American Guild of Organists
Blue Ridge Chapter
August/September 2026

From the Dean

Dear Blue Ridge AGO chapter,



Greetings to all of you, and thank you for the trust you have instilled in me as the new Dean of your chapter. I look forward to working with you and supporting you over the next two years.

In this, my first official article, I don't have anything terribly profound to say. I can at least say that I come with some experience as the dean of a chapter. In 2003, I graduated with my doctor of musical arts degree from the University of Michigan. I moved to Spartanburg South Carolina where for 18 years I served as the organist and Choir master of the Episcopal Church of The Advent. Not surprisingly, the Spartanburg AGO chapter was looking for new blood. Within a year I was asked to serve as the sub Dean for a two year term, which eventually became a two-year term as Dean.

Fast forward to 2022: the chapter needed someone to serve as Dean again, so I said yes. Now that I've served Holy Cross Episcopal Church in Tryon for almost 5 years I'm ready to be another Dean, this time in western North Carolina. I'm grateful to immediate past Dean Tim Shepard for allowing a year of "cushioning" so that I wouldn't need to step into the office of Dean right away. I wish Tim well in his new role as Southeast regional counselor. I am also grateful to the new slate of officers who I am sure will serve this chapter very well.

I am sorry to miss the wonderful meet and greet session at First Methodist in Waynesville on September 12. Please know that the program committee, chaired by our new sub Dean Ed Hauck, has come up with some amazing programs for 2026/2027. Please feel free to reach out to me at any point if you have any questions or concerns about anything happening in this chapter.

Sincerely,

Brennan Szafron

Organ Demonstration and Meet-and-Greet

First UMC, Waynesville · September 12, 10:00am



Casavant Frères opus 3774
3 manuals, 50 ranks

Greetings everyone. Our first event of the season is at First United Methodist Church in Waynesville (566 S. Haywood Street) on Saturday, September 12th . Many thanks to Rhonda Furr for making this happen. We will begin at 10am with Rhonda sharing pictures, history and a demo of the organ, followed by open console time. So, bring music and your shoes, if you need them. For those who would like to hang around for lunch, we are looking at finding a place that will accommodate those of us with a group reservation. The restaurant is still to be determined. We will email you with those details ASAP and RSVP instructions. Looking forward to seeing you on the 12th!

-Subdean Ed Hauck

Upcoming Blue Ridge Chapter Events

The Music of Leo Sowerby · October 25 · 4:00pm
Holy Cross Episcopal Church, 150 Melrose Ave Tryon NC 28782
We look forward to greeting our friends from the Spartanburg chapter at this event!

Hauptwerk Revisited · November 21 · 2:00pm
At the home of John Beaver, 1010 Windsor Drive Asheville, NC 28803

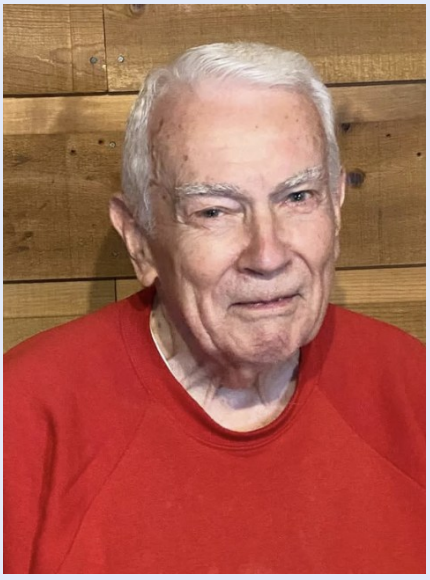
Free Music for Limited Choirs · January 9 · 10:30am
St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 337 Charlotte Street, Asheville NC 28801
Lunch provided at the church · snow date: Jan. 16th

Members Concert · February 7 · 3:00pm
Brevard Davidson Presbyterian Church 249 E. Main Street, Brevard NC

Monty Bennett Organ Concert · March 14 · 4:00pm
Lutheran Church of the Nativity · 2425 Hendersonville Rd, Arden NC

