



Central Hudson Valley Chapter
of the
**American Guild of
Organists**

Newsletter – January 2022

Officers

Laura Russell – Dean
845-232-8601

Nancy Vanderlee – Secretary
914-204-6472

Justan Foster – Board Member
518-965-2389

Eric Hepp – Sub-Dean
845-790-3381

Susan Guse – Treasurer
845-242-1478

Susan LaGrande – Newsletter Editor
845-226-6496

Benjamin Vise - Board Member
330-327-0895

Chapter Web Site

www.chvago.org

CHVAGOboard@gmail.com

From the Dean

Five Years in Review

This will be the sixth time I have written a special Dean’s Letter for the first newsletter of the New Year; it is one of 60+ letters altogether since I have served as Dean. It felt like it was time to review portions from the previous five New Year’s letters – starting with January, 2017 to get a perspective on where CHVAGO has been, and where we might go in the future.

January 2017: I wrote: “Although the date of January 1st is an arbitrary one, ... it also gives us an opportunity to take stock of where we are in our personal and professional lives.” I went on to say that one of my priorities as a new Dean was to actively reach out to our members to find out what their areas of concern and interest were.

Programs we were planning for 2017 included:

- the Annual Spuds ‘n Sundaes event
- a group trip to NYC
- a workshop given by Eric Hepp about “Digital/Computer aided worship”

- Past-Dean Craig Williams offering support to members who wanted to pursue AGO Certification
- the Third Annual Duo Organ “Bach to Broadway” concert, featuring Nathan Avakian and James Fitzwilliam”
- the annual “Members’ Recital”

The Board actively encouraged our members to attend the 2017 Montreal Organ Festival, and many of you did!

January 2018: “If we let it, the New Year can mark a psychological ‘reset’ point for each of us. We can use it as an opportunity to look afresh at our personal life, our professional life, the life of our community, and of our nation and world.”

I went on to suggest some new areas to explore professionally:

- Take organ, voice, or conducting lessons
- Learn how to incorporate Bells into your music program
- Learn new repertoire for organ and choir
- Attend conferences, workshops, concerts

I quoted AGO Chaplain Don Saliers’ column in TAO “We are all called to sing God a NEW Song, all the while knowing the ‘old’ song of God’s enduring love for us throughout all the generations of humankind.” I encouraged us to actively collaborate on projects with our colleagues.

Some highlights of 2018 were:

- annual Spuds & Sundaes Social Event at Hyde Park’s Roosevelt High School, combining our signature comfort-food meal with a NYTOSS/CHVAGO collaboration featuring an organ concert and demo by John Baratta on the Allen organ.
- Susan Guse presented a very successful “Bells in Worship” hands-on workshop that involved all the participants
- Laura Ramsey Russell led a participatory reading session/workshop of “Music for Organ-Plus another instrument”
- an “Organ Repair and Maintenance” workshop presented by Steven Rosenberry and Ed Myers at St. Pau’s Episcopal Church in Poughkeepsie
- the first BYOP* (*Prelude/Postlude) Happy Hour event, combining appetizers, conversation, and informal music performances
- a Choral Reading workshop led by renowned composer Philip Stopford
- the Fourth Annual Bach to Broadway Concert
- Eight of our chapter members attended the National AGO Convention in Kansas City!

January 2019:

Highlights of 2019:

- Organ recital by Craig Williams on the newly refurbished Gress-Miles organ at Christ Episcopal Church
- collaboration with Zion Church in Wappingers Falls bringing the St. Thomas Choir of Men and Boys there for a concert
- Annual Members’ Recital at St. Kateri Church in Lagrangeville

- Collaboration with BachFest 20th anniversary concert in which Dean Laura Ramsey Russell conducted a combined choir in performance of Bach's Magnificat in Skinner Hall at Vassar College.
- Hosting the BachFest Keyboard Festival at Zion Church in Wappingers Falls
- Many chapter members attended the AGO Northeast Regional Division Convention in Buffalo, NY.

