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**American Guild of Organists
District of Columbia Chapter**

THE COUPLER

September 2026

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Dean's message

September always feels like a beginning for musicians. Choirs return, programs resume, calendars fill, and after the relative quiet of summer, our churches and concert halls begin to sound like themselves again. For those of us whose lives



follow the rhythms of the church and academic year, there is a familiar energy to this season and a definite sense that our work is beginning again. The same is true for our chapter and we have much to look forward to.

On Friday, Sept. 25, we will gather at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church for our board installation and members' recital.

Upcoming programs also include an organ crawl in Winchester, our Halloween-themed members' recital at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, educational opportunities, a Young Organists Competition, and other occasions to hear great instruments, learn from one another, and spend time together as colleagues.

As I have settled into serving as dean over the past few months, I have thought a great deal about what an organization like ours should be. We are fortunate to belong to a chapter with an extraordinary concentration of musical talent. Within a relatively small geographic area are remarkable organs, distinguished institutions, gifted performers and teachers, experienced church musicians, and young organists just beginning to discover what their lives in this profession might become. That is an enormous resource, but its real value emerges when we know one another.

At its best, the Guild creates the conditions for that to happen. It connects generations of musicians. It allows ideas, traditions, techniques, opportunities, and friendships to travel between institutions that might otherwise remain separate. It gives us occasions to hear one another play, to learn from one another, and sometimes simply to sit around a table with people who understand

the peculiar joys and challenges of the work we do. I would genuinely like us to cultivate that kind of chapter deliberately.

Come to an event when you can. Bring a student or colleague. Introduce yourself to someone whose name you recognize but whom you have never really known. Volunteer. Play. Listen. Share what you know, and remain curious about what someone else might teach you. A strong professional community is not something a board can manufacture; it is something we create through repeated acts of participation and generosity.

The organ has always been an instrument built on connections: between pipes, divisions, keyboards, rooms, traditions, composers, performers, and listeners. Perhaps there is something instructive in that for us. Our individual work may happen behind different consoles and within different institutions, but our profession is strongest when those individual lives are connected to something larger.

I am excited about what we are building together, and grateful for the many people who are already contributing their time, ideas, and musicianship to it. I look forward to seeing (and hearing) you this fall!

—Robert Baird

Upcoming chapter programs

Catered Reception, Installation of Officers, and Members' Recital

Friday, Sept. 25

Reception: 5:45 pm

Installation & Recital: 7 pm

New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, 1313 New York Ave. NW

Join us as we officially begin the new chapter year with a catered reception, followed by the installation of our officers and a members' recital. The reception will be a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with colleagues, welcome new faces, and enjoy fellowship before an evening of music. **RSVPs are required.** Click [here](https://mailchi.mp/90a957d2de58/the-coupler-september2026-654?e=7af20861b0).

Halloween Organ-fest

Our AGO chapter is presenting an evening of frightful and scary favorites including classical masterworks, movie music, and themes from theater on the 1985/1993 Schantz pipe organ at St. Paul's Lutheran at 7:30 pm on Saturday, Oct. 17. The church is at 4900 Connecticut Ave. NW.

We are looking for members to perform. This is a fantastic opportunity to present some well-loved Halloween classics, movie music, and other fun works. Bios will be collected closer to the concert, and practice/registration time will be scheduled. To prevent overlap in repertoire, please provide a first choice and an alternate piece you would be willing to prepare -- final program selections will be released shortly after the submission deadline.

DEADLINE TO RESPOND IS SEPT. 26

Sign up [here](#).

OCT 17 2026

7:30 PM

*DC CHAPTER AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS
& FRIENDS OF MUSIC AT ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN*

PRESENT

HALLOWEEN ORGAN-FEST

Featuring an evening of frightful and
scary favorites including classical
masterworks, movie music, and themes
from theatre.

Join us in your costumes, if you dare!
Reception following the concert.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
4900 CONNECTICUT AVE NW
WASHINGTON, DC

Member spotlight: Paula Maust



Paula playing the John Brombaugh Op. 32 organ in recital at Christ Church Christiana Hundred in Wilmington, DE, in May. Christine Chang photo

How did you become interested in the organ?