Choral Evensong: Remembering Bev Ward

St. James Episcopal Church · September 27 · 5:00pm



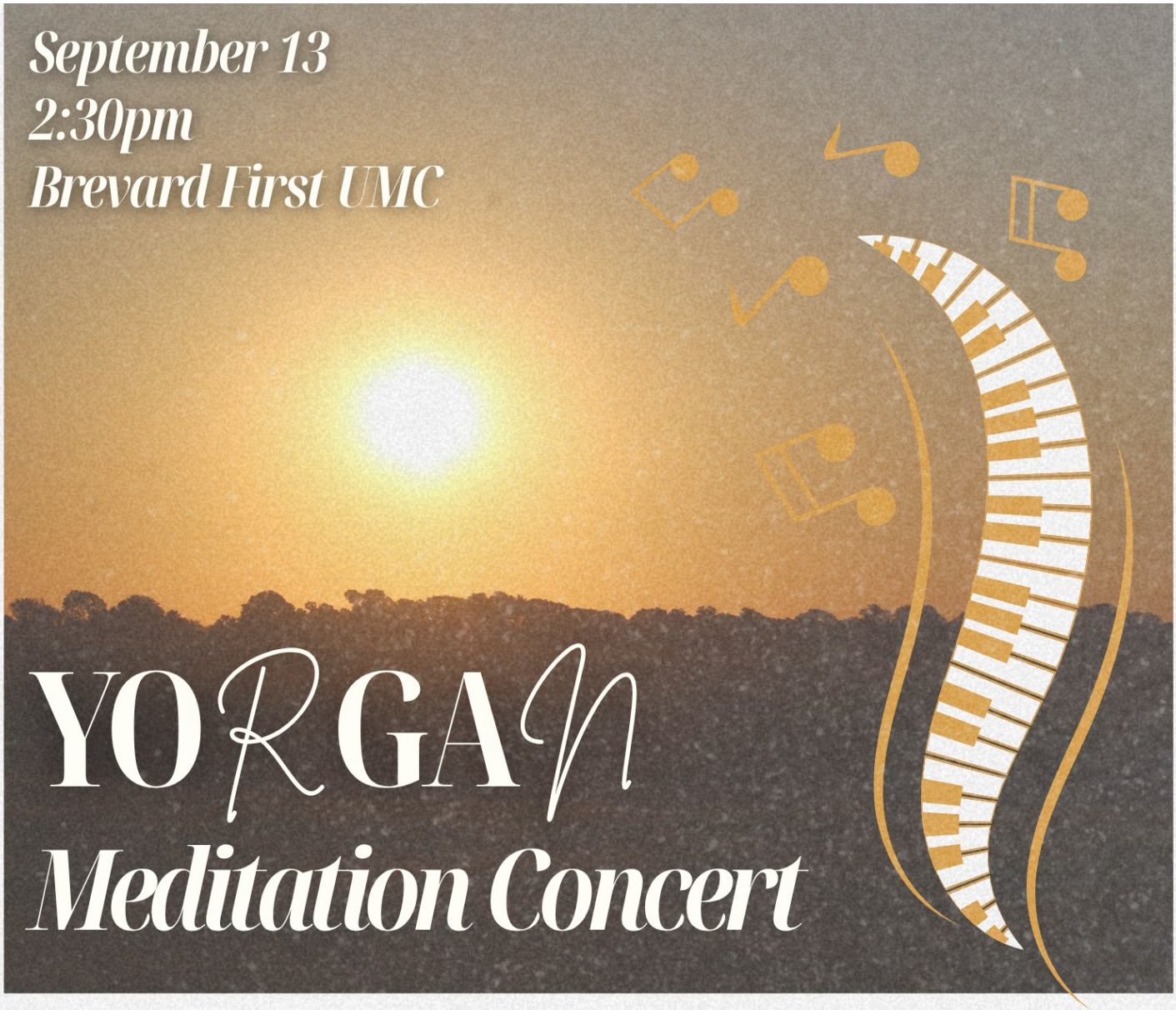
The St. James Choir will offer Choral Evensong for St. Michael & All Angels on Sunday, Sep. 27 at 5:00 pm, with the prelude beginning at 4:40 pm.. This service is offered in loving memory of Bev Ward, who died earlier this year. Bev was a quiet, gentle man but a GIANT in the field of church music. He was the last of the charter members of the Association of Anglican Musicians, the annual conference which I attend every summer. He was Director of Music at St. James Episcopal Cathedral in Chicago from 1965-1968, and was Administrative Assistant and Director of Music/Organist at St. James, Hendersonville from 1994-2000. He was instrumental in the installation of the Harrison & Harrison organ in 1999, and was Captain of the Tower Bells and rang for many years.