Our Board goals for 2019 included:

- Increased opportunities to collaborate with other musical organizations
- Attracting new members to our Chapter
- Promoting the Organ (in all its varied forms) in new venues and contexts
- Welcoming musicians and music lovers at all levels of experience and expertise to participate in and enjoy our programs.

January 2020: Who could have predicted what would happen in the year 2020? I began that year's Dean's Letter with Howard Thurston's poem:

The Work of Christmas

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
 When the star in the sky is gone,
 When the kings and the princes are home,
 When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
 The work of Christmas begins:
 To find the lost, To heal the broken,
 To feed the hungry, To release the prisoner,
 To rebuild the nations, To bring peace among brothers,
 To make music in the heart.*

I went on to talk about resolutions and starting the year afresh with a "reset". Covid was NOT the kind of reset that I meant, but of course, we were forced to reset our priorities and our programs. We managed to fit in a late January Spuds & Sundaes event that also honored three young organists who had completed some or all of the AGO Achievement Awards, which our Chapter was involved in developing. Bruce Xu, who grew up in our Chapter presented a wonderful early February organ recital at St. John's Lutheran Church too!

Then, as everything got shutdown because of Covid, we moved to Zoom for our Board Meetings, and scuttled plans for a March Bachs' Birthday-themed Members' Recital and for many other planned events. Nothing has been the same since! During that year many of us learned how to live stream our worship services; some learned to create Virtual Choirs, and we all struggled to cope with a totally different landscape.

January 2021: I began that year's letter with the quote: "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you." *Isaiah 60: 1-2*

I chose it because it aptly described where we had been in 2020, and where we hoped to be in 2021. The darkness had indeed covered the earth, and "thick darkness" had covered the

people. But we also held out hope that there would be light ahead of us. In many ways there was: vaccines saved countless numbers of lives; through the necessity of doing things remotely we learned how to be more efficient and to connect in new ways. We also developed a keen appreciation for LIVE music-making and for personal connections.

AGOHQ and other national, regional, and local musical organizations brought creative, exciting approaches to music-making. As a Chapter we attended and sometimes offered virtual conventions, workshops, concerts. We explored new forms of remote and in-person worship. We researched and purchased new organ and choral repertoire, trying to expand the standard Organ Canon and Choral Canon. We renewed our Chapter's commitment to focus on issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We shared information about new repertoire with our members and encouraged all of us to step out of our comfort zones. Our Board attended Virtual AGO Leadership Conferences and Virtual AGO Conventions throughout the year, and we connected in new ways with our Regional and National AGO leaders. For example:

- In late winter we held several Zoom sessions for our members to find out how they were using technology in their worship services and to share advice and bonded over our common struggles.
- We held a Zoom workshop on "Creating a Virtual Choir" and several Zoom "Hymn Sings".
- Some of us participated in the AGOHQ interactive webinar "Re-igniting, Re-imagining, Re-emerging from Covid-19" Where chapter leaders discussed innovations and strategies for strengthening chapters' programming and member engagement.
- In April we shared the results of an Employment Poll that Board member Justan Foster sent out to our members, and we hosted CHVAGO/AGOYO member Anthony Rispo on a special Zoom presentation as he shared his experiences working on the committee that developed the new AGO Employment Handbook.
- In May we held our first Virtual Members' Recital and Justan Foster uploaded each player's pieces to our Chapter YouTube channel.
- In June many of us attended the Virtual AGO OrganFest 2021 "*Beauty Endures*".

Beginning during the Covid-lull of the summer, we held outdoor religious services and concerts and started rehearsing and performing together again – very carefully!

Our Chapter collaborated with Christ Church in Poughkeepsie to present a special Benefit Concert of choral and organ music to raise funds for the county homeless shelter. Board member Susan LaGrande donated dozens of beautiful hand-made caps and mittens too! The concert raised nearly \$1500 for the shelter.

