

American Guild of Organists Blue Ridge Chapter

April 2025

www.blueridgeago.org



April Social Gathering

Chapter members and guests are invited to an **informal social gathering/open house** on April 12th at the home of Tom and Denise Bernard between 1:30pm to 3:30pm at 65 Chauncey Circle, Asheville. RSVP by text/call to 706-593-0104 or email tbernardjr@reagan.com by **April 7**. The 'chef' plans for New Orleans favorites such as **authentic New Orleans coffee and chickory**, Mardi Gras King cake and "Lagniappe" (a New Orleans expression for something extra). It is Palm Sunday weekend and anyone having a special hymn or organ piece is invited to bring and play it for the group.

Dinner, Meeting, and Ken Cowan Recital



Thursday May 8 chapter members and guests will enjoy a **catered dinner** at First United Methodist, Brevard. We will gather at 5:30pm, have a **short business meeting**, and be finished by 7:15pm. Dinner is \$10/person; **RSVP by May 1st** to Tom Bernard by text/call to 706-593-0104 or email tbernardjr@reagan.com.

At 7:30pm we have the opportunity to hear **Ken Cowan**, one of North America's **finest concert organists**. Praised for his dazzling artistry, impeccable technique and imaginative programming by audiences and critics alike, he maintains a rigorous performing schedule which takes him to major concert venues and churches in America, Canada, Europe, and Asia. This recital is open to the public, so **be sure to invite your friends!**

Ken Cowan is presented by the Blue Ridge AGO, the BMZ Organ Foundation, and the FUMC Music Ministry. Suggested donation is \$20. First United Methodist is located at 325 N Broad St, Brevard NC. Parking is available at the Caldwell Street Lot.

Blue Ridge Ringers 30th Anniversary

The Brevard-Davidson River Concert Series presents the **Blue Ridge Ringers** on **Sunday, May 4 at 4:00 pm**. This is the Blue Ridge Ringers 30th Anniversary Celebration! Join us as we celebrate 30 years of **handbells in the mountains** with a retrospective concert including favorites from the past 30 years. Also featured is a **newly commissioned work** for this momentous occasion by well-known composer **Karen Buckwalter** entitled "Appalachian Delight." Brevard-Davidson River Presbyterian is located at 249 East Main Street in Brevard.

This concert is **free and open to the public** so join us and bring a friend.

Fine Arts Spring Events 2025

BC Music Presents:

Guest Recital

Bruce and Kate Murray, piano
Piano 2025: Music for Two Keyboards
Jan 19, 3:00pm
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

Trumpet & Organ Recital

Bradley Ulrich and Madison Barton,
trumpet; Vance Reese, organ
Jan 26, 3:00pm
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

Guest Lecture Recital

Sarah Masterson, piano
The Life and Music of Philippa Schuyler
Feb 26, 2:00pm
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

Wind Ensemble Concert

Mar 1, 3:00pm
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

BC Music Presents:

Honors Recital

Apr 16, 3:00pm
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

Jazz Ensemble Concert

Apr 23, 7:30pm
Ingram Auditorium, Dunham Hall

Percussion Concert

Apr 27, 7:00pm
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

Wind Ensemble Concert

Apr 29, 7:30pm
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

Spring Choral Concert

May 1, 7:30pm
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

BC Theatre Presents:

BIG BAD*

by Katherine Gwynn
Feb 27–Mar 1, 7:00pm
Mar 2, 2:30pm
Morrison Playhouse, Porter Center

VANITIES a new musical*

Book by Jack Heifner
Music and Lyrics by David Kirshenbaum
Apr 24–26, 7:00pm
Apr 27, 2:30pm
Morrison Playhouse, Porter Center

BC Theatre Mixtape

Apr 30, 7:00pm
Morrison Playhouse, Porter Center

*Event is ticketed. \$5 for BC students, staff, and faculty, \$10 for community members.
Please visit www.onthestage.tickets/brevard-college/season

BC Spiers Gallery Presents:

To All Who Have Found

A solo exhibition by Amella Rosenberg
Jan 24–Feb 21
Opening reception Jan 24, 5:00pm
Spiers Gallery, Sims Art Building

Brevard College Faculty Exhibition

Feb 28–Mar 28
Opening reception Feb 28, 5:00pm
Spiers Gallery, Sims Art Building

Spring Senior Exhibition

Apr 4–25
Opening reception Apr 4, 5:00pm
Spiers Gallery, Sims Art Building

Small Works Exhibition

May 2–9
Opening reception May 2, 5:00pm
Spiers Gallery, Sims Art Building

Spiers Gallery is open weekdays
8:00am–5:00pm

BC Fine Arts Presents:

Fine Arts Gala

"Love the Arts"
Feb 8, 6:00pm
Porter Center
Scan for more information



Sidewalk Chalk Festival

Apr 26, 10:00am–4:00pm
Robbins Plaza

Students from the
**Hayes School of Music at
Appalachian State University**
and professor **Dr. Joby Bell** present:

Young Artists Organ Recital

Hear these talented young musicians play the **largest
mechanical action organ** in Asheville with two
keyboards, a full pedalboard, and **over 1,300 pipes!**

May 3 · 3:00pm

**St. Mark's Lutheran Church
10 North Liberty St · Asheville, NC**

Free admission -- donations accepted
for the church music program and the
university scholarship fund.



