



GRAND RAPIDS

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THE CIPHER

September 2026

Dear GRAGO members and friends,

I hope you have had a wonderful and relaxing summer and are feeling ready for the busyness (and business) of the upcoming fall. By now, I hope you've seen our upcoming 2026-2027 program year - there's lots to be excited about! Our very first program is the official dedication of the new Ruffatti organ at Sacred Heart Church on Friday, September 4 at 7:00 PM. I know some of you have already heard the instrument and I've heard great things about it, so I hope to see you all there. As we look further into the fall, please keep the annual Annamae Rotman Young Organist Competition on October 26 on your calendar. The application deadline is September 25 if you know someone who is planning to apply. Please plan to attend this event to support our local young organist community.

We will hold two of our programs out towards the Lakeshore this year. In November, Ron Krebs and Caron Farmer have cooked up a fun program that involves an organ crawl and food (two of my favorite things). On February 28, we will join First Presbyterian Church in Grand Haven for their young artist recital series. There are many more wonderful programs through the AGO and the greater music community that I hope you will find time to support this year. Grand Rapids is an exciting place to be a music lover!

Rob Hobgood, Dean



Monthly programs for 2026 – 2027

Here is the lineup of AGO meetings for this season, 2026-2027. Our meetings take place at various venues throughout the area and are typically the third Monday evening of the month although there are exceptions.

Friday, September 4, 2026, 7:00 pm

Organ Recital: Martin Baker

**Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church
151 Garfield Avenue SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504**

As part of the Michigan Sacred Music Retreat, Martin Baker will present a recital on the new Ruffatti organ at Sacred Heart Parish. Distinguished Choral Conductor and Concert Organist, Martin Baker is regarded as one of Britain's finest choral conductors and organists having held distinguished posts at both Westminster Cathedral and Westminster Abbey in London. As an organ soloist he won first prize in the Improvisation Competition at the St Albans International Organ Festival in 1997, and he performs solo recitals regularly throughout the UK as well as in Europe, the USA, and Russia. He is known particularly for his skill in organ improvisation.



Monday, October 26, 2026, 7:00 p.m.

Annamae Rotman Young Organist Competition

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

The Annamae Rotman Young Organist Competition was founded in 2013 by Dr. Richard Rotman in honor of his mother and is an annual competition. We thank him for his generous support of young organists. Competitors will each play pieces in variety of styles and a hymn to be sung by the audience. For more details, see our Competitions page: [Competitions](#) Photo is of 2025 judges and competitors.



**Back row: Dr. Richard Rotman, Matt Jakubisin, Dr. Gregory Crowell, Dr. Norene Walters, Noah Smith
Front row: Ann O'Neill, Rebecca Voogt**

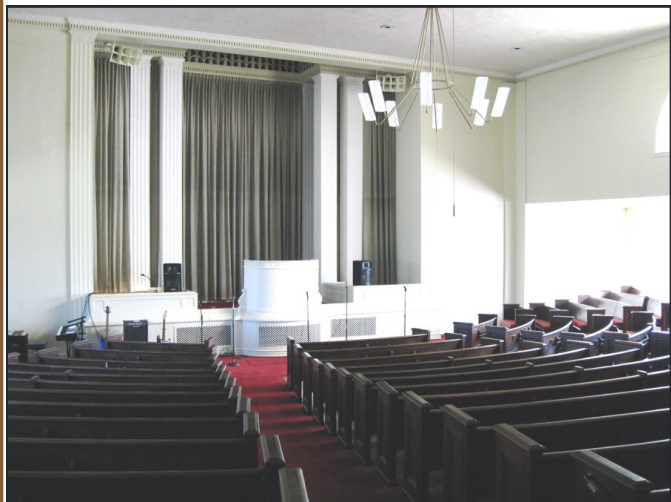
Monday, November 9, 2026

Dinner and Organ Demonstrations

The Corner
(formerly The First Church of Christ, Scientist)
280 West Muskegon Avenue
Muskegon, MI 49440

Central United Methodist Church
1011 2nd Street
Muskegon, MI 49440

Dinner and organ demonstrations at The Corner ([Aeolian Skinner 3/21](#)) and Central United Methodist Church ([M.P. Möller 3/49](#)), Muskegon. Dinner at The Corner is open to AGO members with a dessert reception afterwards at Central United Methodist Church for all attendees. You will be contacted for dinner reservations. The demonstration recitals will be presented by our chapter members, John Deppe, Caron Farmer, Eileen Hoogterp, Ron Krebs, Peter Kurdziel and Elizabeth West.



