



GRAND RAPIDS

The Executive Committee of Grand Rapids AGO 2026-2027

Officers

[Rob Hobgood](#), *Dean*

[David Bading](#), *Sub Dean,
Membership*

[Chris Witte](#), *Treasurer*

[Noah Smith](#), *Secretary*

Council Members at Large

[John Deppe](#)

[Barbara Dulmage](#)

[Caron Farmer](#)

[Ronald Krebs](#)

Members Ex-Officio

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

[Rhonda Edginton](#)
Education Coordinator

[Rebecca Snippe](#)
Competitions

THE CIPHER

October 2026

Dear GRAGO members and friends,

The fall is off to a very busy start and I hope you've had the chance to take in some musical events that have already happened this year. As we begin the year I wanted to update you on the GRAGO Chapter Board. The following people have agreed to be nominated to serve in the specified positions:

Rob Hobgood - Dean

David Bading - Sub-Dean

Chris Witte - Treasurer

Noah Smith - Secretary

Members-at-large - John Deppe, Barbara Dulmage,
Caron Farmer, Ron Krebs.

The changes from last year are that Noah Smith has moved from Member-at-large status to the Secretary position, replacing Alexis Van Zalen; John Deppe has joined the Board as a Member-at-large. We wish to say a special thanks to Alexis for her service as Secretary the last several years. Her administrative and musical insights will be missed!! John Deppe is a graduate of Hope College in Engineering, but he studied organ with Huw Lewis while at Hope and serves as a substitute organist in the Grand Rapids/Lakeshore area. Please look for a separate email with a virtual ballot by which you can vote for these Board members.

Finally, please see all of the information in this newsletter about many upcoming events. I want to bring special attention to the Rotman Young Organist Competition on October 26 - I hope you will come out to support these young musicians!

Rob Hobgood, Dean



Martin Baker shines in new organ dedication at Sacred Heart of Jesus

On September 4 local organists and parishioners were treated to a superb recital by British organist Martin Baker, playing the new Ruffatti organ at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Grand Rapids. This marked the first of a series of guest artist appearances at the church, in celebration of the recent organ installation. Mr. Baker brought out many of the colors of the organ, in solo and combination, in a variety of compositions from the Renaissance to the 20th century. These included a charming “Capriccio sopra il Cucho” by Frescobaldi; a sturdy transcription of “Ricercare a 6” from J.S. Bach’s *A Musical Offering*; a warm, lovely rendition of Herbert Howells’ *Master Tallis’s Testament*; and an exciting and colorful “Paraphrase-Carillon” from Tournemire’s *L’orgue Mystique*. Mr. Baker, who has held positions in Westminster Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, and St. Paul’s Cathedral in England, is renowned for his improvisational playing. It was fitting, therefore, that the program closed with a masterful improvisation on the hymn tune BILLINGS followed by a congregational hymn on the same tune.

David Bading

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.

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

Grand Rapids AGO Fall Festival

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

We will spend the evening in Muskegon, beginning with an autumn dinner at Central United Methodist Church prepared by Tudor Catering:

Chicken Montreal (gf)

Roast Loin of Pork

Romaine and Spring Mix Salad

Rice Pilaf

Acorn Squash

(Vegan entrees available by request)

Following dinner, we will hear a short recital on the three-manual, 50-rank Möller organ in the sanctuary. Featured artists will be members John Deppe, Eileen Hoogterp, and Ronald Krebs.

We will then cross the parking lot to The Corner, an adjacent event space that was originally the Muskegon Christian Science Church, and hear a mini-concert on the three-manual, 21-rank Æolian Skinner instrument. Performers for the second program include Caron Farmer, Dr. Peter Kurdziel, and Dr. Elizabeth West. The concluding reception will feature specially prepared homemade desserts.

