



# Pipeline

American Organist Guild—Red River Valley Chapter

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2012

## Message From the Dean

It is Fall! The football season has begun, schools have begun, and piano students have returned to their teachers. At church, monthly committee meetings have resumed, attendance is rebounding from the summer doldrums and the music leaders have begun to plan for the Christmas Season.

Why is it that musicians are always thinking ahead? Have you noticed that you can name the date of all the Sundays in the next month or two? Is it that we HAVE to plan ahead in order to choose music that we find meaningful and inspiring AND get it practiced and ready to share by a target date? Or is it more fun when we plan ahead? I have found that I enjoy practicing more when I am learning something new and challenging.

Last May at our AGO music exchange we tried something new. I had received a huge inventory of music from Norma Halverson, a longtime organist and member of the RRV AGO. We had a used music sale during which many of us purchased literature for a fabulous low price. The proceeds went to Norma in the nursing home. One result for me has been the excitement of digging into old hymn variations and sharing them with the congregation. One week I was told that the final verse of the hymn was "thrilling". I had used a variation from a very old book of Norma's. Sight reading through the books has made my practice time more enjoyable and I am finding countless treasures to keep pulling me back to the bench.

Have you tried something new recently?

How about something old? Since we're thinking ahead, perhaps a New Year's Resolution is in order! *I will challenge myself with music I haven't played before because it keeps me practicing, which keeps me refreshed.*

I wish you a Merry Christmas, preceded by a Fabulous Fall!

P.S. Don't forget to attend Christopher Houlihan's Concert in October! This young man will knock your socks off! Invite your friends to attend, and share the information with your congregations. See you there!

Sally Harmon

Dean, RRVAGO

[songsally@aol.com](mailto:songsally@aol.com)

### First Friday Luncheon

**Who** Everyone is Welcome!

**When** First Friday of the  
Month at Noon

**Where** Fryn' Pan  
302 Main Ave, Fargo

### Chapter Officers

Dean: Sally Harmon

Sub-Dean: Sonia Carlson

Secretary: Robyn Vinje

Treasurer: Ruth Strawn

### Board Members at Large

2012: Ruth Discher

2013: Alpha Roeszler

2014: Bill Tweten

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## Board Meeting Notes

Minutes of the RRV/AGO Board Meeting  
August 3, 2012

The RRV/AGO board met Friday, August 3, 2012, at the Fargo Fryin' Pan restaurant. Members present were Sally Harmon, Sonia Carlson, Alpha Roeszler, Ruth Strawn, Jim Gurney, Bill Tweten, Michael Olson, and Robyn Vinje.

Sally thanked Jim and Bill for accepting chairmanship of the Christmas Sing-a-long to be held at Messiah Lutheran Church on Monday, December 10th, and 7:00 PM. There will be no admission charge, but an offering will be taken for the Food Pantry. Checks are to be made to the FM Food Pantry. Organists willing to participate include Ruth Strawn, Alpha Roeszler, Sally Harmon, in addition to Jim & Bill. Marty Baumgartner was also listed as a possible participant. Possible groups to ask to participate are the 19th Avenue Jazz from North High School. They need to be asked if they charge a fee, as we are hoping to get groups who do not charge.

The Christopher Houlihan concert is scheduled for Sunday, October 21st, at 4:00 PM at First Lutheran Church. We received a \$2500 grant from the FM Foundation, and \$400 from the Lake Region Arts Council. Michael Olson will serve as host for Christopher. Carolyn Hensrud is in charge of publicity, with Ruth Discher and Robyn Vinje assisting her. Posters have been ordered, and local publications have been notified.

The Fabulous French will be the theme of our program Sunday, March 10th, 2013. Sally will serve as chair.

We will conclude the year with a potluck and music exchange on Wednesday, May 22nd. Details TBA.

It was decided that we will not sponsor an outside organist next fall, but will probably begin the year with a concert by

member/local organists.

The Pipeline will be co-edited by Alpha Roeszler and Ruth Discher. There will be four issues this year. Alpha asked for suggestions for articles to be included.

The treasurer's report was distributed electronically prior to the meeting. We currently have \$5,014.80 in the checking account, and \$2,804.83 in a CD, for a grand total of \$7,819.63.

The next board meeting will follow the First Friday Lunch on September 7, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robyn Vinje, secretary.

## Board Meeting Notes

### Minutes of RRV Chapter of AGO Board Meeting September 7, 2012

The meeting was called to order by Dean Sally Harmon. Other members of the board present were Alpha Roeszler, Ruth Strawn, Sonia Carlson, and Robyn Vinje. Also present were program chairmen Michael Olson (Houlihan concert) and Jim Gurney (Christmas sing-a-long).

Sally read an e-mail from Peggy Johnson, past dean of the chapter and organist at Trinity Lutheran Church in Moorhead, extending an invitation to use the church as the site for a Pipes, Pedals, and Pizza program for young people to introduce them to the organ. It was agreed that we would consider this after Christmas.

