

# The Treasure Coast Chapter of The American Guild of Organists



Monthly Newsletter

August 2022

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



After moving to Port St Lucie in 2014, I felt that God was calling me to return to church music. Since I had just retired, I knew that subbing was the answer.

For one thing, no matter the church or the denomination, it's all about the people you meet. Secondly, until I acquired my practice organ, it gave me a way to continue my practice time. This month I thought I'd give some tips on subbing:

It's always good to visit the church service prior to subbing, if possible.

As a sub, your duty is to play the service without any radical departures from what they've come to expect. Remember, you're not applying for a job. Never say anything negative about the current organist.

Try to get access to the organ prior to the service you're playing. Most organs are in some sort of disrepair and knowing what works and what doesn't is important.

Touch base with the priest/pastor prior to the service, if you haven't already done so. And dress for the service. I wear a white dress shirt and tie. And polished shoes. They notice and you'll get called back.

Once I was asked to play a Pentecostal funeral and one of their hymns was stuck in my notebook when I played at an Episcopal church the next weekend. I just needed a little fill in so I used the Pentecostal hymn, after which the priest came over to the organ and asked that we use that for the recessional. After initial panic, I found something similar in their hymnbook and all went unnoticed. Moral: Stick with the denomination's hymn book.

(Subbing)

Try not to make any changes to the bench, pistons, etc. If you adjust anything, put it back the way you found it. I once taped the floor under the bench so that I was sure to return the bench to the correct position.

Payment should be discussed when first contacted to sub. There should be no surprises later. I take into consideration the church. Once I was contacted to play a month during Christmas at a small Baptist church of about 20. I was free, so I was willing to accept what they could afford.

Don't be afraid to say "No, sorry." In trying to accommodate two churches, I accidentally overbooked and it felt terrible to have to decline one and explain the error.

Be sure you include your contact information in our TCCAGO directory for subbing. Even if you have a regular church, you might be available for funerals and weddings.

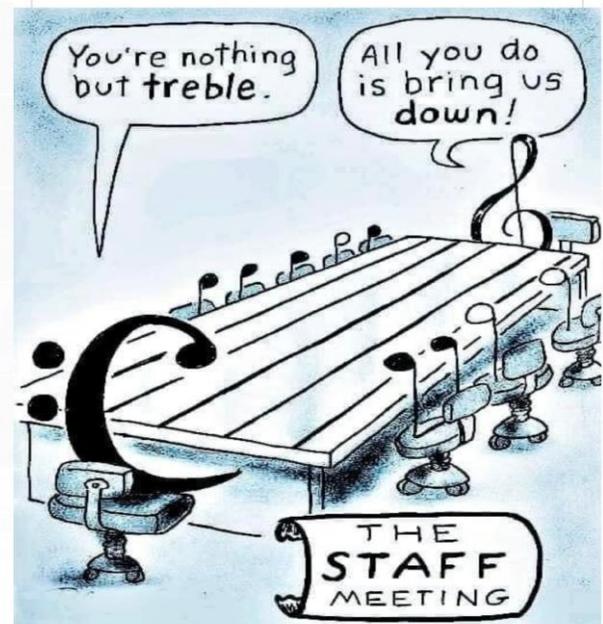
If you're the organist who has called someone to sub it's always respectful to tidy up the console. It's your office, if you will; and leaving used tissues, empty communion cups, and even full ashtrays is a no-no. (Jack VanderPlate once found an ashtray full of butts in the organ bench).

It's also wise to have a notebook laid out with everything for the service in order. At least give the sub a run down of the service and the hymn accompaniments. If there's a Cantor, set up rehearsal time, if necessary. Same with choirs.

Subbing is so necessary. Finding a good sub has become more and more challenging. Church musicians need time off to rest and recharge. And in case of illness, it's nice to be able to call someone; and it's really important to be able to call someone you trust and will show up. I even showed up once with two broken ribs. Don't ask.

Cheers! Until next time.

Steve Giddens, Dean TCCAGO



## MEET YOUR FELLOW TCCAGOers

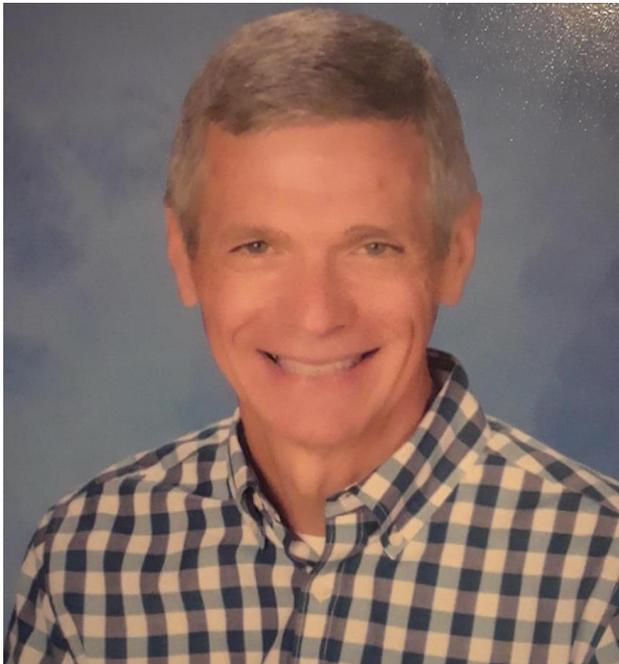
### Jerry Myers

Jerry Myers grew up in York, PA—Amish country. He began studying piano at age 7, and was fascinated by the home organs he saw. He did not hear a real church organ until much later.

