

American Guild of Organists Blue Ridge Chapter

January 2026

www.blueridgeago.org



From the Dean

Happy new year everyone. 2026 is off and running. I have some good news, good news.

We, the members and friends of BRAGO, have surpassed **our fund raising challenge/goal** and passed \$500 the day before Christmas Eve. Thank you to all who were able to give. I realize December has many extra expenses. We acknowledge and thank our contributors elsewhere in the newsletter, with many thanks. It is never too late to give the chapter a high-five and contribute something when you are feeling flush. Your support is crucial to our success, and very much appreciated when it comes.

There's more good news. The merger of the Western North Carolina and Blue Ridge chapters has been officially approved by National Council and we begin the process of dotting the "i's" and crossing the "t's" at the council's guidance. We begin this new year stronger than ever!

Our next meeting is Saturday, January 24 at the home of member John Beaver in South Asheville. There is complete information and invitation elsewhere. I look forward to learning about Hauptwerk, catching up with colleagues, and making new friends. I hear there is homemade cheesecake, too. Thanks, John, for opening your home and being a loyal BRAGO member for many years. I encourage our members to invite a friend who might become a friend of our work and mission. Go tell it on the mountain that music is sounding in the mountains!



Tim Shepard, Dean

**A big thank you to these members and friends who contributed to our challenge grant. We exceeded our goal and raised \$775!
Donors as of January 7 are:**

Thomas Bernard, Denise Bernard, Tim Shepard, Robert Kinter, Brennan Szafron, Michael Helman, Lesley Bush, Michael Brannon, David Anderson, Scott Coates, JC Cecconi, Ann Mcalpin, Paul Wolfe, Sharon Boone, Rhonda Furr, Kathryn Rivers, John Beaver



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF
St. John in the Wilderness
FRIENDS OF MUSIC & THE ARTS SERIES

CHARLES FROST ORGANIST AND **LUCY OWEN HOYT** SOPRANO

Join us for an afternoon of organ music featuring African-American composers and spirituals.



**SUNDAY,
JANUARY 18**



4:00PM



CHURCH

1895 GREENVILLE HWY,
FLAT ROCK



**FREE
CONCERT**

DONATIONS
GRATEFULLY
ACCEPTED
TO SUPPORT THE MUSIC
& ARTS SERIES



LEARN MORE

www.stjohnflatrock.org

Hauptwerk Organ Demonstration

Our next chapter event will be held on **Saturday January 24th @ 4 p.m.** at the home of John Beaver in South Asheville. John has graciously offered his home to demonstrate his “Hauptwerk” model digital organ. Digital organs using computer monitors are becoming increasingly common. Not only will John offer a demonstration; he will provide cheesecake along with hot and cold drinks. This promises to be a lovely way to spend a Saturday afternoon. All are welcome!

1010 Windsor Drive · Asheville, NC 28803



Blue Ridge AGO Members' Recital

February 15 · 3:00pm

First United Methodist Church, Hendersonville NC

Casavant Opus 3124 · 3 manuals, 43 ranks

Save the Date!

An extraordinary weekend with Wesley Hall · March 21-22

<https://www.wesleyharrisonhall.com>



www.blueridgeago.org

This monthly feature from the Blue Ridge AGO explores ways that our organization provides resources for your real-world challenges. Get ready to get practical with:

SOS - Someone Offers Solutions!

with Dr. Rhonda Furr

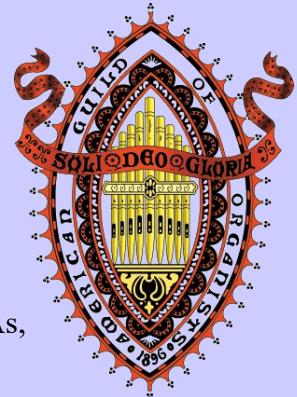
This year you were hit with an unexpected tax bill because of extra income related to your part-time (or sub) organist job. You want to establish some new habits that will make it better going forward. Where do you turn for help?

Check out this AGO HQ Webinar:

Tax Tips for Part-Time and Substitute Organists

As tax time approaches, Kenna Payne and Jeffrey Verkuilen, both organists AND CPAs, offer helpful tips for both part-time and substitute church organists.

<https://youtu.be/sxDOdLPByL0?si=uolpSgZEPfFm3oa9>



Is your membership current? In addition to the excellent programming you've come to expect from the Blue Ridge chapter, your membership includes a subscription to *The American Organist*, **the glossiest magazine east and west of the Rio Grande**. Please visit www.agohq.org to check on the status of your membership, or contact chapter registrar Tom Bernard: Tbernardjr1949 (at) gmail.com



Open Positions

Abiding Savior Lutheran Church, Fairview NC

Lutheran (ELCA) congregation in Fairview, N.C. seeking pianist to support Sunday morning worship.

Abiding Savior Lutheran Church in Fairview is searching for a pianist (or pianist/guitarist) to play for our services Sunday mornings at 11 a.m. Worship is casual and cozy with an average attendance of 20 people. Worship music consists of a mix of contemporary and traditional music, generally this is a prelude, three hymns/songs, a psalm refrain and postlude as well as some liturgical service music. We welcome all types of people to Abiding Savior and are an LGBTQ+ affirming church. The accompanist will work with the interim pastor to choose songs and play on Sunday mornings, as well as Christmas Eve and Wednesday evening services during Lent.