Artist in Residence Tate Addis will be playing two of his organ pieces during the prelude for the service, which begins at 4:40 p.m. Tate will also be playing Sowerby's Rest in Peace. The St James Choir will sing Bev's beautiful setting of Ubi Caritas as a choral benediction at the end of the service. The choir will also be singing My Guardian Angel by Judith Weir, Preces & Responses by Sumsion, Evening Service in C by Ossewaarde, and In the Year That King Uzziah Died by David Williams. Plan now to attend this beautiful service in memory of Bev Ward.

--Brad Gee, Director of Music/Organist







Come join us for an expansion of our "Mission Moment" of the month!
Featuring minimalist, soundscape, and impressionist music improvised or by composers like *Alain, Messaien,* and *John Cage* played by Director of Music *Rachel Schulz.*
Laura Sullivan, teacher at Brevard Yoga Center will lead the **chair and mat yoga.**

FREE EVENT :
Donations will be collected towards the Creation Care Team.

EXPECT :
Mat yoga, chair yoga, or sit outside listening, meditating, or picnicking.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF

St. John in the Wilderness

FRIENDS OF MUSIC & THE ARTS SERIES

BANRÌGH

CELTIC HARP QUARTET

Join us for an afternoon of beautiful music paying tribute to traditional Celtic culture.

FREE CONCERT

DONATIONS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED TO SUPPORT THE MUSIC & ARTS SERIES

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

4:00PM

PARISH HALL
1905 GREENVILLE HWY, FLAT ROCK



FOR MORE INFORMATION
www.stjohnflatrock.org

YOU ARE INVITED

"LET'S SING!"

A CHORAL ADVENTURE
IN THE HEART OF THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

4H Center, Abingdon, VA, Sun-Sat, Oct 4-10, 2026

Calling all singers with some choral experience and reading music skills, including those who are retired or near retired, looking for an exciting week of creating the choral magic that keeps you coming back for more — with relaxing down time in the country. Enjoy daily rehearsals, social times and events, including an evening at the Barter Theater, "Classic Movie Musicals" night, closing concert at local venue. Come for the music. Stay for the friendship. Leave with your spirit renewed. The music is chosen to fit this year's theme:

"Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue"

Director: Andrew Walker — directed 30+ Choral Workshops with the Elderhostel/Road Scholar organization; recently retired from 45 years as Director of Music at St. Michael's Episcopal, Orlando; final choir trip: St. Paul's Cathedral, London, UK, Five Evensongs, post-Christmas 2025.

The Abingdon 4H Center: located in the Blue Ridge Mountains; rolling meadows, that crisp, clean, and invigorating mountain air, comfortable accommodations, Appalachian Comfort Food — it's medicine for your soul.

"Enthusiasm, energy, and a zest for living, living life to it's fullest potential — I see it in these singers in their 60's thru 90's, and it is SO, SO inspiring! WOW! We have the best time together!"
Andrew Walker, Director

LET'S SING

Similar to that which Road Scholar and Elderhostel offered, we will enjoy a week of singing balancing inspiration, fun, with a touch of challenge. Each day provides a joyful, creative experience where music becomes community, and your passion is shared with kindred spirits.

CONTACT

Rebecca Mullins, 4H Center Events Coordinator: rebeccam1415@vt.edu / 276.676.6180
Andrew Walker, Director: ajw@ajwmusicservices.com / 407.619.0967

REGISTRATION:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf_jyRLDtLjhvhD8nA_6eSyfIkCVZWo9TZlmCos8foZv2jlew/viewform

For more information about the repertoire for this event, contact Blue Ridge AGO chapter member Philip Newton at signalphilip (@) gmail.com

SEPTEMBER 6, 2026

A QUARTET FROM

GALLUS CAMERATA

WILL JOIN ST. MARY'S TO OFFER SUNG LITURGIES IN HONOR OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. WITH PIECES SELECTED TO REFLECT THE SANCTITY OF THE PARISH NAMESAKE AND TO CELEBRATE THE UPCOMING FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF MARY,

