

A Letter From the Dean

Dear Members,

Happy August! Your board met last week, in person, on Gordon's deck, (with our masks, and no snacks or drinks), to discuss the upcoming program year. I'm happy to say that we came up with a few ideas we think just might work, in spite of the craziness of these times. I'll share more specifics later in this newsletter.

We also agreed that most everyone feels rather overwhelmed with life in these current times. We all have to sit in front of the computer more than we'd like. We all miss so many things that just can't happen right now. And we're all trying to figure out how to make it through, with enough of the things we need to keep us sane. Hopefully your AGO has a few of those things we can offer in the upcoming program year, without adding more stress or obligations. We're going to try and keep it doable this year, for everyone's sake!

Member News –

Area organists and friends of the chapter Aaron Goodyke and Kristin Baron were married on July 31 at Second Reformed Church in Zeeland, with only family and close friends present, due to COVID restrictions. Huw Lewis and David Heinze were organists for the ceremony. We wish Kristin and Aaron much happiness (and music together) in the coming years!

Julia reports that her wrists are feeling better and she's making progress on the recovery from her double carpal tunnel surgery in June.

Jane reports that Harderwyk has begun in person, inside services again. She says the congregation sits distanced from one another and wears masks, though they also sing the hymns together. (Huh...)

Virtual Concerts-

For those of you who missed the online AGO Organ Fest concerts in July, they are still available for viewing on the national website. I myself eventually got around to watching them all, and found them quite enjoyable and varied.

If you are interested in watching my livestream concert from July, it is also still available. On the Hope Church Facebook page, click videos, and look for the one with the camera shooting straight at the console. Thanks to all who tuned in that night, or since then.

If you are looking for other organ concerts online, the famous Methuen Memorial Organ in Methuen, MA has been livestreaming their summer series this year for the first time. (I know, because I was supposed to play in August...) If you'd like to check out this iconic instrument in a stunning space - <https://www.youtube.com/c/methuenmemorialmusichall>

New Organist in Town!

I've heard through the grapevine that Our Lady of the Lake has hired a new music director, a young woman fresh from Notre Dame University, with a masters in sacred music and organ performance. (Fascinating, since in 1989, the new music director at OLL also came from Notre Dame – none other than Steve Jenkins!) Audrey Thomas will begin playing the weekend of Aug 15. Hopefully we'll all have a chance to welcome her to the chapter and Holland soon.

Welcome new board members-

Thanks so much to Karen Howells, our new board secretary, and Alex Cross, our new student member, for joining the board. You may remember Alex from our first meeting last fall at Hope Church. Our thanks to outgoing board member Roberta Kraft. Also, thank you all for your participation in the board elections this spring. It was great to have so many people voting, and thanks to Gordon for setting up a new system that worked so well for us.

Organ available-

A member of my church has an organ available – it belonged to her mother, who was an AGO member and church organist. It is a two manual Rodgers, with full pedalboard, from the 90's. She is happy to give it to anyone who can take it away for her! If you have any thoughts on people or places (students, organist who can't practice easily during COVID, retirement homes with an organ on the way out?) who might be interested, please put them in touch with Lois Maassen, at lois.maassen@gmail.com

Program Year Sneak Peak (of course, everything subject to change)

+You may remember we had to postpone our spring events – Handbells with Larry and Carla Sue, as well as Music of Larry Visser. As soon as restrictions are loosened in our area, we hope to reschedule with Larry for his program at Second Reformed. Alex reports this was a particular draw for many of the Hope students.

+We hope that in September we can hold Larry and Carla's bell program outside at First Reformed, on their lawn. The scheduled date is the afternoon of September 27 with a rain date on October 4, the exact time TBA.

+The Grand Rapids chapter has asked if we'd be interested in being involved in a Virtual Masterclass they hope to organize with area chapters and teachers. So we'll be sending info about that out, as it evolves.

+Steve and I are hoping to put together some kind of virtual presentation on Organ Music of Black composers, specifically with a focus on repertoire one can play in church. This will happen in February, to coincide with Black History Month.

+And in November, we'd like to have some kind of Virtual Console-Side Chat (clever name, eh?), with a panel of area organists, followed by a general Q and A together. Our theme will be – What are YOU doing at church this Christmas!? This will be a time to share ideas, and hear how colleagues are planning to deal with the trickiest Christmas season at church that any of us has experienced.

Chapter Directories-

In light of the current situation, our newsletter editor Paul is going to email us all an electronic copy of the directory this fall, instead of making paper ones and trying to pass them out as usual. If you really love your paper copy, you can always print it off yourself from the file he sends.

Hope you are getting outside lots to take advantage of the fresh air and sunshine these days, and finding ways to make and share music with those around you.

Best wishes,

Rhonda

Chapter Officers for 2020-2021

Dean - Rhonda Edgington

Sub-Dean - Linda Fulton

Secretary - Karen Howells

Treasurer - Gordon Bruns

Board Member - Rick Van Oss

Student Board Member - Alex Cross

Newsletter Editor - Paul Dalman

Website – hollandareaago.org

2020-2021 Calendar		
Sun Sep 27, afternoon time TBA (Rain date Oct 4)	Handbell Concert – Larry and Carla Sue	First Reformed Church lawn, Holland