



# Utah Valley Chapter American Guild of Organists

*The mission of the American Guild of Organists is to enrich lives through organ and choral music.*

## Chapter Officers

### Dean

Sheri Peterson  
sheri.peterson@gmail.com

### Sub-Dean

Jack Stoneman  
jackstoneman@byu.edu

### Registrar & Treasurer

David Chamberlin  
david@chamberlinmusic.com

### Secretary

Jennifer Morgan  
MusicalMom@gmail.com

### Newsletter Editor

Miranda Wilcox  
miranda\_wilcox@byu.edu

### Web Master

DeeAnn Stone  
ddstone@renewamerica.us

### Historian

Judy Wright  
jjswright1027@gmail.com

### Education

Lori Serr, CAGO  
ljserr@yahoo.com

### Publicity

Mark Clark  
mclark@novell.com

### Photographer

Kari Nay  
2karinay@gmail.com

### BYU Student Representative

Kymerly Stone  
kym.stone21@gmail.com

### Members-at-Large

Florence Hawkinson  
wardorganist@gmail.com

Carol Dean  
carolorg1111@gmail.com

Linda Rehart  
lindarehart@juno.com

Lella Pomeroy  
lellasplace@gmail.com

## The Dean's Message

February 2014

Dear Members and Friends,

Recently, as I was going through past issues of *The American Organist*, for a school project, I stumbled upon articles pertaining to the 1996 centennial celebration of the American Guild of Organists. I saw many fascinating articles, but one in particular caught my eye. It was an article that talked about the founding of the AGO. I learned some very interesting facts. Some of you are probably already familiar with the AGO's founding, but I would like to share a few things for the benefit of those who aren't familiar with it.

In 1894 Gerrit Smith, organist of the South Dutch Reformed Church in New York City, became interested in the Royal College of Organists. The British had founded the RCO thirty years earlier to provide advancement and training. Smith gathered information about the RCO to share with his colleagues. On February 3, 1896 clergy and organists met to discuss the forming of the American Guild of Organists. Eleven days later another meeting was held, and the American Guild of Organists was officially formed on April 13, 1896.

The forming of the AGO during this time period seemed of even greater significance to me when placed in a historical perspective. As the article pointed out:

In the music world, Franck and Tchaikovsky had recently died, and in 1896, Brahms sat at his piano in a sanatorium in Ischl, penning his unique dying gift to organists, the Eleven Chorale Preludes. In the same year, Edward MacDowell was appointed to the first professorship of music at Columbia University. The organ virtuoso Alexandre Guilmant was making his first concert tours of the United States in the mid-1890s, playing to sold-out audiences and introducing public and organists alike to the music of the French Romantic school. In Paris, young Albert Schweitzer was taking organ lessons from Widor, and across the channel in England, another youthful musician, Arnold Dolmetsch, was startling audiences with performances of Renaissance and Baroque music. (Barbara Owen, *The American Organist*, January 1996)

Given such a climate, is it any wonder that Smith and his colleagues organized a guild to advance the cause of the organist? Although more than a century has passed, as I read the article, I found myself thinking how the AGO founding fathers' desires were not unlike ours today and for one brief moment it was as if I was walking in Gerrit Smith's shoes (or was he walking in my shoes?).

It is a privilege to belong to an organization such as the American Guild of Organists. Thank you to all who build upon the foundation that was laid in 1896!

Sincerely, Sheri

## Upcoming Events

### Utah Valley Chapter Meetings

- Feb 22 Hymn Sing Workshop, Sharon Stake Center, 550 S 800 E, Orem, 11:00 am
- March 21 Chapter Bach Recital, Provo Central Stake Center, 7:00 pm
- April 26 Super Saturday, Harris Fine Arts Bldg., BYU
- May 16 Chapter Hymn Sing, Sharon Stake Center, Orem, 7:00pm

### Organ Recitals and Concerts

- Feb 24 Utah Chamber Artists and University of Utah Chamber Choir, "For They Shall Be Comforted – A German Requiem by Johannes Brahms," Libby Gardner Hall, 7:30 pm
- March Kayley Byers (student of Don Cook), Recital, Assembly Hall, TBA
- March 14 Dr. Daniel Kerr (director of organ studies at BYU-Idaho), Recital, Tabernacle, Temple Square, 7:30 pm
- March 22 Tyler Boehmer (student of Don Cook), Recital, De Jong Concert Hall, BYU, 1:30 pm
- March 29 SLCA Concert Choir and Chamber Choir, "How Lovely are Thy Dwellings: Brahms Requiem," Libby Gardner Hall, 7:30 pm
- April 12 SLCAGO Activity, Dr. John Longhurst will lecture on Joseph Ridges and the original Tabernacle organ  
Tabernacle, Temple Square, 10:30 am
- April 18-19 SLCA and BYU Early Music Ensemble, "Music for Holy Week: J. S. Bach *St. John Passion*," Waterford School Concert Hall, 7:30 pm
- May 23 Hans Uwe Hielscher (organist and carillonneur at Marktkirche in Wiesbaden, Germany), Recital, Tabernacle, Temple Square, 7:30 pm
- Sept 5 Gabriel Dessauer (cantor and organist at St. Bonifatius in Wiesbaden, Germany; organ faculty at the Musikhochschule Rheinland-Pfalz), Recital, Tabernacle, Temple Square, 7:30 pm