THE ENSEMBLE WILL SING FOR

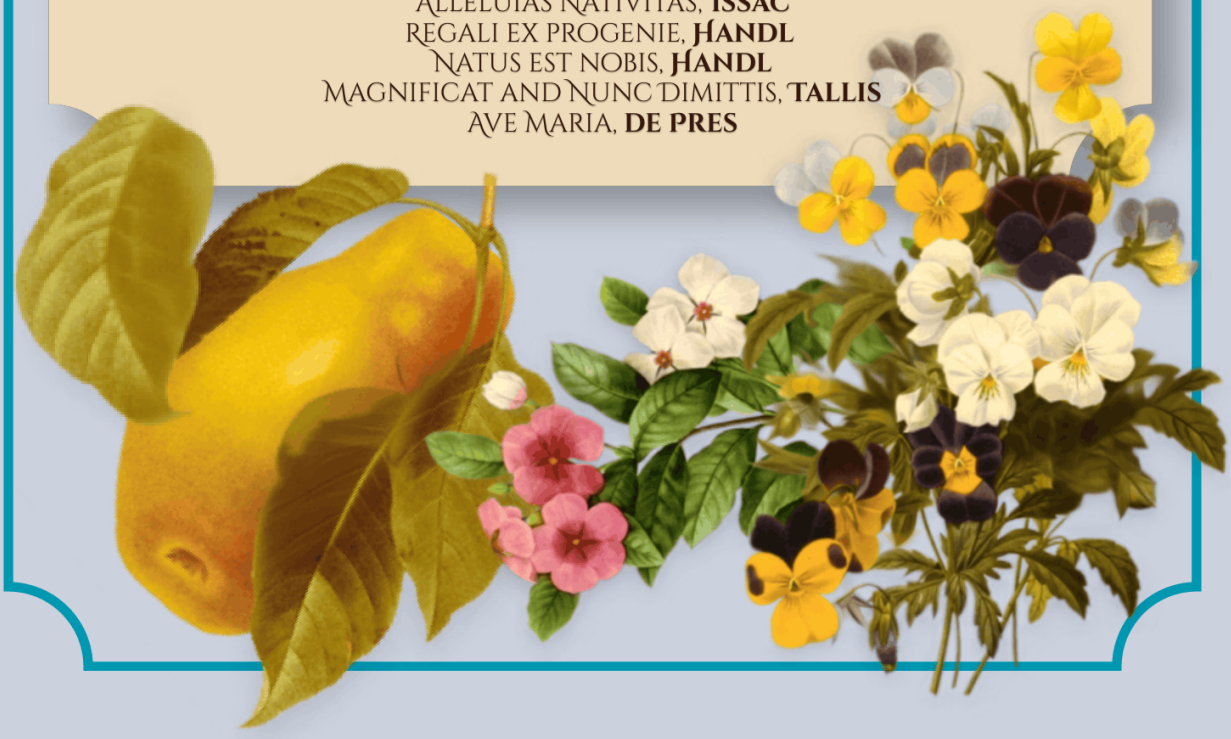
11:00AM RITE ONE HOLY EUCHARIST

&

4:00PM EVENSONG

MUSIC OFFERED:

AVE MARIA, **VICTORIA**
MISSA DE BEATA VIRGINE, **PALESTRINA**
ALLELUIAS NATIVITAS, **ISSAC**
REGALI EX PROGENIE, **HANDL**
NATUS EST NOBIS, **HANDL**
MAGNIFICAT AND NUNC DIMITTIS, **TALLIS**
AVE MARIA, **DE PRES**



GALLUS CAMERATA

IS A NEW CHORAL ENSEMBLE BASED OUT OF COLUMBIA SC AND FOUNDED IN DECEMBER 2024. GALLUS CAMERATA'S CORE MEMBERS REHEARSE AND PERFORM AS AN OCTET WHILE REGULARLY STRENGTHENING THEIR MUSICIANSHIP WITH THE COLLABORATION OF GUEST SINGERS AND CLINICIANS.

AN A CAPPELLA CHAMBER CHOIR, THE ENSEMBLE LEADS EACH OTHER WITHOUT CONDUCTOR OR INSTRUMENTS. AIMING TO DEMONSTRATE VALUES OF EXCELLENCE IN PERFORMANCE AND EQUITY IN OPERATION, THE GROUP'S PRACTICE IS BUILT ON A SHARED SENSE OF DUTY TOWARD THEIR COMMUNITIES AND AN AMBITION TO ENGAGE THEIR VOICES TO FIND FRESH, BOLD PATHS TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE.