Dinner will be served at 6 pm. Reservations will be available for our members and their guests for the remarkable price of \$10 each! More information on the reservation process will appear in subsequent emails and the Cipher. To attend only the musical portion of the evening's schedule, plan to arrive at Central UMC by 6:45 pm. We look forward to seeing you!



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



Photo by Debora Spencer

Temple De Hirsch Sinai in Seattle. In October of 2024 he was appointed Interim 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.

SUMMER ORGAN ENCOUNTER

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.

Founded 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.

There were six participants in the Summer Organ Encounter this past summer and this is the recital presented on June 26 on the new Ruffatti organ at Sacred Heart Catholic Parish.

Samantha Walton

HYFRODOL arr. Wayne Leupold
Meditation Alfred Fedak (b. 1953)

Charlotte Anderson

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence (PICARDY) Larry Visser (b. 1962)
Gigue John Barr (b. 1938)

Jenna Boerkoel

Pastorale Wilbur Held (1914-2015)
Prelude in G minor, BWV 558 J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

Kenny Power

Flute Tune on HYFRYDOL Mark Albrecht
Prelude in F major, BWV 556 J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

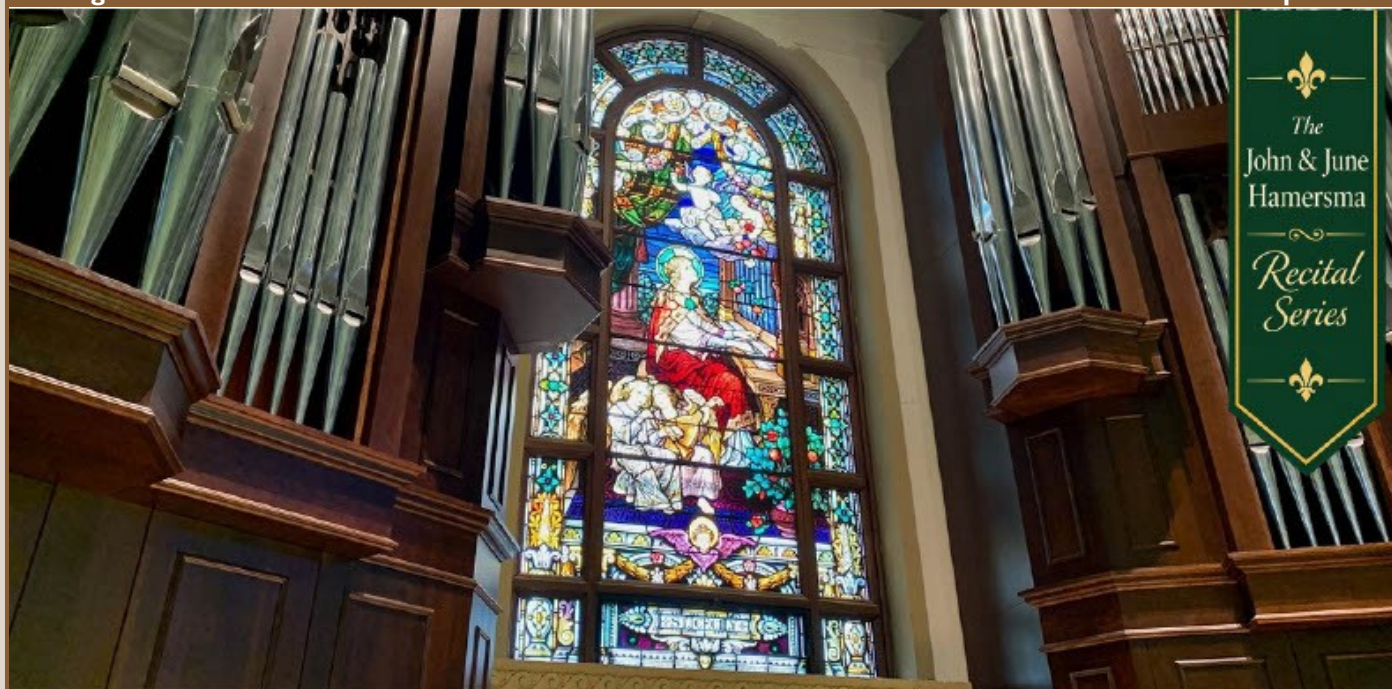
Esther Postma

NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT arr. Wayne Leupold
Passacaglia Kenneth Kosche (b. 1947)

