

# American Guild of Organists Blue Ridge Chapter

## May 2025



[www.blueridgeago.org](http://www.blueridgeago.org)

## Dinner, Meeting, and Ken Cowan Recital

**May 8 · First UMC, Brevard**  
5:30pm chapter dinner · 7:30pm 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 1<sup>st</sup>** to Tom Bernard by text/call to 706-593-0104 or email [tbernardjr@reagan.com](mailto: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.



## Chapter Breakfast

May 9 · 9:30am

All chapter members are invited to have breakfast at the Mills River Restaurant on May 9 at 9:30am. We will be joined by AGO Chief Membership Officer Elizabeth George for conversation about the organ.



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.



# Blue Ridge Ringers 30<sup>th</sup> 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.



## ORGAN RECITAL

DAVID HIGGS,  
ORGANIST

Thursday, May 15th;  
7:00 p.m.

No tickets required.  
Candlelight reception to  
follow in Stillwell Hall.



Inaugural concert of the Linda Lassiter Hill Organ Recital Series

St. James Episcopal Church  
766 N. Main Street  
Downtown Hendersonville, NC 28792  
828-694-6925  
[stjamesepiscopal.com](http://stjamesepiscopal.com)



# David Higgs Organ Recital

Inaugural Concert of the Linda Lassiter Hill Organ Recital Series

St James Episcopal Church · Thursday, May 15 · 7:00 pm

no tickets required



One of America's leading concert organists, David Higgs is the Minehan Family Professor of Organ and Chair of the Organ Department at the Eastman School of Music. He performs extensively throughout the United States and abroad and has inaugurated many important new instruments including Meyerson Symphony Center, Dallas, St. Albans Cathedral, England, Church of St. Ignatius Loyola New York City, and most recently, Christ Church Cathedral Cincinnati. For over twenty years he performed annual holiday organ concerts to capacity audiences at Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco and at Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. His performances with numerous ensembles include Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Orpheus Ensemble, Chanticleer, and Empire Brass.

Mr. Higgs appears at organ festivals and competitions around the world and often performs at national and regional conventions of the American Guild of Organists.

In 2010 he performed the inaugural St. Cecilia Recital, a series endowed by Marianne Webb that presents world-renowned concert organists in recital during the biennial National Conventions of the American Guild of Organists. In 2018 he performed several concerts in France, including a solo recital at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, and as guest teacher at the Paris Conservatoire.

In addition to his significant performing career, Mr. Higgs has distinguished himself as a pedagogue. He was appointed to the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music upon graduation from that institution and has been a member of the faculty of the Eastman School of Music since 1992. His students have won prizes in prestigious international competitions and hold important positions in leading academic and religious institutions. He has recorded for Delos International, Pro Organo, Arsis, Loft, and Gothic records.

Mr. Higgs' recital is the inaugural program in a new series of annual recitals featuring nationally known organists. This series is endowed by Linda Hill, a retired organist/choirmaster who is a member of the St. James Choir and one of the choir's librarians. The series is dedicated in memory of Roy Lassiter, Jr., Linda's father, who encouraged her to study organ; and in memory of William J. Hill, Linda's late husband, for his unfailing support of her musical career.

The organ at St. James is a Harrison & Harrison from Durham, England and was installed in 1999. Most recently, the organ was updated with new Walker digital sounds including harp, chimes, celesta, and four 32-foot pedal stops. Other additions include a new electrical system, sequencer, MIDI recording and playback, and single-person tuning capability. The organ console will be moved for Mr. Higgs' recital so that all may see him play. No tickets are required; an elegant candlelight reception will follow in Stillwell Hall.

Brad Gee, Director of Music/Organist  
St. James Episcopal Church · 766 N. Main Street  
Hendersonville, NC 28792 · 828-694-6925



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](http://agohq.org) to check on the status of your membership, or contact chapter registrar Tom Bernard: [tbernard@reagan.com](mailto: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](mailto:cantordavid@stmarkslutheran.net)



## 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.



## THE PREPARATIONS FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER



WERE STARTING TO TAKE A TOLL ON THE  
PARISH ORGANIST

[memegenerator.net](http://memegenerator.net)



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

**Touche! A Collection of Toccatas:**

[http://sacredmusicdownloads.com/Catalog/Productdisplay.asp?item\\_number=AC-OR080](http://sacredmusicdownloads.com/Catalog/Productdisplay.asp?item_number=AC-OR080)

**SacredMusicDownloads.com**



# 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

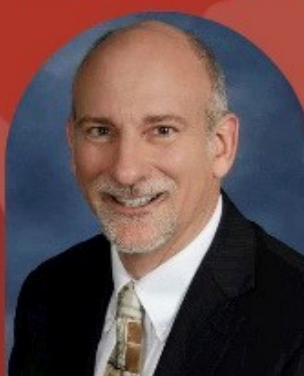
*Adult Choral*



**ROBERT  
HOBBY**

TRINITY ENGLISH  
LUTHERAN  
FORT WAYNE, IN

*Handbells*



**ED  
TOMPKINS**

ST JOHN IN THE  
WILDERNESS  
EPISCOPAL,  
FLAT ROCK, NC

*Chaplain*



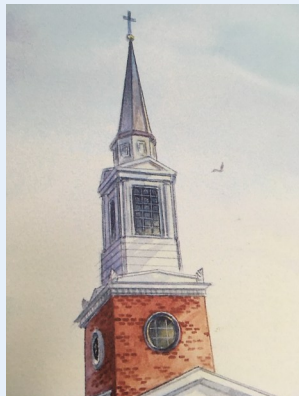
**PASTOR  
VERN KINARD**

BETHLEHEM  
LUTHERAN,  
HICKORY, NC

**LUTHERIDGE.ORG/ADULT-MUSIC-WEEK**

## 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.blueridgeago.org), or email newsletter editor David Anderson [cantordavid \(at\) stmarkslutheran.net](mailto:cantordavid@stmarkslutheran.net) for more information.

A scenic photograph of a mountain range with rolling hills and valleys, partially covered in green trees and shrubs. The sky is blue with some white clouds. The website address is overlaid on the bottom of the image.

[www.blueridgeago.org](http://www.blueridgeago.org)



# Blue Ridge AGO Chapter

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Founded  
August 15, 2013

## OFFICERS

**Vance Yoder**  
Dean

**Thomas Bernard**  
Sub Dean, Treasurer  
and Registrar

**JC Cecconi**  
Secretary

**Rhonda Furr**  
**Brennan Szafron**  
**Hunter Holbert**  
**Michael Helman**  
Members at Large

**Tim Shepard**  
Past Dean

**David Anderson**  
Newsletter Editor

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National Office:  
475 Riverside Drive  
Suite 1260  
New York, NY 10115  
[www.agohq.org](http://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

Brevard—Davidson River Presbyterian Church, Brevard NC  
Cornel Zimmer Organ Builders Opus 21, 1997



Originally Casavant Frères Ltée. (Opus 3082, 1970)