## Please Join Us

The Utah Valley Chapter will sponsor a hymn sing on Friday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at the Sharon Stake Center in Orem (550 South 800 East). The Sharon Stake Center 17-rank Wicks organ has recently been renovated, re-voiced, and upgraded to a digital relay and combination action. The hymn sing is tentatively titled "The Power of the Hymns of Zion." Our goal with this hymn sing is two-fold. First, we would like to give the chapter and the community at large an opportunity to feel the power of hymn singing in a setting where professionalism and heartfelt dedication combine to create a moving musical and spiritual experience. Second, we want to give as many chapter members as would like to participate the opportunity to try their hands (and feet) at accompanying at a hymn sing. We are so grateful to all the chapter members who volunteered to accompany at the hymn sing. The response when we called for volunteers was enthusiastic and quick. Thanks!

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## At the Bench

by Jennifer Morgan

Almost two years ago I had the wonderful opportunity to play for BYU Women's Conference. I was ecstatic as I prepared. Ideas flowed, and I ended up incorporating an assortment of creative techniques into the hymns. After many organ commitments in the ten days leading up to the conference, which included an unexpected family funeral, I was overwhelmed and felt the pressure of the world on my shoulders. During my practice the night before I was to play, things completely fell apart and I had to accept the fact that due to my exhaustion, my practicing was now complete, for better or worse.

The next morning, while sitting with friends during the opening session of the second day of Women's Conference, I felt so nervous and began to second-guess myself; none of the other organists had utilized creative hymn techniques, was I looking beyond the mark? As they announced the closing session, my friend turned to me and said, "Just think: You get to play for an apostle of the Lord. An apostle will sing to *your* music!" Her statement opened my eyes and allowed me to see things a little differently, yet I still felt inadequate. I still questioned my choices—did I really want to solo out the alto on that chorus? Did I want to add the end of phrase elaborations on that verse? I didn't know how to let go of my stresses and let the Lord in.

In the minutes before the closing session, I again pondered on what my friend had pointed out, and my purpose was finally made known to me. I realized I was there to help bring the Spirit to the meeting and prepare those in attendance to hear the message of an Apostle of the Lord.

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## Hymn Sing and Preparatory Workshop

We plan to have a hymn accompaniment workshop Saturday, February 22 at 11:00 AM at the Sharon Stake Center. Here are some of the things we'd like this workshop to accomplish:

1. Share ideas with those who have signed up to play in the May hymn sing, who may be looking for suggestions.
2. For those who have signed up to play in the hymn sing, coordinate with others so everyone isn't doing the same kind of thing with their hymn accompaniment, assuring variety.
3. Learn about hymn accompaniment from each other, whether we're playing in the hymn sing this time or not.
4. Encourage each other, making sure the hymn sing is a positive experience, and contributing toward more positive accompaniment experiences in weekly church meetings.

Many of us, whatever our skill level, are in the trenches week in and week out accompanying hymn singing in our local congregations. Hence, beautiful hymn accompaniment is an interest many of us share. We hope that the workshop in February and the hymn sing in May will be an opportunity for us as a chapter to improve our hymn accompanying and an opportunity for the wider organist community to experience great hymn singing that will be an inspiration and a catalyst for the general improvement of hymn singing in congregations around the valley. Please begin spreading the word so that we can reach as many people as possible with the hymn sing. We will certainly advertise it at Super Saturday in April, and as we draw closer to it, we will send out fliers for chapter members to post. Thanks for your support!

## Douglas E. Bush Memorial Recital

The chapter board has discussed the possibility of having a member recital in October 2014 to mark the one-year memorial of Doug's passing. Doug has had significant and lasting influence in our chapter, and in the lives of many of our chapter members. We wish to honor him. We will all be thinking of Doug in March at the annual chapter Bach recital, but we also wish to celebrate Doug's life and music. We propose a recital in which pieces are chosen from the repertoire of Doug's wonderful hymn arrangements and other works, or more generally, music that members know Doug loved. We would also welcome brief (2-3 minute) remembrances and anecdotes from members' experiences with Doug. These remembrances may be offered by those performing or not performing.

