THE CIPHER

November 2026

GRAND RAPIDS

The Executive Committee of Grand Rapids AGO 2026-2027

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John Deppe

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Dennis Buteyn, *Webmaster, Cipher Editor*

Rhonda Edginton *Education Coordinator*

Rebecca Snippe *Competitions*

Dear Friends,

Fall is upon us! (at least the busyness if not the colder weather....yet). Congratulations to Derek Bostrom, Joseph Schmiedicke and Charles Tavera who played in the Annamae Rotman Young Organist competition on Monday evening. Special congratulations to Derek who placed first - he's only a high school student!! Charles placed second and Joseph placed third. It was great to hear some wonderfully talented young musicians!

On Monday, November 9th, we will meet in Muskegon for a Fall Festival dinner and recitals on two different organs. All AGO members are invited to attend the dinner beginning at 6:00 at Central Methodist Church. Following the dinner, anyone is welcome to attend the two short recitals starting at Central, then moving next door to The Corner. To RSVP for the dinner, and/or if you are interested in carpooling, please use this registration link: GRAGO Fall Festival. Get your reservation in no later than Tuesday, November 3.

I hope to see you all there - this promises to be an enjoyable evening of food, fellowship and good organ music.

Rob Hobgood, Dean



Report on Annamae Rotman Young Organist Competition



L-R: Dr. Darlene Kuperus, Derek Bostrom, Dr. Richard Rotman, Joseph Schmiedicke, Dr. Gregory Crowell, Charles Tavera, Dr. Rob Hobgood

On October 26, the eleventh annual Annamae Rotman Young Organist Competition was held at Park Congregational United Church of Christ on the four-manual, 81-rank Skinner-Moller-Muller organ. Three contestants played and received monetary prizes. Derek Bostrom won the first prize of $1500. He attends Holland Christian High School and is a student of Dr. Elizabeth West. The $1000 second prize was awarded to Charles Tavera. He is a pre-med major at Calvin University and studies organ with Dr. Rhonda Edgington. Joseph Schmiedicke received the $500 third prize. He is an organ student of Dr. Huw Lewis at Hope College.

Rebecca Snippe served as Competition Coordinator, and judges for the event were Dr. Gregory Crowell, Dr. Robert Hobgood, and Dr. Darlene Kuperus. The Annamae Rotman Young Organist Competition was founded in 2013 by Dr. Richard Rotman in honor of his mother. We are grateful for his generous support of young organists in our area.

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, November 9, 2026

Grand Rapids AGO Fall Festival

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



The Corner
Æolian Skinner Opus 1078,1945
Three Manuals, 21 Ranks

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



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

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! Further information on menu and carpooling, as well as a reservation form, here: https://forms.gle/nB2HK4CZKp9vYotL9. . 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!

Performers for this evening's event



John Deppe Eileen Hoogterp Ron Krebs Caron Farmer Peter Kurdziel Elizabeth West

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


Photo by Debora Spencer

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 worlds 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 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 Ruffati - 2025
39 Ranks - 2,340 pipes - 5 Physical Divisions



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



<u>Young Artist Recital:</u> 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 Fischoff 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.