Several of our members were able to sing together in the Annual Messiah Sing presented in the Bardavon with Cappella Festiva and the Hudson Valley Philharmonic.

Looking ahead at 2022: At the moment it feels like the only thing that we can plan on is that our plans will most likely be upended! Just today we had to make the decision to postpone our annual Bach to Broadway Duo Organ concert, scheduled for January 8th, because of Covid.

Still there is much for which we are grateful, and there is much about which to be hopeful. I am looking forward to the creativity, determination, and resiliency of our music community. I know we will figure out new ways to share of joy of music, and I know that we will come together and find common ground in our shared humanity.

Here's to a safe, healthy, and musical 2022!

In gratitude and hope,



Laura Ramsey Russell, DMA - Dean, Central Hudson Valley AGO

Membership News - Hail and Farewell

This past year we were delighted to welcome several new members! We hope the time is coming soon when we can greet them in person. They are, in order of the date of their joining:

Chip Hogg
Eileen Kerkes
Margaret Ritzau
Gabriel Harrison
Christine Johanssen
Todd Sisley
John Corrie

One member has moved away, although she continues her membership in the chapter: Margaret Small now lives in Maine; her new address is included in the chapter roster.

And we were sad to say goodbye to Alice Cann, who died in November 2020, and whose memorial service was held in July. We also recently heard of the death last June of Gordon Auchincloss, formerly assistant vice-president of Austin Organ Company in Hartford, CT. Gordon's widow Joyce was a member of our chapter for a time before they moved to Norfolk, VA. His obituary appears in the January 2022 issue of TAO.

Cultivating Friendships in the AGO

by Susan LaGrande

In our profession as organists and choir directors, we can sometimes feel isolated, either by choice or necessity. Have you ever gritted your teeth when a parishioner approaches with a glad smile when you are working your way through a challenging postlude? Or, especially in these Covid times, maybe you feel lonely all by yourself in the loft or far away from the congregation at the front of the church.

It really helps to have a friend who can relate to these situations and who has their own stories to tell. Laughing (or groaning) together can make uncomfortable situations much easier to deal with. Fortunately, within our own chapter we have lots of people who need a friend just as much as you do.

Since our chapter covers a wide, fairly sparsely populated geographic area, we may not have many opportunities to encounter each other in our daily lives. But with a little effort we can make contact and get to know one another. In my capacity as Communications Director, I have an excuse to reach out to new members all the time. If they use Facebook I send them a Friend request and invite them to join our chapter's private page. But there are lots of other ways that I have made friends within the chapter. Most of them involve working on some project together.

One of the first people I met when I joined was Paul Nepf, who was my predecessor as Newsletter Editor. I worked with him for several years before he retired and handed the job to me. In those days publishing a newsletter was a very tedious process, but it went much quicker with two people keeping each other company. Paul and I found lots to talk about as we met each month.

Starting in 2003, several of us began meeting once a month to plan the AGO Regional Convention that our chapter hosted in 2005. One member of the steering committee was the late Charles Faverio. Through him I met Glenn May, and the three of us discovered a mutual love of the martial arts. We also worked together in the East Fishkill Community Chorus. Our friendship has continued over the years, and we always have a good time together talking about a whole range of topics, always including the martial arts.

Sometimes necessity throws us together. Laura Russell and I ended up sharing a hotel room (and lots of conversation) at the AGO National Convention in Kansas City. Then a few weeks before Covid hit in 2020, Laura and I took a road trip to West Point to apply for a year-long visitor's pass. Between the drive itself and the application process, we spent a whole morning together. I always look forward to hearing from her!

My point is, don't be shy! Take advantage of every opportunity to introduce yourself to other members. Volunteer to help with one of the ongoing chapter initiatives mentioned in the Dean's Letter above. If you use Facebook, read what other members are posting; make comments and be liberal with your "likes." Pay attention to the Membership News section of the newsletter and don't hesitate to make a phone call or send a note if the spirit moves you. Don't forget, *The mission of the American Guild of Organists is to foster a thriving community of musicians who share their knowledge and inspire passion for the organ.* The best way we can do this is by forming relationships with each other.