The Corner
[Æolian Skinner Opus 1078, 1945](#)
Three Manuals, 21 Ranks



Central United Methodist Church
[M.P. Möller, Inc. Originally Opus 5634, 1929](#)
Rebuilt Opus R-732, 1965
Three Manuals, 49 Ranks

Thursday, December 31, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

New Year's Eve Concert

Douglas Cleveland

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

Internationally acclaimed organist Douglas Cleveland launched his career after winning first prize in the American Guild of Organists National Young Artists Competition in Dallas. Since winning this prize, Douglas Cleveland has performed organ recitals in all fifty of the United States and has been invited to perform in such venues as Westminster Abbey, The Berlin Cathedral, Moscow Conservatory, Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, St. Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne and the Cathedral of Lausanne, Switzerland. He has performed in many of the world's concert halls including the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing, Victoria Concert Hall in Singapore, and Minato Mirai Concert Hall in Yokohama, Japan. Dr. Cleveland has performed with various reputable early music ensembles, including Paul Hillier's "Theatre of Voices." His performances with American symphony orchestras have included the Chicago Symphony, the Saint Louis Symphony, the Milwaukee Symphony and the National Symphony in Washington, DC., performing in the Washington National Cathedral. He has also appeared several times on the Seattle Symphony Organ Series at Benaroya Hall. He has appeared at several international festivals, including the Oregon Bach Festival, the Spoleto Festival, Festival Vancouver, the Moscow International Organ Festival, the International Organ Festival in Reykjavik, Iceland, and the Bergen International Music Festival in Bergen, Norway. Many of Dr. Cleveland's performances have been broadcast on National Public Radio, the BBC and the Scandinavian Radio Network. He has recorded six CD's on the Gothic and Loft labels, which have received critical acclaim — his most recent being "Douglas Cleveland Plays Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago." He has performed at the American Guild of Organists National Conventions in Houston, Dallas, Denver, Kansas City and San Francisco. He has been a member of the jury of several organ competitions, including the AGO National Young Artists Competition, the Miami International Organ Competition and the Longwood Gardens International Organ Competition. Dr. Cleveland has served on the faculties of St. Olaf College, Northwestern University and the University of Washington. For twelve years he served as Director of Music at Plymouth Church in Seattle, and most recently Director of Music at St. Thomas Medina Episcopal Church in Seattle and Musician in Residence at Temple De Hirsch Sinai in Seattle. In October of 2024 he was appointed In-



Photo by Debora Spencer

terim Organist and Director of Music at Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago. Doug received his bachelor's degree from the Eastman School of Music where he studied with Russell Saunders, a master's degree from Indiana University studying with Larry Smith and Marilyn Keiser and a doctorate from the Graduate Theological Foundation where he completed his course work and final doctoral project at the University of Oxford School of Theology.

The Grand Rapids Chapter appreciates the opportunity to support area churches in the presentation of the exceptional recitals that are a part of our programming.

Monday, February 1, 2027, 7:00 pm

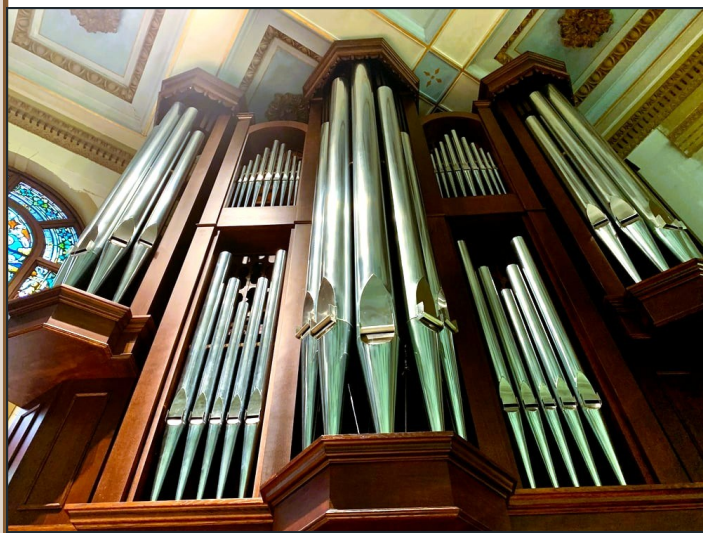
Organ Crawl

Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church
156 Valley Avenue NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Organ crawl and open console at the new Ruffatti organ at Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church. More details to follow.

[Fratelli Ruffatti - 2025](#)

39 Ranks - 2,340 pipes - 5 Physical Divisions



Sunday, February 28, 2027, 4:00 p.m.

Young Artist Recital: Daniel Colaner

First Presbyterian Church
508 Franklin Street
Grand Haven, MI 49417



American organist Daniel Colaner first captured international media attention at the age of 12 with his same-day performances on piano at Carnegie Hall and on organ at St. Patrick's Cathedral. Since then, his talents have been showcased on ABC World News Tonight, Good Morning America, The Harry (Connick Jr.) Show, and the BBC World Service Newsday. He has been featured on the NPR radio show

From the Top (Show #377), performing "Jupiter" from Gustav Holst's The Planets, and on PBS with the American Pops Orchestra in One Voice: The Songs We Share—The Sacred. In 2023, he made his orchestral debut with Joseph Jongen's Symphonie Concertante under Carlos Kalmar.