THE BACH CHORALE OF GRAND RAPIDS



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

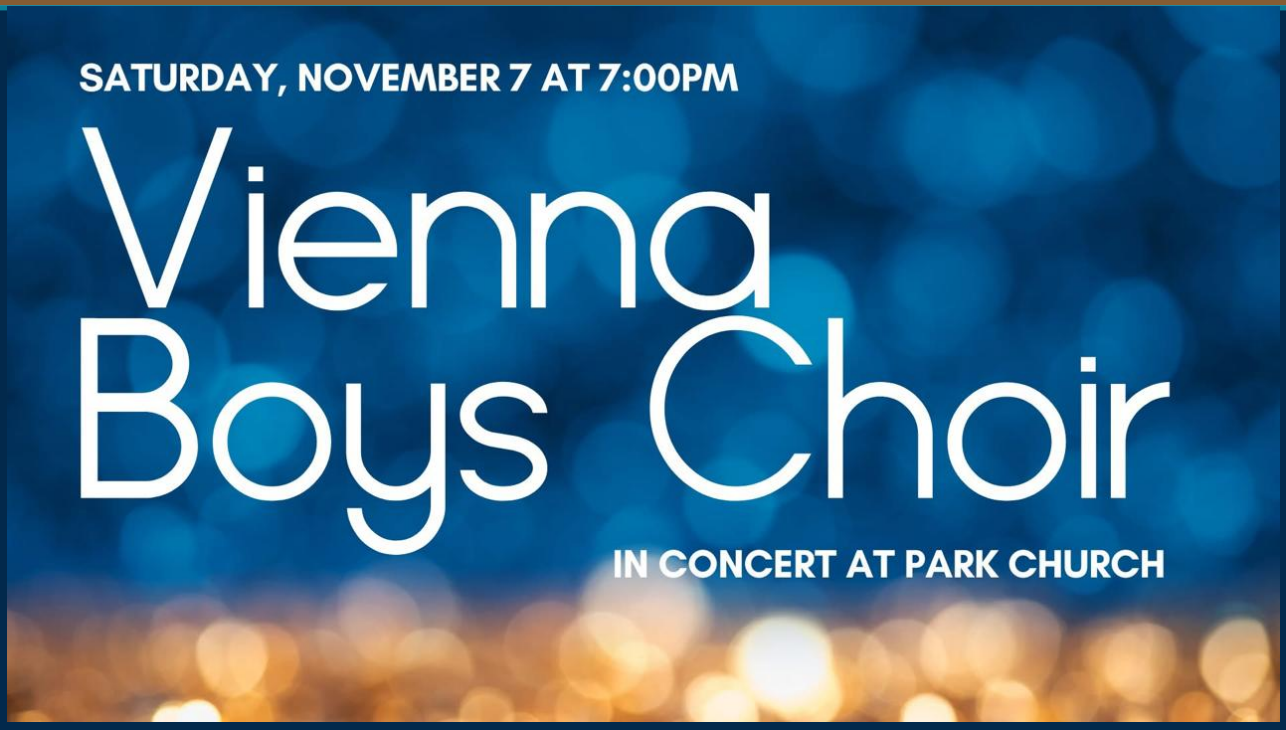
Dr. Caroline Robinson



Grace Episcopal Church
555 Michigan Ave · Holland, MI

Sunday, November 1 · 3:00 PM
Free Admission


Echoing Air
VOCAL ENSEMBLE with BAROQUE INSTRUMENTS
Presents
"A Mighty Fortress"
Featuring music by
Heinrich Schütz
Dieterich Buxtehude
Christoph Bernhard
J.H. Schein
Dietrich Becker
Andreas Hammerschmidt
Sunday, November 8, 2026
4:00 pm
First Presbyterian Church
508 Franklin Ave.
Grand Haven, MI 49417



PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
10 East Park Place
Grand Rapids, MI

ORGAN RECITAL



David Schout

Sunday, November 15, 3:00 p.m.

Samuel Lutheran Church

540 Houston Avenue
Muskegon, MI 49441

David Schout will present an organ recital at Samuel Lutheran Church in Muskegon on Sunday, November 15, at 3:00 PM. The music of Bach, Langlais, Widor, and American composers will be performed. Admission is free, and an offering will be taken. All are welcome!

CELEBRATION OF MUSIC

Trinity Lutheran Church

2700 Fulton Street East
Grand Rapids, MI 49506



Saturday, November 21, 2026
3 p.m. | Trinity Lutheran Church
EMBELLISH: I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY
BRENDA AUSTIN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The Embellish Handbell Ensemble, under the direction of Brenda E. Austin, presents an inspiring afternoon of music celebrating light, joy, and the changing season. Featuring lyrical originals, festive favorites, and dynamic handbell artistry, the program also includes a special collaboration with Trinity's Resound Bell Choir, creating a joyful and memorable musical experience.

This is a perfect way to begin enjoying some of your Christmas favorites and to hear them played by extraordinary handbell ringers. Their techniques will amaze, and their musicianship will bring to life cherished favorites and new compositions alike.

The Choral Scholars Present

VESPERS

Psalms and Canticles

November 22, 2026 at 4:00 PM

First United Methodist - Grand Rapids



We warmly invite you to join us for a service of Psalms and canticles on November 22 at 4 PM. The service will feature a range of works, including Gibbons, Rutter, Sander, and Mendelssohn.

No ticket purchase is required. All are welcome to contribute a free-will offering at the concert.

First United Methodist Church

227 Fulton Street East

Grand Rapids MI 49503

CELEBRATION OF MUSIC

Saturday, November 21 I 3 p.m.
EMBELLISH: I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Saturday, December 19 I 5 p.m.
VOXMAS 2026: A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Sunday, January 31 I 3 p.m.
KUPERUS, KRUMMEL & COMPANY: DANCE!



Friday, March 5 I 7 p.m.
VOX GR: ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE VOCAL ENSEMBLE
A HELPING HAND: INSPIRING CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY

Sunday, April 18 I 3 p.m.
CALVIN UNIVERSITY & HOPE COLLEGE COLLABORATION: RACHMANINOFF "VESPERS"

Sunday, April 25 I 6 p.m. I 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

Trinity Lutheran Church



Park Church 190th
GRAND RAPIDS ANNIVERSARY

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

CENTRAL REFORMED CHURCH
PRESENTS

NEW YEAR'S EVE CONCERT

FEATURING CONCERT ORGANIST

DR. DOUGLAS CLEVELAND



The program includes:
"Sonata I" | Alexandre Guilmant
"Variations on a theme by Paganini" | George Thalban-Ball
"Carol Rhapsody" | Richard Purvis
Three Settings of "In Dulci Jubilo" | J. S. Bach, and Marcel Dupre

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

Free Admission | Ample Parking Space

10 College Avenue NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
616.456.1773
centralreformedchurch.org

This concert is cosponsored by the Grand Rapids Chapter of the American Guild of Organists