Deadline for Next Newsletter

We are always glad to receive input for the chapter newsletter in the form of calendar items, reviews of recent concerts and events, biographies, letters, photographs, etc. In order to make sure these submissions can be processed in a timely fashion, please make sure they are received by the 23rd of each month. However, material such as calendar items may be submitted at any time; even if the material may not make it into the printed newsletter, it can be quickly posted on our web site at www.chvago.org. You may submit newsletter or web site material by mail, e-mail, fax or phone. Just contact the editor, Susan LaGrande, using the information given above. Remember, the deadline for the next printed newsletter, to be available the first week in February 2022, is January 23.

List of Organ Substitutes

The following chapter members have indicated on their membership application that they will serve as substitute organists. Please contact them directly if you would like more information. Please note that only CHVAGO members in good standing are eligible to be included in this list, unless otherwise approved by the Board. More information about each substitute is provided on our web site at www.chvago.org. If you would like your name listed, or if you need to update your information, please contact the editor using the information above.

Meredith Baker	845-565-3321	Maris Kristapsons	845-635-8837
Joe Bertolozzi	845-337-1216	Sistine Lezon	914-456-0533
Luca Cantone	703-554-5906	Janet Nickerson	845-561-0763
Greg Citarella	845-297-7693	Michael Oosterhout	301-910-5307
Richard C. Ehlenberg	845-687-6013	Edward Palange	914-213-3460
James Fitzwilliam	845-849-3606	Joanne Reed	845-361-3474
Justan Foster	518-965-2389	Margaret Ritzau	860-779-3751
Carl J. Geiselhart	845-457-4830	Anthony Rispo	914-979-5181
Susan Guse	845-242-1478	Todd Sisley	518-225-0928
Larry Hazard	845-452-0119	Nancy Vanderlee	845-266-3858
Eric Hepp	845-489-2625	Benjamin Vise	330-327-0895
Boyd Herforth	845-687-6233	John Ward	917-657-4614
Wesley Joseph	845-849-0104	Christopher Wynkoop	845-926-7389

List of Organ Teachers

The following chapter members have indicated on their membership application that they are accepting new organ students. Please note that only CHVAGO members in good standing are eligible to be included in this list. More information about each teacher is provided on our web site at www.chvago.org. If you would like your name listed, please contact the editor using the information above.

Meredith Baker	914-261-0028	Janet Nelson Nickerson	845-561-0763
John Baratta	973-222-0618	Michael Oosterhout	301-910-5307
Gregory Citarella	845-297-7693	Anthony Rispo	914-979-5181
Justan Foster	518-965-2389	Benjamin Vise	330-327-0895
Larry Hazard	845-452-0119	Patrick Walker	845-464-9035
Boyd Herforth	845-687-6233		

Editor's Corner

This newsletter is published by the Central Hudson Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. The editor is:

Susan LaGrande

12 Montrose Lane

Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

Phone: 845-226-6496 (home) - e-mail: CHVAGOboard@gmail.com

Position Openings

Editor's Note - Hiring institutions are encouraged to check references from applicants' previous employers. It should not be assumed that applicants who learn of position openings via these listings are endorsed by the Central Hudson Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Position openings are listed without charge for three months unless an extension is requested. If you would like to place a listing, please contact the editor, Susan LaGrande at 845-226-6496 or email chvagoboard@gmail.com.

ORGANIST - (Part-Time)

ST. PETER LUTHERAN CHURCH – WARWICK, NY

One Sunday service at 11:00 AM. No Choir. One Service on each of the following holidays: Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday. Weddings and Funerals paid directly to you. Our organ is a Rodgers which was acquired from another church many years ago (not sure of exact date). It is serviced by Gottshall. We also have a Yamaha upright piano available.

Salary: \$11,000 – 15,000 (depending on experience), 4 weeks vacation

We are a small Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregation. We use the Lutheran Service Book, Copyright 2006 from Concordia Publishing House.