MUSICAL TERMS

ALLEREGRETTO: When you're 16 measures into the piece and suddenly realize you set a too-fast tempo

ANGUS DEI: To play, with a divinely beefy tone

A PATELLA: Accompanied by knee-slapping

APOLOGGIATURA: A composition that you regret playing

APPROXIMATURA: A series of notes not intended by the composer, yet played with an "I meant to do that" attitude

APPROXIMENTO: A musical entrance that is somewhere in the vicinity of the correct pitch

DILL PICCOLINI: An exceedingly small wind instrument that plays only sour notes

FERMANTRA: A note held over and over and over and over and...

FIDDLER CRABS: Grumpy string players

FLUTE FLIES: Those tiny insects that bother musicians in outdoor gigs

FRUGALHORN: A sensible and inexpensive brass instrument

GAUL BLATTER: A French horn player

GREGORIAN CHAMP: The title bestowed upon the monk who can hold a note the longest

PLACEBO DOMINGO: A faux tenor
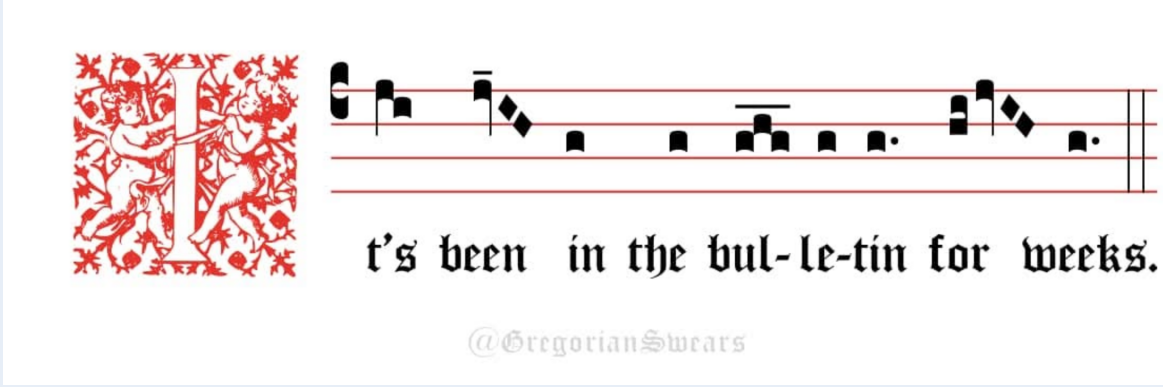
SPRITZICATO: An indication to string instruments to produce a bright and bubbly sound

TEMPO TANTRUM: What an elementary school orchestra is having when it's not following the conductor





Is your membership current? In addition to the superlative programming you've come to expect from the Blue Ridge chapter, your membership includes a subscription to *The American Organist*, the **glossiest professional publication in the lower 48!** Please visit www.agohq.org to check on the status of your membership, or contact chapter registrar Tom Bernard: Tbernardjr1949 (at) gmail.com



Josh Goforth & Bryan McDowell

Josh Goforth grew up in Madison County, North Carolina surrounded by the music and stories of his ancestors. He is a highly accomplished storyteller and oldtime, bluegrass, and swing musician playing close to 20 instruments. Fiddler, vocalist, and master of stringed instruments, **Bryan McDowell's** reputation is solidifying as a musician of great interest on the acoustic scene. His talents have made their way onto several recordings garnering IBMA awards and projects receiving Grammy nominations.



Together, Josh Goforth and Bryan McDowell bring the spirit and energy of the music of western North Carolina to the stage through intriguing storytelling, blazing instrumentals, heartfelt songs, and a whirlwind of instrument switching. They grew up in the greater Asheville area with the same musical influences. Their show will have you tapping your toes and singing out loud as they bring you on a musical journey to the southern Appalachian Mountains.

August 29 · 4:00pm

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

Free and Open to the Public

Open Positions

Brevard First United Methodist Church is seeking a part-time choir accompanist to serve our music ministries. The ideal candidate would be an experienced accompanist capable of sight-reading and familiar with United Methodist hymnody. The ability to accompany on the organ and a music degree is desired, but not required. Availability for regular Wednesday night choir rehearsals and Sunday morning services occasional rehearsals with other ensembles is necessary. Interested applicants should email questions and/or resume to musicdirector@brevardfumc.org



First Church of Christ, Scientist, Asheville
First Church of Christ, Scientist in downtown Asheville - 64 North French Broad, needs an organist to begin in October. The services are held from 10:30- 11:30 on Sunday mornings. The job includes: 7 min. prelude, 3 hymns, accompany a soloist, 2 min. collection and 5 min. postlude. Compensation negotiable based on experience. Would even consider two organists, each taking 2 or 3 Sundays a month.

