upcoming GRAGO Event

Monday, May 4, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

**Calvin University Chapel
1835 Knollcrest Circle, SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546**

Organ Recital: André Knevel

Organist André Knevel, of Ontario, Canada will present a recital based on the Psalms with sponsorship from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship in conjunction with the university's 150th anniversary.



SUMMER ORGAN ENCOUNTER

A FREE COURSE FOR PIANO STUDENTS AGES 12 TO 18



JUNE 2026

GRAND RAPIDS + HOLLAND, MI

**SPONSORED BY THE AMERICAN GUILD
OF ORGANISTS (GRAND RAPIDS CHAPTER)**

APPLY AT SOEGR.ORG

Summer Organ Encounter

A PROGRAM FOR TEENS

The Summer Organ Encounter of West Michigan is a program designed to introduce students to the pipe organ through classes, private lessons, and performance. Open to all students in West Michigan, the program is 100% underwritten by donors, friends of the program, and local organists.

Started by Bob Houskamp in 2014, the program has “graduated” over 75 students in the West Michigan area ages 10-18. We encourage any students, especially those studying piano, to apply for this program.

The Scholarship Program

Each year, students are recommended for the scholarship program, a facet of our organization that is funded by additional donors. Students will be notified of their acceptance into the scholarship program by the end of the summer.

Organ Tours

As an extension of the three-week classes, we have arranged for our students to tour selected organs in the area. Students have had the opportunity to play historically preserved instruments and even recent builds.

Do you know a student who might be interested in learning how to play the pipe organ?

[Invite them to apply!](#)

Guild members:

You may have gotten an email from me regarding this year’s SOE, which is, for the first time, a program of GRAGO!

Could you publicize the following blurb (feel free to add to it) and attached poster in your church, studio, social media platforms, etc.

Blurb:

We are happy to announce this year's Summer Organ Encounter, an annual 3 week program in June for high school piano students to learn the fundamentals of the pipe organ...entirely free of charge!

More details and applications can be found at soegr.org Applications due May 1.

[DOWNLOAD, PRINT AND POST FLYER ON PREVIOUS PAGE](#)



Music at Midday

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

A FREE CONCERT SERIES IN THE CITY

Park Church offers Music at Midday: a free community concert series on Tuesdays in downtown Grand Rapids. Our concerts begin at 12:15 and last for 30-40 minutes.

4/7 Caleb Wenzel and Friends

4/14 Perugino String Quartet

4/21 Outside Pocket with Greg Scheer

4/28 Eric Strand, organ

5/5 Bruce Robey and Friends

While the concerts are free, there is an optional lunch available for \$7.00 payable at the door (cash is preferred). Lunch is served both before and after the concerts in our fellowship hall.

The items are boxed or individually wrapped, and the menu varies by the week.