Is your membership current? In addition to the great programming you've come to expect from the Blue Ridge chapter, your membership includes this news-

letter, and a subscription to *The American Organist*, **the glossiest magazine around**. Please visit agohq.org to check on the status of your membership, or contact chapter registrar Tom Bernard: tbernard@reagan.com

Want to see your next event here?

If you're looking for the perfect place to publicize your sackbut choir's next concert of Messiaen transcriptions (and really, who isn't?) look no further! Just write the details on the back of a crisp \$100 bill and mail it to the editorial department today. Alternately, you may email your event information to: cantordavid@stmarkslutheran.net



Browse our collection of high-quality, downloadable choral, handbell, and keyboard music today!

SacredMusicDownloads.com

Love Reach Down & Lift Us Up

Join the Asheville Choral Society's singers for music of hope and inspiration. As Asheville continues to recover from Hurricane Helene and our neighbors support each other in these uncertain times, ACS shares music of connection and community.

May 9, 2025 | 7pm , May 10, 2025 | 4pm

Central United Methodist, 27 Church Street, Asheville
Adults \$25 & Students \$15



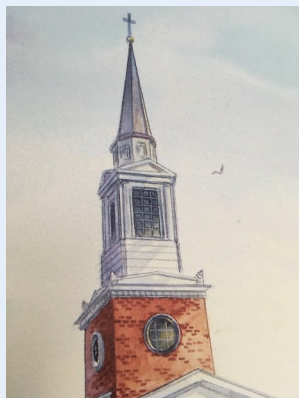
From AGO National Headquarters: Important Announcement Regarding Dues

Beginning with renewals effective on July 1, annual dues across all membership categories (Regular, Special, and Young Organist) will increase by \$7, with \$2 being distributed to chapters. This modest increase, approved by the National Council, will allow the AGO to continue offering high quality programs and services to our members, while providing additional financial support to chapters.



Open Positions

Hendersonville Presbyterian Church, Hendersonville, NC



Organ and Piano Accompanist Position Summary:

We are seeking a part-time, skilled organist and piano accompanist to join our worship team. This position will support our traditional worship services through music, providing accompaniment for congregational singing, choir anthems, and other special music.

Primary Duties: Provide accompaniment by playing the organ and/or piano to accompany congregational hymns, choir anthems, soloists, and other musicians during worship services. Select appropriate musical pieces in collaboration with the Director of Music or Lead Pastor and prepare adequately for services. Availability to attend rehearsals and services, which may include evenings, weekends, and holidays. Actively participate in rehearsals with the choir, soloists, and other musicians as needed. Provide music for special services including holidays and other church services upon request. Collaborate with the Director of Worship, Lead Pastor, Choir,

and other musicians to enhance the overall musical experience during worship. Provide or assist in arranging accompaniment for funerals, memorial services, and weddings on organ/piano as needed. For more information, contact Rob McClelland, rmcclelland@hendersonvillepc.org or 828-692-3211.

Union Lutheran Church, Salisbury NC

Union is conducting a search for a Part Time Director of Music Ministries and a Part Time Church Organist. We are open to the same person filling both positions. Job descriptions may be found at <https://lcsalisbury.org/employment-opportunities/>. Contact the church office for more information.

Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church

Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church (www.laketoxawayumc.org), worshipping in a simple Gothic-Revival style frame building dating from 1912, is seeking an interim and/or permanent organist. The congregation meets each Sunday at 10am. There is no choir so the organist's only responsibility is selecting hymns for the week and playing during the service, with an optional prelude and postlude of his/her choosing. There are a few weddings and funerals each year. The church's organ is a 2 Manual Allen Digital organ, less than 10 years old and in excellent condition. It also has a system to utilize additional stops beyond the regular stop list. The church also has a similarly aged high end Roland electric piano, also in excellent condition. Please contact Stephen Wood, the church's Parish-Staff Committee Chair (swwood50@gmail.com) for further information or to express interest in exploring this opportunity.