Qualifications

- Skilled piano player
- Guitar playing would be a definite plus but is not required
- Experience with church music - both traditional and contemporary – is preferred
- Small church experience or desire to work in a small community preferred
- Flexibility, sight-reading and willingness to collaborate are desired

For more information or to apply for this position, please email president@abidingsaviorlutheranchurch.org

First Presbyterian Church, Greeneville, Tennessee (Presbyterian Church, USA)

First Presbyterian – Greeneville is endeavoring to hire an organist for the two traditional services each week. Salary: \$ 17,000 per year, 10 hours per week, contractual part-time employee, under the supervision of the Director of Music. Responsibilities for this part-time position include providing accompaniment for our choir and congregation as well as voluntaries during services. Music is one of the hallmarks of our congregation and we support efforts to continually grow this ministry. Music is a tool for leading people to Christ, for strengthening our faith, for helping persons experience true worship, and for glorifying God.

Qualifications Include: A high level of musical talent, proficiency, education, and experience playing the organ in liturgical services is required. Proficiency playing the piano is required. A Bachelor's degree in organ, piano, or sacred music is preferred. Five years' experience as an organist in a liturgical, mainline protestant church is preferred.

Applications should be sent to the attention of the Organist Search Committee at fpcstc@gmail.com. The church telephone number is (423) 638-4533. For more information on our church community, or to stream a live service, please visit us at www.firstpresgreeneville.org.

A candidate qualified as an organist, and also as a choir director, may apply for a part-time (20 hours/week) combined position: Director of Music. Please contact fpcstc@gmail.com for the description of the choir-related and administrative duties for the combined position.

First United Methodist Church, Waynesville, NC

Waynesville First United Methodist Church is seeking a passionate and skilled musician to lead our Chancel Choir. We are looking for a leader who can balance musical excellence with a heart for ministry, encouraging volunteers while maintaining high standards. The position is part-time and includes directing the Chancel Choir on Sunday mornings throughout the year and leading Wednesday evening rehearsals September through May. Select, prepare, and direct the chancel choir, collaborate with the Pastor and/or Worship Committee, recruit, encourage, and support volunteer choir members of varying skill levels, work closely with the church organist, prepare/direct special services such as Christmas Eve and Holy Week, oversee the management of the music library and annual music budget. Qualifications: A degree in Music, experience conducting an adult choir within a church setting, strong conducting skills, excellent communication and interpersonal skills, a commitment to Christian faith and to the mission, vision, and values of our church. Approximately 20 hours per week which are flexible based on the liturgical seasons; \$20,000-25,000.



For more details and how to apply: <https://tinyurl.com/mry2uf46>

First United Methodist Church, Brevard, NC

First United Methodist Church of Brevard seeks a full-time Organist and Director of Music to lead and enrich our vibrant and diverse music ministry. Our congregation averages around 200 multi-generational worshippers each Sunday, united by our mission: "We are Christ's people, drawn together in love, moving out to serve." The Organist/Director of Music provides leadership for all musical activities of the church. The Director oversees and collaborates with choirs, instrumental ensembles, handbell groups, and the praise band, fostering an inclusive and spiritually enriching worship environment. The ideal candidate will uphold and support the beliefs and worship practices of the United Methodist Church. Brevard FUMC has a long-standing reputation for musical excellence within both the church and the community. Our sanctuary houses a three-manual Schantz pipe organ (28 ranks), enhanced with a Festival Trumpet rank and updated electrical system, supported by an endowed foundation. A two-manual tracker organ graces our chapel, and other instruments include a harpsichord, handbells, Orff instruments, and more. Our praise band leads the contemporary worship service each Sunday. Learn more about our music ministry at brevardfumc.org.

Required Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in Church or Sacred Music (or equivalent); strong organ and keyboard proficiency; substantial experience directing choral ensembles; demonstrated leadership and supervisory skills; ability to build relationships and collaborate with musicians of all ages. Preferred: Graduate degree in Organ, Church, or Sacred Music; experience directing handbell and/or instrumental ensembles; familiarity with contemporary worship and praise music. Salary: \$50,000-\$70,000, commensurate with experience and skills; health insurance; retirement plan; paid vacation and sick leave

To apply, please submit: a cover letter including a brief personal statement of faith; a résumé highlighting relevant experience.

Email materials or request a detailed job description at admin@brevardfumc.org

Blue Ridge AGO Chapter

www.blueridgeago.org

Founded
August 15, 2013

OFFICERS

Timothy Shepard
Dean

Brennan Szafron
Sub Dean

Thomas Bernard
Treasurer and Registrar

JC Cecconi
Secretary

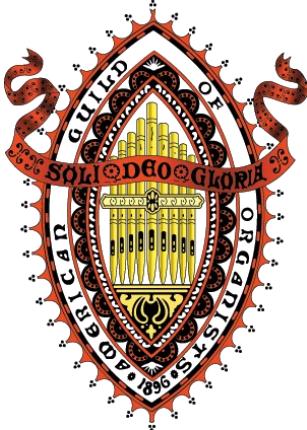
Rhonda Furr
Hunter Holbert
Michael Helman
Tate Addis
Members at Large

Vance Yoder
Past Dean

David Anderson
Newsletter Editor

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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 United Methodist Church, Waynesville NC
Casavant Frères Opus 3774, 1998 · 50 ranks, 3 manuals