Sonya Minderhoud

Echo Voluntary Alfred Fedak (b. 1953)
CREATOR ALME SIDERUM Marcel Dupre (1886-1971)

SUMMER ORGAN ENCOUNTER WEBSITE



The
John & June
Hamersma
Recital
Series

ORGAN RECITAL

Featuring works by Polish composers Nowowiejski, Surzyński, and Jan z Lublina

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2
7:00 PM

Wine reception following

Marek Kudlicki



Photo Credit:
Dorothy Young Riess

Born in Poland, Marek Kudlicki graduated with distinction from the Academy of Music in Cracow, launching his professional career as a student. Based in Vienna, Austria, he now tours internationally, having performed on every continent with an extensive repertoire that spans all musical periods.

Support the
John & June Hamersma Music Fund



These recitals are not concerts, but coincide with the parish's monthly nocturnal adoration of our Eucharistic Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

FREE AND
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



SACRED HEART OF JESUS
151 Garfield Ave. SW, Grand Rapids

SACRED HEART
OF JESUS CATHOLIC PARISH



Cathedral of St. Andrew
215 Sheldon Blvd. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Join Cathedral organist Matthew Jakubisin for a recital celebrating the feast of St. Francis of Assisi with music based on themes of creation. You'll hear the organ in new and fun ways by imitating rushing wind, flowing water, birdsong, and more! The program will last about 45 minutes with a free will offering to support the music ministry.

Saturday, October 3, 7:00 pm



Robert Ragoonanan
presents an
Organ Recital
October 17th at 2 PM
Westminster Presbyterian Church



Minister of Music Robert Ragoonanan presents an Organ Recital on the Aeolian-Skinner organ in the sanctuary, with a program of complementary old and new works for organ by Samuel Adler, Mary Beth Bennett, César Franck, Christopher Churcher, and Marcel Dupré. The program will also feature the premiere of a new work by Iowa composer Brooke Joyce, commissioned by Robert.

Westminster Presbyterian Church
47 Jefferson Ave SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503
westminstergr.org

Donia Organ Recital

Monday, October 19, 7:00 p.m.

Johann Vexo



Johann Vexo is represented in the United States and in Canada by Phillip Truckenbrod Concert Artists, LLC
(www.concertartists.com).

Dimnent Memorial Chapel
277 College Avenue
Holland, MI 49423

CELEBRATION OF MUSIC

Sunday, September 27 | 3 p.m.

AMORE E AMICIZIA (LOVE & FRIENDSHIP)

Sunday, October 18 | 3 p.m.

SONGS OF LIFE: THE CALVIN ALUMNI CHOIR CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

Saturday, November 21 | 3 p.m.

EMBELLISH: I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Saturday, December 19 | 5 p.m.

VOXMAS 2026: A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Sunday, January 31 | 3 p.m.

KUPERUS, KRUMMEL & COMPANY: DANCE!

Friday, March 5 | 7 p.m.

VOX GR: ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE VOCAL ENSEMBLE

A HELPING HAND: INSPIRING CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY

Sunday, April 18 | 3 p.m.