Blue Ridge AGO Substitute List

The Blue Ridge AGO maintains an active list of musicians who are available to play. Please contact us at www.blueridgeago.org, or email newsletter editor David Anderson [cantordavid \(at\) stmarkslutheran.net](mailto:cantordavid@stmarkslutheran.net) for more information.

www.blueridgeago.org

MUSIC WEEK

A mountaintop church music experience
Adult Conference



THEME:

Peace ~ Pax ~ Shalom

Arden, N.C.

JULY 6-11, 2025

*Hands-on learning & daily creative
worship experiences with
outstanding clinicians*

- Adult Choir
- Organ Workshops
- Handbell Choirs
- Hymn Festival
- Reading Sessions
- HymnFest Choir

Organ



**ANDREW
JACOB**

AUGUSTANA
LUTHERAN,
ST. PAUL, MN
ST. OLAF'S
SING FOR JOY

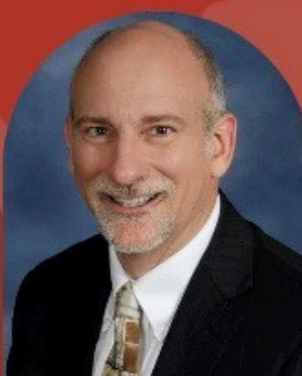
Adult Choral



**ROBERT
HOBBY**

TRINITY ENGLISH
LUTHERAN
FORT WAYNE, IN

Handbells



**ED
TOMPKINS**

ST JOHN IN THE
WILDERNESS
EPISCOPAL,
FLAT ROCK, NC

Chaplain



**PASTOR
VERN KINARD**

BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN,
HICKORY, NC

LUTHERIDGE.ORG/ADULT-MUSIC-WEEK

Margaret Hillis: Unsung Pioneer

by Howard Bakken, Blue Ridge AGO

We lived in the western Chicago suburbs for 30 years and were always aware of Margaret Hillis and her legendary successes with the Chicago Symphony Chorus and the Elgin Symphony Orchestra. She was born 104 years ago and deserves to be remembered for her contributions to the arts in America.

Miss Hillis, as she was always known and addressed, was born into a wealthy Kokomo IN family; the family wealth (think stainless steel) was a major factor in supporting her professional life. She was a graduate of Indiana University and the Juilliard where she studied with Robert Shaw and was a classmate and then lifelong friend of Alice Parker.

In 1977 Fritz Reiner encouraged her to establish a professional chorus to perform with the CSO. She believed singers were professionals on a par with instrumentalists and should be paid equally. That spirit led to the formation of the ACDA and her membership on the National Endowment of the Arts.

Her recordings earned nine Grammy Awards as testimony to the quality of her work. Her standing in for an ailing Georg Solti at a 1977 Carnegie Hall performance of Mahler VIII received international attention, one of the first times the world had recognized a woman on the podium.

Another aspect of her Chicago stardom arose from the Do-It-Yourself Messiah for which she asked me to be the organist. One of the Chicago banks generously funded the soloists from the Lyric Opera School, the orchestra principals, harpsichordist David Schrader and me. (Our family had an enhanced Christmas for those 20 years.) The rest of the orchestra were auditioned, but unpaid. There were two, and occasionally three, performances in Orchestra Hall, now Symphony Center. Mandatory tickets were free via WFMT-FM. One year there were 18,000 requests for 5500 tickets. The sound of over two thousand singers was one I will never forget. I may try to forget the sound of "Their Sound is Gone Out" and a few of the lesser-known choruses.

Although Miss Hillis was known and revered by Chicagoans, I have discovered her name here is virtually unknown. She was a dynamo who devoted her life to the cause of choral music. May her contributions be recognized and live on.

Margaret Hillis: Unsung Pioneer by Cheryl Frazes Hill was published in 2022. It is a highly detailed summary of a remarkable musician. Here is a link to an interview with Ms. Hill and Frank Villella, the archivist of the CSO, filled with remembrances and tributes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4g2K8tlZJ0>



Blue Ridge AGO Chapter

www.blueridgeago.org

Founded
August 15, 2013

OFFICERS

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Sub Dean, Treasurer
and Registrar

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American Guild of Organists

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About Us

Our mission is to enrich lives through organ and choral music. To achieve this, we encourage excellence in the performance of organ and choral music; inspire, educate, and offer certification for organists and choral conductors; provide networking, fellowship, and mutual support; nurture future generations of organists; promote the organ in its historic and evolving roles; and engage wider audiences with organ and choral music.

Area Organs

First Baptist Church, Waynesville · Reuter Organ Company Opus 1025



19 Ranks - 1,250 Pipes

An Order for Easter Evening

The Priest goes home.

People

Do you have some time

Monday morning to get together?

Celebrant

No.