[St. Peter Lutheran Church](#), 70 Little York Road, Warwick, NY 10990.

Email: st.petercontact@gmail.com; church office phone: 845-258-4541. You can also find us on Facebook: [st.peterchurch](#) and Instagram. Please call Christina Gust, Church President, at 845-324-0997, or email at christinagust@aol.com. 12/21/2021

ORGANIST - (Part-Time)

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - PLEASANT VALLEY, NY

One Sunday Service at 10:00 AM; two services on Christmas Eve and during Holy Week. No choir. Weddings/funerals paid directly to you. Approximately \$200. Allen digital computer organ 220 series. The organ came to us gently used in 2021. There are 2 manuals, Swell and Great and a “princess pedalboard.” The organ is in excellent condition, recently serviced by Harry Gottshall. Salary: \$8,500, 4 weeks vacation.

Older congregation, a few strong singers. We use the 1982 Hymnbook and occasionally supplement from Wonder, Love, and Praise. [St. Paul's Episcopal Church](#), PO Box 1449, 808 Traver Road, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569. 845-635-2854 Contact: Rita Carver, Warden 917-647-1140 stpaulspv@gmail.com 11/11/2021

MUSIC DIRECTOR, ETC. - Part-Time

FREEDOM PLAINS UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - LAGRANGEVILLE, NY

[Freedom Plains United Presbyterian Church](#) is hiring one, two, or three people to support, nurture, and build our Music Program. We seek applicants who will use their musical gifts to nurture the varied and substantial musical talents in our congregation and larger community. We are a congregation that would love a classical string group one week and a jazz group the next, and we sing hymns.

The positions are:

1. Music Director/Choir Director

The responsibilities of the Music/Choir Director include leading and rehearsing with the choir and coordinating small vocal or instrumental groups and soloists.

2. Organist/Keyboard Accompanist

The responsibilities of the Organist include providing music during worship services and accompanying small musical groups and soloists.

3. Director of the School of Sacred Music

The School of Sacred Music is run with some adjunct paid teachers who offer classes for the church and wider community in eight-week sessions. Classes (such as flute choir, string ensemble, handbell choir, children's choir, jazz group) are offered depending on interest and the recruitment or availability of staffing support. Responsibilities of the Director include scheduling and teaching classes and recruiting instructors and students.

The organ in our sanctuary is a 3-manual Allen MDS 41S, manufactured in the mid 90's, with an Allen Vista 256 voice MIDI Expander. We also have a Steinway Model L grand piano and a 5 octave set of Schulmerich handbells.

Salary is commensurate with experience and scope of responsibilities. Previously, these positions were held by one person and required an average of 20 to 24 hours per week with a salary range of \$38,000-\$45,000. There is some flexibility in the job(s) listing depending on the talents and time of the applicants. Our musical life and these positions will center around our 10:00 AM Sunday morning worship services.

The church is located at located at 1168 Route 55 in Lagrangeville, NY.

Please send inquiries, resumes, and letters of interest to office@fppchurch.org or mail to: Music Director Search

c/o Freedom Plains United Presbyterian Church

PO Box 400, Lagrangeville, NY 12540. 845-452-0684 www.fpupc.org

10/9/2021

ORGANIST/MUSIC DIRECTOR - (Part-Time)

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - COLD SPRING, NY

One Sunday service at 10:00 AM; Eucharist on the first, second, and third Sundays, with Morning Prayer on the fourth and fifth. Additional holy day services as required, including, but not limited to: Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil, and Thanksgiving. We are also considering regular Sung Evensong services, held Sunday's at 4:00 PM, every other month. Your in-person presence and participation (with safety precautions during the COVID-19 pandemic) for Sunday worship is required, whether inside the sanctuary or outdoors on the lawn. Currently, there is no choir. The successful candidate will bring a willingness and positive energy to encourage, recruit and train members (whether parishioners or outside community) in order to build a volunteer choir. Salary will increase in tandem with the additional duties and responsibilities of the position, and rehearsal time with volunteers.