Of course, October is in the next AGO calendar year, and we are not sure who will be on the board for the 2014-2016 leadership cycle. Nevertheless, we felt that this would be a worthy activity, and that it would be best to inform members before the summer break so that we could prepare pieces for the recital. Once a date is decided upon, we will end out a call for participants, so please watch for information in future newsletters.

## At the Bench continued

This purpose was not only my privilege, but my great responsibility. I had been led to choose that session; to incorporate techniques that would paint the hymn text and unlock the power of these hymns. When I considered simplifying the accompaniment by not playing my additional material, I had the distinct impression that I was to play as I had prepared. I knew that God was in control, and that I was just a part of His plan. As long as I remained humble, things would go as they should. Mordecai's statement to Esther played through my head, "And who knoweth whether thou art come...for such a time as this." The weight of the world left me, and the peace of God replaced it.

While my playing was not flawless, it was powerful, and I received confirmation that it was an acceptable offering. I was where I needed to be, I had listened to the Spirit and accomplished God's purposes. He chose *me* for "such a time as this," just as He has chosen each of us in our own sphere.

Every single time we play we are in a position to lift a burden, heal a broken spirit, comfort the weary, and bring joy and rejoicing to a happy heart! "Who knoweth whether thou art come...for such a time as this" in the lives of those who hear you play? We may never know the impact of our preparation, but we should never doubt our important role in the lives of others.

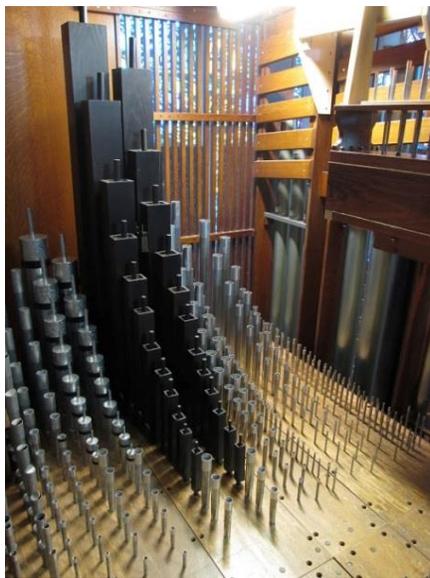
## Chapter Visit to St. Ambrose

by Jack Stoneman, photographs by Evan Manning and Jennifer Morgan

On January 11, 2014, the Utah Valley Chapter was privileged to visit the recently installed organ at St. Ambrose Catholic Church. Members were guided on a tour of the organ chamber by chapter member David Chamberlin, Tonal Director of M.L. Bigelow Pipe Organs, who completed the expansion and renovation of the organ. After the tour, members had the opportunity to also play the organ and mingle at a potluck lunch.

The organ at St. Ambrose is comprised of the Holtkamp organ formerly installed at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Salt Lake City and parts of the small Wicks organ which served St. Ambrose for a number of decades. The Holtkamp organ was removed from St. Marks and replaced by a new tracker organ built by Bigelow. The Bigelow firm also rebuilt the Holtkamp and installed it at St. Ambrose.

Many thanks to organist and director of liturgy at St. Ambrose Christopher Huntzinger, as well as the kind staff at St. Ambrose for hosting our chapter. And thanks to David Chamberlin for arranging the activity and kindly giving us tours of the organ chamber. And thanks to Linda Rehart for hosting the lunch.



## Resources for Organists

"The LDS Organist"  
(created by Jennifer Morgan)  
[www.organlessons.blogspot.com](http://www.organlessons.blogspot.com)

"Pedal Points"  
(created by Florence Hawkinson)  
[www.ldsorganist.wordpress.com](http://www.ldsorganist.wordpress.com)

David Chamberlin's hymn  
voluntaries  
[www.chamberlinmusic.com](http://www.chamberlinmusic.com)

Free music for the LDS organist  
[www.ldsorganist.org](http://www.ldsorganist.org)

Music for the LDS organist:  
[www.wardorganist.com](http://www.wardorganist.com)

Resources for the LDS organist  
[www.ldsorganists.info](http://www.ldsorganists.info)

BYU organ information  
[www.organ.byu.edu](http://www.organ.byu.edu)

Local organ builder of fine  
mechanical action organs  
[www.bigeloworgans.com](http://www.bigeloworgans.com)

AGO Salt Lake City Chapter  
[www.slicago.org](http://www.slicago.org)

AGO Utah Valley Chapter  
[www.uvago.org](http://www.uvago.org)

AGO Region IX Blog  
[www.agoregionixblog.blogspot.com](http://www.agoregionixblog.blogspot.com)

AGO National Headquarters  
[www.agohq.org](http://www.agohq.org)

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