In first grade I wrote a short book in which I declared that I would someday become an author and a concert pianist. My earliest interests in the organ were twofold: I had heard several recordings of the complete works of J.S. Bach played on grand European pipe organs that piqued my curiosity, and I had also decided that that working as a musician would be substantially better than working on my family's small farm in rural Pennsylvania.



Photo by Corbin Phillips

I took piano lessons for years. The church my family attended had a small Schantz pipe organ. When I was 14, I began taking organ lessons with a local church musician. I got my first church job later that year earning \$35 each week to play for a Sunday morning service.

My interest in the organ and its repertoire naturally became much more refined over time, and now I cannot imagine a life that does not include playing the organ (and writing). My first-grade expectations for my career were not too far off!

What is your educational and professional background?

I am assistant professor of music theory at the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, and I also perform extensively as a harpsichordist and organist with numerous groups including the Washington Bach Consort, the Folger Consort, and In Series Opera. Additionally, I am a co-founder of Musica Spira, a baroque chamber ensemble dedicated to telling the stories of musical early modern women. I worked for 20 years as a church organist/music director before transitioning into a full-time academic position. These days, I enjoy being a substitute organist because I get to play on all the fantastic instruments around town and meet new people each week. I have MM and DMA degrees in harpsichord from Peabody, an MM degree in organ from the Cleveland Institute of Music, and a BM degree in church music and organ from Valparaíso University. My speciality is 17-century North German *stylus fantasticus* repertoire, and I love the process of making every voice of the counterpoint come out clearly, creating as much nuance as possible in the timing, and of course, playing bombastic pedal solos with prominent reed stops!

What do you like to do when you are not making music?

I spend a lot of time working on research projects. Right now, I am making a modern scholarly edition of Isabella Leonarda's *Sacri concerti*, op. 3, editing a Musica Spira recording of music by Leonarda and Maria Perucona, designing a new graduate seminar on unresolved dissonances, and writing several articles on how Elizabeth Turner managed to sell so many copies of her 1756 collection of harpsichord lessons. I also love reading historical fiction, taking long walks to see the turtles in the lake near my house, and baking elaborate cakes.

What's an interesting fact you would like people to know about you?

I am the creator of Expanding the Music Theory Canon, an open-source collection of more than 500 examples organized by music theory topic written by women and/or people of color active before the 20th century that I released in early 2021. I had been collecting the examples to use in my own classrooms for several years before I created the website, because I was disheartened that music theory textbooks did not include examples by any underrepresented historical composers. When all my concerts were canceled during COVID, I decided to channel my angst into creating something that could be useful to others. Since its launch, the website has had more than 30,000 users in 61 countries, I have given lectures about diversifying the curriculum at universities across the U.S., and a print anthology based on the project was published by SUNY Press in 2024.

Tell us a funny thing that happened while you were on an organ bench.

One Sunday morning the heel of one of my organ shoes fell off in the middle of accompanying the choir anthem. I kept playing and somehow managed to slip both shoes off my feet and onto the floor. I was also miraculously able to use my then-freed toes to move the heel off the pedal board. No one in the choir, including the director, noticed what had happened. The lesson of the day was certainly that I needed to replace my organ shoes more frequently!

Organ recitals



Saturday, Sept. 5, 3 pm: Dylan David Shaw plays light classics and transcriptions as part of the Sterling Organ House series. 15902 Jerald Rd., Laurel, MD. \$45 tickets include wine, snacks and a dessert reception. Send email to kasterling@verizon.net

Sunday, Sept. 13, 4 pm: Adam Chlebek, assistant director of music at the Basilica of the Shrine of the

**Nathan Laube plays at St. George's
Episcopal Church in Arlington on
Sept. 20.**

Immaculate Conception, plays a
recital at St. Joseph's on Capitol Hill,
313 2nd St. NE.

Sunday, Sept. 20, 4 pm: Nathan Laube plays a recital at St. George's Episcopal Church, 915 N. Oakland St., Arlington.