In high school years he studied classical piano, and organ—mostly

of the theater organ variety.

Jerry is a graduate of the Grand Rapids School of Bible and Music in Grand Rapids, MI. (This college had purchased the old Franklin campus of Calvin University of which your editor is an alumnus. So we shared some fun stories about the organs on that campus.)



During his time there, Jerry met and studied briefly with Harold DeCou and frequented the Roaring 20's Restaurant with its Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Organ.

Jerry has owned several Allen theatre organs and is a member of the American Theatre Organ Society.

Grace College in Winona Lake, IN came next with a major in Music Education. Jerry holds a Master's degree from Ball State University in organ where he studied with Kirby Koriath.

Jerry served full time as Director of

Music and Organist at churches in Pontiac, Michigan and Wooster, Ohio. During this time he earned a Master's degree in Sacred Music and Organ from the University of Michigan studying with Michele Johns and Marilyn Mason.

Following his studies in Ann Arbor, Jerry moved to Atlanta where opportunities were abundant. These included staff organist at the 5,000 seat Fox Theatre and serving as accompanist for a community chorus on their tour of Italy.

Then to historic Savannah, GA. He was there ten years, playing Schlueter Opus 1 at First Presbyterian Church, and also playing for First Presbyterian Church of Hilton Head Island. (cf. our July newsletter for information about the new Schlueter organ in Fort Pierce.)

Seven years ago, Jerry retired from Georgia public schools and moved to Ft. Lauderdale. He just completed teaching six years in the Broward County school system. He played for New Presbyterian Church (break off of Coral Ridge) on a wonderful 4 manual Walker organ. (pictured here)



After New Presbyterian, he was Director of Music at First Presbyterian

Church of Hollywood, FL. Jerry was active in the Ft. Lauderdale chapter of the AGO where he served as dean.

Jerry recently moved to Port St Lucie and will begin his 32<sup>nd</sup> year as an elementary school music teacher at Savanna Ridge School.

His hobbies are bicycling, walking, running and jet skiing.

Jerry enjoys church music where the musicians lead people in meaningful worship. He especially appreciates organists leading congregational singing with imaginative and sensitive hymn introductions, registration appropriate to the words, alternate harmonizations, and interludes.

We are delighted to welcome Jerry as a member of the Treasure Coast Chapter.



### **THANK YOU FOR BEING AN AGO MEMBER**

Is your AGO membership current? To manage your membership, renew, change your address, find an AGO member, and more just go to the national website:

(<https://www.agohq.org>)

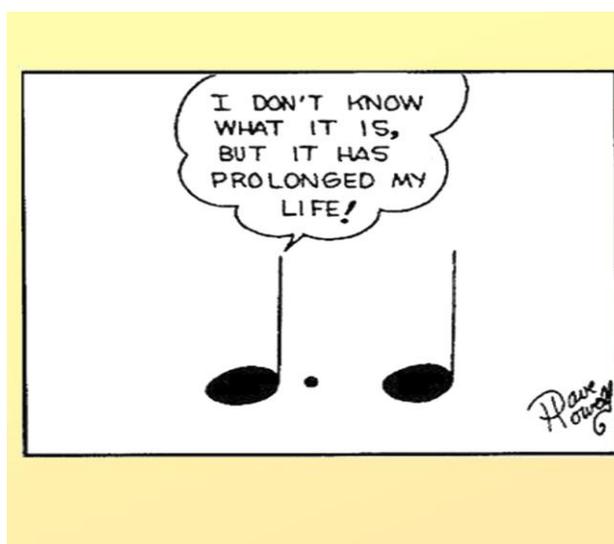
If you need assistance with your membership, please call 212-870-2310.



### **Looking to apply for, or post a job?**

The AGO maintains the largest jobs board in the profession for organists, choral conductors, and music directors. One hundred jobs are currently posted. AGO members can search jobs and/or create an online profile with a résumé to attract the attention of potential employers. To begin, go to:

<https://www.agohq.org/careers/positions-available/>



### **Some Thoughts on Singing**

Songs (Psalms) accounts for over 7 percent of the Old Testament. In addition to the Psalms are other song and poetry focused books such as "Song of Solomon," and "Ecclesiastes." In the New Testament, we have song lyrics recorded in Revelation chapters 5, 7 and 15. Matthew 26:30 mentions Jesus and the disciples singing; and the apostles sing in Acts 16:25.

Many people also consider Mary's "Magnificat" in Luke 1:46-55 and the

angels' announcement in Luke 2:14 to be songs. The New Testament church is commanded to communicate with each other "with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs from the Spirit. "Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19).

The first reference to a musician in the Bible is in Genesis 4:21. Jubal was the fourth generation from Adam through Cain and is recorded as "the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe."

The question of whether or not Jubal played a full rank of pipes is unanswered.



### Organ Trivia

Q: What types of pipes require the most air to sound?

A: Flue pipes. The broader the scale, the more air they require. For example, both string and flute pipes are flues. But the string pipe, being of a narrower scale than the flute, does not require as much air.



*American Guild of*  
**ORGANISTS**

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