

Lehigh Valley Chapter

American Guild of Organists

January 2026

www.lvago.org



Chapter Officers 2025-2026

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Executive Committee
Marisa Deshler (2026)
Jeffrey Raub (2026)
Charles Glandorf (2027)
Gary Raish (2027)
Robert Riday (2028)
Michael Fister (2028)

Notes from the Dean

There is something exciting about things that are new, isn't there? The sparkle of freshly fallen snow, the crispness of potato chips in a newly opened bag; the smell of a brand new car, the sunrise of a new day. We feel excitement and even a little apprehension about trying new adventures, tackling a new piece of music, recruiting a new singer. I think we in the church spend so much time helping our congregations recall what God has done in the distant past through his Son Jesus (and of course that remembering is vital to our faith), that we rarely lift our eyes and notice the new things God continually does in our lives. In Isaiah 43: 19, God says, "Behold, I am doing a new thing, now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" As we stand at the edge of this brand new year, my prayer for you is that you have the courage to be open to new experiences, new ideas, and even new ways of doing established things. May you regularly challenge that deadly phrase "But we always did it this way!" God has placed a creative spark in each of us - let's use it to improve the lives of our congregations and even change the world. Consider attending January Jumpstart, check out our excellent LVAGO programs coming up, and have a very Happy 2026!

God bless, Susan



Make Your New Year's Resolution to Attend and Support LVAGO Chapter Events!

Each month your LVAGO Board is planning exciting and interesting events for our chapter membership. From choral workshops and concerts to organ crawls and recitals, there is something for everyone. Invite a fellow musical friend or one of your choir members to join you for programs that will energize and inspire you. Mark your calendars now, and plan to reconnect with LVAGO friends this coming year!

JANUARY 17

LVAGO members are invited to attend the Philadelphia Chapter's annual January Jumpstart, a full day of workshops and concerts held at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church. Look for complete information in the article in this newsletter.

FEBRUARY 21

A choral workshop in observance of Black History Month will be presented by Dr. Derrick Thompson, Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at Kutztown University. The event will be held at St. John's Lutheran Church in Fullerton, beginning at 9:30 a.m. with hot beverages and light refreshments and concluding by 12:00 noon. You'll learn some new choral techniques and gain some insights into spirituals and gospel songs.

MARCH 22

A celebration of women composers, hearing organ works, choral anthems, hymns, and more, all composed by women, will help us observe Women's History Month. Gwyn Michel will be our host at College Hill Moravian Church in Bethlehem.

APRIL 25

Chapter members and friends will be on the road for an organ crawl, traveling to Philadelphia, the birthplace of our country's freedom. We'll travel by bus, enjoy a boxed lunch, and visit interesting venues and churches with fabulous organs, both new and old.

MAY 31

LVAGO member Luke DiGiacinto, currently pursuing studies at Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, will be our featured young artist recitalist at Christ Lutheran Church in Allentown. A banquet and annual meeting follows the recital.

LVAGO Organist Substitute List

If you would like to be included in the Organist Substitute List please forward your Name, Contact Information (phone/email) and Availability (Sundays, weekdays, etc) to Stephen Bueker, 2520 Clark Place, Easton, PA 18040; sfbueker@rcn.com.

Dale Bonenberger	Mon-Fri	917 328-9041
Ruthann Brandt	Mon-Sat	610 262-3304
Janice Butz	Mon -Fri	610 882-9388
Ellen Erb	Mon-Sat	570 350-0343
Charles Glandorf	Mon-Sat	610 416-1055
Eric Gombert	Mon-Sat	610 435-1641
Susan Hartney	Mon-Sat	610 360-6934
Joe Kaczmarek	Mon-Sat	484 433-4336
Jacqueline Kuba	Sun-Sat	570 386-4480
Michael Kuhnert	Mon-Sat	215 536-4345
Cristina Dinella	Mon-Sat	585-732-8017
Makowicz		
James Matz	Sun-Sat	610 367-8094
Linda Maule	Mon-Sat	610 258-5006
Richard McIntyre	Mon-Sat	908 283-4691
Jeffey Raub	Saturday	484 541-8322
Michael Seroka	Mon-Sat	570 516-7207
Barbara Thomson	Sun-Sat	908 591-4499
Bruce Tonkin	Sun-Sat	610 220-5457
Dennis Varley	Sun-Sat	610 739-3567
Matthew Wary	Mon-Sat	610 743-0921
Stephen Ziminsky	Mon-Fri	610 417-2669
Freida Zimmerman	Mon-Fri	610 381-3089

January Jumpstart

Saturday, January 17, 2026

8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

It's not too late to register for the Philadelphia Chapter's annual Jumpstart event! Travel with your LVAGO friends to enjoy a full-day organ music festival held at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church. The theme this year is From the Old World to the New: British and American Organs and Organ Music, featuring an array of concerts and workshops. Presenters are Jeffrey Gemmel on Moravian choral music, James Kealey on British organ music, and Douglas Reed on American organ music, with special premieres by Libby Larsen and Trevor Weston. This year, there will be a variety of Breakout Sessions that complement and contrast the day's opening worship service and its two organ recitals. Topics to be discussed in these sessions include Organ Preservation, The Composer's Process, British Organ Music for Manuals, Choir Tours, Tips and Tricks for the Substitute/Part-Time Organist, and a masterclass on American Repertoire. Coffee, tea, lunch and a free music exchange are included.

To register for the event, go to the Philadelphia AGO Chapter website at agophila.org. If you are interested in carpooling, please contact Jeffrey Raub at raubjeffery@gmail.com.



Newsletter Editor

Marta Oberlin, martasgig@gmail.com

Placement Service

Please visit the Placement page on www.lvago.org for information and the Placement Service Information Sheet.

Newsletter Deadline

(February issue) Saturday, January 24, 2025



JANUARY JUMPSTART 2026

Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026

8:00 AM - 5:30 PM

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church

AGO Philadelphia invites you to our biggest event of the year!

January JumpStart 2026, planned in conjunction with St. Andrew's Organ Week (Scotland) "From the Old World to the New," features a full day of concerts and workshops with an emphasis on British and American music.

Headline Presenters: Jeffrey Gemmell (Moravian choral music), James Kealey (British organ music) and Douglas Reed (American organ music).

Featuring:

- Moravian Singstunde (a worship service consisting primarily of hymns)
- Organ recitals including premieres by Libby Larsen and Trevor Weston
- Organ masterclass led by Douglas Reed
- Free music exchange

Plus workshops / panel discussions on:

- The Weekend Organist
- British Organ Music
- Creating Choral Synergy
- Taking Your Choir on Tour
- Historic Organ Preservation/Restoration
- The Composer's Process

FEES*:

- \$25 AGO Philadelphia Chapter member
- \$45 General
- \$25 Full-time Student (please bring your ID)

Included: Light breakfast, box lunch, and reception