Sunday, Sept. 20, 5 pm: Anna Smith plays a recital to celebrate the 210th anniversary of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, 1334 29th St. NW in Georgetown.

Sunday, Sept. 27, 5 pm: Andrew Balio, principal trumpet with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and Sarah DeLacy, organist and music director at Messiah Lutheran Church, present music by J.S. Bach. 13901 Clopper Road, Germantown, MD.

Sunday, Oct. 11, 4 pm: Samuel Rowe plays a recital at St. Joseph's on Capitol Hill, 313 2nd St. NE.



Mt. Zion
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Organ Recital



**Sept. 20
2026**

5pm

Anna Smith, organist

1334 29th St NW #3351,
Washington, DC 20007
FREE ADMISSION

*Join us for an afternoon of beautiful organ music
with Anna Smith*



MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

Soli Deo Gloria

J. S. Bach



Andrew Balio
Principal Trumpet
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra



Sarah DeLacy
Organist - Music Director
Messiah Lutheran Church

27 MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
SEP 13901 Clopper Rd, Germantown, MD
2026 SUN 5PM

Music at Midday



Ralph Holtzhauser, left, and Sondra Goldsmith Proctor play at National City Christian Church this month.

Music at Midday presents concerts downtown each Friday from 12:15 to 1 pm. The fall season begins this month with three performances on the magnificent organs of National City Christian Church, 5 Thomas Circle NW, Washington, DC.

Sept. 11: Ohio organist Ralph Holtzhauser plays an extended program dedicated to September 11 and to civil rights, performing works by Maurice Duruflé, J.S. Bach, Virgil Fox, Alfred Fedak, Florence Price, Iain Farrington, and Phyllis Hall.

Sept. 18: California organist and composer Angela Kraft Cross performs her own recently composed Symphonie and J.S. Bach's Prelude and Fugue in G.

Sept. 25: Organist Sondra Goldsmith Proctor (Canton, NY) presents a program titled "J.S. Bach and His Sons," featuring works of the great master along with compositions by Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach, and the lesser-known P.D.Q. Bach.

Oct. 2: Organist Adam Chlebek (Washington, DC) performs works of Henri Mulet, Sigfrid Karg-Elert, Maurice Duruflé, and Iain Farrington.

Oct. 9: Kevin Paton-Cole (Gaithersburg, MD) performs a program titled "The Gift

of Peace: An Organ Meditation,” featuring works of J.S. Bach, George Thalben-Ball, and Dan Locklair.

Music at the Monastery

The Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America, 1400 Quincy St. NE, hosts a monthly Sunday concert series on its Lively-Fulcher organ. Each begins at 4 pm.

Sept. 13 – Kenneth Dean

Oct. 11 – Grant Holcomb

Nov. 8 – Anna Smith

Dec. 6 – Kimberly Hess

Jan. 10, 2027 – Russel Paul

Feb. 14 – Steve Kalnoske

March 14 – John Henderson

April 11 – Michael Stefanek

May 9 – Paul Binko

Organlive turns 23

This month marks 23 years of free, round-the-clock pipe organ streaming from Organlive, a service of the nonprofit Organ Media Foundation.

With more than 32,000 tracks and the detail organists care about, from performer to the exact instrument and often the score, it is a genuine discovery tool. You can request any track, and even submit your own recordings.

Start listening at organlive.com/listen](<https://organlive.com/listen>).

Job openings

Listings are continuously updated on our website, dcago.org. Click on the Membership tab. To submit a listing, send an email to dcagochapter@gmail.com.

AGO chapter board

Robert Baird, dean
Rob Church, treasurer
Eric McAfee, assistant treasurer
Kevin Biggins, membership secretary
Justin Connors, social media director
Anna Elise Smith, chapter young organists coordinator
Paul Hersey, education coordinator
Caleb Bates, member-at-large
Sarah DeLacy, member-at-large
Patrick Merrill, member-at-large
Evelyn Simpson-Curenton, member-at-large
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