St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Brevard
St Philip's Episcopal Church in Brevard, North Carolina 0is seeking an Organist and Collaborator to nurture music ministry. St. Philip's is the only Episcopal Church in our county and is composed of a wonderful mix of retirees and families who bring a great diversity in musical tastes and sensibilities. The Organist will be adept at employing music in liturgy. This person will work in tandem with the Director of Music Ministry. Important to the position is a well-versed background in the literature of choral music and the ability and willingness to accompany and rehearse church music of various styles from the Anglican tradition and beyond. We seek a creative and professional musician with inclusive tastes and a passion for encouraging active participation in the liturgical life of the congregation.



Job Summary: As a partner in ministry, the Organist will promote the Vision and Mission of St Philip's Episcopal Church and strive to embody Christian values and be a friendly, welcoming presence to all who come in contact with St. Philip's Church. The Organist is charged with assisting the Director of Music Ministry in the planning and implementation of music in worship programming at St. Philip's Episcopal Church. This collaboration will facilitate active participation of the congregation in the liturgical life of the church and to encompass the wide tradition of sacred music. Reports to the Director of Music Ministry 15-18 hrs /week Salary: $30,000 annually. If interested, please contact Brittnee Siemon, Director of Music Ministry, at music@stphilipsbrevardnc.org.

Substitutes Available

The Blue Ridge AGO maintains a list of chapter members and friends who are available to substitute in the western North Carolina area. Please contact newsletter editor David Anderson for more information: cantordavid@stmarkslutheran.net

Blue Ridge AGO Chapter

www.blueridgeago.org

Founded
August 15, 2013

OFFICERS

Brennan Szafron
Dean

Ed Hauck
Sub Dean

Thomas Bernard
Treasurer and Registrar

Daniel Gainey
Secretary

Burton Bumgarner
Hunter Holbert
James Taulbee
James Cassarino
Members at Large

Timothy Shepard
Past Dean

David Anderson
Newsletter Editor

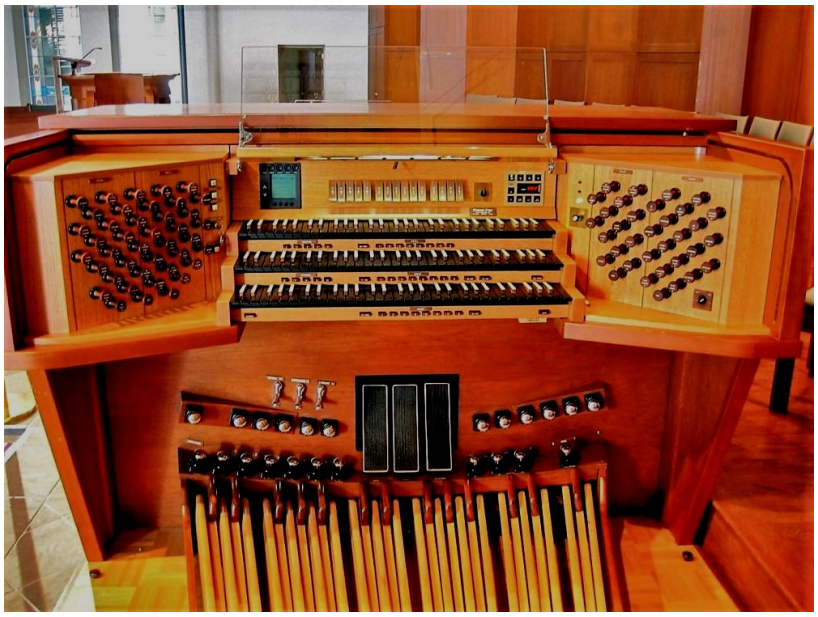
American Guild of Organists
National Office:
475 Riverside Drive
Suite 1260
New York, NY 10115
www.agohq.org

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 United Methodist Church, Waynesville NC



Casavant Frères opus 3774 · 3 manuals, 50 ranks

Come hear this organ at our September 12 event!



"Seventy-five trombones? Is this your first time planning a big parade?"