A member of The Diapason magazine's "20 Under 30" Class of 2021, he was a 2023 National YoungArts Winner with Distinction in Organ/Classical Music and a recipient of the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Young Artist Award. He has been a top prize winner at numerous organ competitions, including the Arthur Poister Organ Competition and the Albert Schweitzer Organ Competition (HS Division). His recent success at the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition also garnered him the Bach Prize as well as future engagements at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, New College, Oxford, Manchester Cathedral, and a Bach Corner concert at the St. Albans International Organ Festival.

As a prize-winning pianist and chamber musician, Daniel has been a laureate of the American Protégé Piano Competition and The American Prize Lorin Hollander Concerto Competition. He made his Severance Hall debut with the Cleveland Pops Orchestra, performing Nikolai Kapustin's Piano Concerto No. 2, and has performed Saint-Saëns' Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Euclid, Lakeland, and Suburban Symphony Orchestras. His Meraki Trio was awarded 1st Prize at the inaugural Glass City Chamber Music Competition and was one of four piano trios to advance to the semi-final round of the 2023 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition.

His exposure to classical music as a pediatric cancer survivor unleashed his passion for the piano at age 5 and the organ at age 10. He received his pre-college music education at the Cleveland Institute of Music and as a private organ student of Dr. David Higgs. Currently a first-year student of Alan Morrison at the Curtis Institute of Music, he holds the Dr. Mi Wha Lee Fellowship and serves as the Michael Stairs Organ Scholar at the Church of The Redeemer in Bryn Mawr, PA. In addition to making music, Daniel's passions include promoting the benefits of classical music on both radio and television and raising funds for non-profit organizations that support music therapy and music education.

Sunday, April 25, 2027. 6:00 pm

Hymn Festival

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

Dr. David Cherwien will present a hymn festival at LaGrave Avenue CRC joined by the choirs of LaGrave and Trinity Lutheran Church.

Dr. David Cherwien, served as Cantor at Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Minneapolis from 2001-2024, continuing the tradition of creative hymn singing begun and sustained by predecessors Paul Manz and Mark Sedio. From 2001 until 2022 he also served as Artistic Director of the National Lutheran Choir. Prior to those he has served church music positions in Minneapolis, Chicago, Seattle, and Berlin, Germany. He is a nationally known conductor, composer and organist. Recognized for his contributions to the field of church music and liturgy, he is often called upon to serve as clinician and hymn festival leader across the country.

During his time with the National Lutheran Choir he served as editor of the National Lutheran Choir Series of choral music published by Morningstar Music Publishers and produced many recordings – including the “Hymns We Love To Sing” series, still available at www.nlca.com. He is a founding member of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians and has served in its leadership in a variety of capacities, including as National President from 1993 to 1997.





MICHIGAN SACRED MUSIC RETREAT 2026

Psallite Domino: the Psalms as the Foundation of Worship

The following liturgies are open to the public:

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

6:00 PM Sung Traditional Vespers

Martin Baker, DuFay's Guys

7:30 PM Authenticum Lecture:

Praying and Living the Psalter

Rev. Canon Stephen Sharpe, ICKSP

9:00 PM Sung Compline

DuFay's Guys

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

8:00 AM Solemn High Mass

*Martin Baker,
Sacred Heart Academy Choir*

6:00 PM Sung Congregational Vespers

Martin Baker

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

8:00 AM First Friday Mass

DuFay's Guys

7:00 PM First Friday Organ Recital,

Martin Baker; reception to follow



SACRED HEART
OF JESUS CATHOLIC PARISH

151 Garfield Ave SW Grand Rapids, MI



MARTIN BAKER

FORMER MASTER OF MUSIC AT
WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL (UK)



**SACRED HEART ACADEMY
CHOIR**



DUFAY'S GUYS

JOEL BADING | ADRIAN POOL | JONATHAN BADING

The celebrated British organist Martin Baker will be Artist-in-Residence at the inaugural Michigan Sacred Music Retreat, hosted by Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Parish from the evening of September 2nd through September 4th. All liturgies and the closing recital are free and open to the public. Please come hear one of the world's greatest liturgical musicians and improvisers for three evenings in a row!

The parish has some spots remaining for the full comprehensive retreat. If you're interested, please contact Jonathan Bading at musicdirector@shgr.org

James Kibbie

Organ Concert

Friday, September 11, 2026

7:00 p.m.

Music by Bach, Mozart, Alain, Widor and a special appearance by Darlene Kuperus and Larry Visser playing Panerai's Sonata for Six Hands.



LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church

107 LaGrave Avenue S.E.

Grand Rapids, Mi 49503