The instrument (organ) we use indoors is a Copeman Hart & Company organ, manufactured in Irthlingborough, England. A Steinway Model B grand piano is also available. When outdoors, on the Great Lawn, we use a Yamaha 88 key electronic keyboard, with an outdoor amplification system. Salary is commensurate with experience, for four services per month. As parish organist, you will have the right of first refusal for the special, public services which include weddings and funerals. This means you are compensated even if the family engages another musician. The honorarium for parishioners is currently \$200 and \$250 for non-parishioners, and is paid directly to you. The candidate must have either a degree in

music or current enrollment in studies toward such a degree, with a concentration in organ studies, and must be vaccinated for COVID-19. For a complete job description, [Click Here](#). [The Episcopal Church of St. Mary-in-the-Highlands](#), 1 Chestnut Street, Cold Spring, NY 10516. Send resume to Father Steve Schunk at stmaryinthehighlands@gmail.com.
8/11/2021

ORGANIST/MUSIC DIRECTOR - (Part-Time)
ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - ELLENVILLE, NY

Seeking an organist/music director, one Sunday service weekly, 10:00 AM, and Christmas Eve. Adult Choristers rehearsal on occasional Sundays (9:00 AM) and occasionally mid-week, as scheduled. Weddings and funerals depending on availability with right of first refusal. St. John's has two organs: (1) a newly installed Allen Digital Organ with substantial speakers in the front and back of the sanctuary, and (2) an historic pipe organ, originally built by Lebagh and Kemp in 1874 (mechanical action, two manuals, 18 ranks), which has been recently restored, is in excellent condition, and is maintained by Rosenberry and Myers, Organbuilders. An electronic piano is also available. Service hymn selection in collaboration with clergy. St. John's is the home of the Music Institute of Sullivan and Ulster Counties (MISU), under the direction of Anastasia Solberg, a community-oriented school specializing in traditional and contemporary chamber music; MISU concerts at St. John's 3-4 times yearly. Our church is committed to community involvement, environmental stewardship, and hospitality. Salary range: \$9,000-\$11,000. Flexible vacation time. Visit St. John's online at <http://www.stjohnsellenville.org>. Please submit a letter of interest, resume, and references to The Rev. Canon Jeff Gollhofer, St. John's Episcopal Church. P.O. Box 262, Ellenville, NY 12428, or by email at jmgollhofer1@earthlink.net. 7/23/2021

Calendar of Events

If you are interested in having an event posted on this calendar, please contact the web site administrator, [Susan LaGrande](#). Events are selected for inclusion based on their relevance and interest to the members of the Central Hudson Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. The chapter reserves the right to decline or withdraw listings at any time.

<p>Saturday, January 8, 2021 POSTPONED DUE TO COVID CONSIDERATIONS</p>	<p>Bach to Broadway Concert Back by popular demand! Come and be dazzled by a Duo Organ Concert featuring Nathan Avakian on the NYTOS Traveling Theatre Organ, and James Fitzwilliam on the Gress-Miles Pipe Organ, along with other friends and collaborators. Christ Episcopal Church, 20 Carroll Street, Poughkeepsie. Watch this space for more information as it becomes available. Tickets \$15 at the door. Info: 845-452-8220.</p>
---	---

<p>Sunday, January 23, 2022 Time TBA</p>	<p>Organ Concert by Felix Hell Felix Hell, no stranger to the Hudson Valley, is one of the most sought-after concert organists in the world. Through the generosity of Mary Heller, Felix will be appearing at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 55 Wilbur Blvd, Poughkeepsie. Watch this space for further information as it becomes available.</p>
--	--



Central Hudson Valley Chapter – AGO
Susan LaGrande, Newsletter Editor
12 Montrose Lane
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
www.chvago.org
CHVAGOboard@gmail.com



Soli Deo Gloria