CALVIN UNIVERSITY & HOPE COLLEGE COLLABORATION:
RACHMANINOFF "VESPER"

Sunday, April 25 | 6 p.m. | LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church

FESTIVAL OF HYMNS: COMBINED CHOIRS OF TRINITY LUTHERAN &
LAGRAVE CHURCHES



[Download brochure](#)



2700 Fulton Street East, Grand Rapids, MI 49506



presents

WORLD PEACE: SONGS OF UNITY AND HARMONY

featuring



Choral Connection

Dr. Mark Webb, conductor

National Finalist

The American Prize in Choral Performance,
Community Division, 2026



FSC Adult Choir

Dr. Emmanuel de Leon Jr., conductor



Grand Rapids Youth Choruses

Leah Ivory, conductor

October 18 | 3 PM

24 Fountain Street,
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

FREE admission!
Donations are welcome
and appreciated



Fountain Street Church



GREAT AMERICAN VOICES *goes global!*

FRI NOV 7, 2026	Vienna Boys Choir 7:00 PM (Ticketed)
SUN DEC 13, 2026	109th Annual Candlelight Christmas 4:30 PM (Free)
FRI FEB 12, 2027	Voces 8 7:00 PM (Ticketed)
FRI APR 16, 2027	Canadian Brass 7:00 PM (Ticketed)

MUSIC AT MIDDAY *Fall 2026*

Lunch (\$7) served 11:15 AM–12:15 PM and 12:45–1:15 PM.
Concerts (free) at 12:15 PM.

10/6	Rhonda Edgington, Organ
10/13	Low Brass of the GR Symphony Orchestra
10/20	Roger MacNaughton, Piano
10/27	Chris Dekker, Organ
11/3	Mark Kahny, Piano
11/10	Mike Lutley Trio
11/17	Robert Edwards, Piano
11/24	Eric Strand, Organ
12/1	Caledonia Choralaires

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



HOLLAND
CHORALE



WEST MICHIGAN
CHILDREN'S CHOIR

REFLECTION

Our opening concert of the season explores the rich choral canon that shaped the first American Choral Societies of the 19th century. Mendelssohn's *Richte Mich Gotte*, Mozart's *Ave Verum*, and Haydn's *Little Organ Mass* are all works that were staples as American choral societies began to form and find fellowship through music.

Pay-What-You-Can

Suggested Ticket \$25 [TICKETS](#)

Concert Sponsored by TNT Roofing & Smith, Houghey, Rice, and Roegge.

Season Sponsored by Noel & Kathleen Carlson, in memory of Tom and Marjorie Carlson.

Saturday, October 24, 7:00 p.m.

Harderwyk Ministries

1627 W Lakewood Blvd,



On **Sunday, November 1st, at 7:30pm**, the Bach Chorale of Grand Rapids, under the direction of Martin Werner, will present its Fall 2026 concert at Fountain Street Church in downtown Grand Rapids.

Alan Chiang, a young, truly extraordinary piano virtuoso, will perform J. S. Bach's keyboard concerto BWV 1057, which is musically identical to the "Brandenburg Concerto", BWV 1049. Alan will also play Bach's famous "Chaconne" for violin solo, in the highly romantic version for piano by Ferruccio Busoni -- possibly adding his own creative spin to this grandiose masterwork.

The vocal ensemble will sing a "Magnificat" by H. Schütz, "Laudate pueri Dominum" by W. A. Mozart, and an adaptation of S. Barber's "Adagio for Strings". The concert, conducted by Dr. Martin Werner, will also showcase the chamber orchestra in Mozart's "Salzburg Symphony #1".

Regular admission \$40, student tickets \$20. Sponsored tickets \$79.

Tickets can be purchased at the door, or online: [TICKETS](#)

A portion of all ticket proceeds will directly support the Community Assistance Fund at Fountain Street Church to aid in addressing the ongoing homelessness crisis near the church in Veterans Park. Managed by Rev. Nathan Dannison, this fund provides compassionate relief through direct community assistance, such as rent relief and emergency financial aid for our unsheltered neighbors.

The Seventh Annual Joy Huttar Memorial Recital
Featuring Concert Organist

Dr. Caroline Robinson



Grace Episcopal Church
555 Michigan Ave • Holland, MI

Sunday, November 1 • 3:00 PM
Free Admission