Sally stated that she had received word from Dr. Jay Hershberger, organist at Gethsemane Episcopal Cathedral in Fargo, that they will be hosting a program on Sunday, April 7, 2013, entitled *Celestial Sounds*. Michael Barone from Minnesota Public Radio will be serving as host of the program, but he won't be playing. They would like area organists to participate. Robyn moved that we cancel our March program (*Those Fabulous French*) and participate in the Gethsemane program instead. Ruth Strawn seconded the motion, which carried. (This will be the Sunday after Easter.)

Ruth Strawn distributed the treasurer's report electronically prior to the meeting. She reported that we now have 20 paid members. We have \$7,674.30 in the checking account, \$2,804.83 in the CD, for a grand total of \$10,479.13.

Alpha reported on *The Pipeline*, which she and Ruth Discher are editing, and they expect to have the first issue online about the end of September. Jim Gurney will be the first biographical feature, Wilbur Held will be the featured composer, Sonia Carlson will write on the latest organ installation by Johnson Organ Company, the action portion of the board meetings will be included, and maybe a book review.

Alpha and Ruth are looking for suggestions for articles to be included in future issues. Some suggested topics were a review of good organ books, which could include the Missouri Synod new organ series to accompany their new hymnal, and the new Presbyterian hymnal which will be available to congregations in about a year.

Michael reported that he tried unsuccessfully to contact the Radisson Hotel regarding the possible in-kind donation of a room for Christopher Houlihan. We will pay for his room, which is not a problem since we received two grants. Robyn reported that the publicity is underway (and has been for some time) and distributed posters and bulletin announcements to everyone to take to their respective churches. Sonia also took 25 posters to distribute to south Fargo churches. Robyn will contact Sheila Baumgartner about sending a welcome basket to the hotel prior to his arrival.

Jim Gurney distributed copies of the proposed program for the Christmas Sing-a-long, and recruited members to play for individual carols. It promises to be an excellent program.

The next board meeting will follow the First Friday Lunch on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robyn Vinje, secretary

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## || Getting to Know You

|| *This edition features fellow-RRVAGO Member James F. Gurney.*

|| I was born in Mount Vernon, Washington, in 1957. Coming from a family of non-musical musicians, I formed my early musical knowledge by listening to cartoon music, the radio, Lawrence Welk and anything that went on in my home town Lutheran church. I probably should be embarrassed by this, but I actually feel that this awkward start gives me an appreciation of diverse types of music. I presently enjoy Straviniski and Bartok as well as Gershwin, the Beatles and Hank Williams Sr.

|| My schooling includes BA degrees in Theory/Composition and German from Saint Olaf College, MA degrees in Organ Performance and German from the University of North Dakota, and a Choral Education degree from Minnesota State University Moorhead.

|| I have held organist positions at the Christus Rex Campus Center at UND, the First Presbyterian Church in Grand Forks, Augustana Lutheran Church in Grand Forks, ad St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Middleton, Wisconsin. I am currently music director at Messiah Lutheran Church in Fargo, North Dakota. I also accompany voice at MSUM, Theater at NDSU and have a private piano studio.

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### Former RRVAGO Dean Assumes Position at Trinity Lutheran

As of August 14, 2012, Peggy Johnson, former RRVAGO Chapter Dean, has been appointed to a one-year position as Coordinator of Sanctuary Worship and Organist at Trinity Lutheran Church, Moorhead. As such, she will be responsible for shepherding the worship and music for "traditional" services at Trinity as well as playing for three worship services each week (Sunday mornings at 8:00, 9:00, 11:00), special services, weddings, and funerals, as they arise. She will also accompany the Cathedral Choir, handbell choir, soloists and instrumentalists.

In addition to her duties at Trinity, Peggy has been appointed as supply musician for chapel services at Concordia College, playing for worship on Monday and Wednesday mornings.

The vacated position at Trinity opened due to the retirement of long-serving organist Peter Nygaard. Peter held the position at Trinity Lutheran Church from January 1985 through May 2012, and served on staff at Concordia College from September 1970 through June 2012.

Our thanks to Peter for his contribution to the organ community in the FM area and the RRVAGO Chapter, as well as his service to Trinity and Concordia College. We wish Peter well in his retirement, and we wish Peggy all the best in her new position.

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### **Virtuoso Organist Christopher Houlihan to Perform at First Lutheran**

Exciting young artist Christopher Houlihan will be performing in concert at First Lutheran Church, Fargo, ND on Sunday, October 21, 2012 at 4 p.m. "Gloriously passionate." - "The audience should be prepared to be mesmerized." - "Clearly a musician of the first order." - "A new prince for the king of instruments." - "The one to watch." - These are samples of various concert reviews for Houlihan's performances.

A native of Somers, Connecticut, Houlihan earned a bachelor's degree at Trinity College in Hartford, where he studied with John Rose, and a master's degree at the Julliard School, studying with Paul Jacobs. He has performed in concerts throughout the U.S. and Europe. "His imaginative registrations, and fine verbal notes kept the audience's attention throughout." (TAO 2011 AGO Convention Reviews)

Houlihan is indeed an artist with a bright future. You can become a Houli Fan at [Facebook.com/houlihan](https://www.facebook.com/houlihan) and also follow him on Twitter and YouTube. Share in this unique opportunity to meet and hear this young organist.

Admission tickets for this event will be \$10 for adults and \$5 for students at the door.

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### **First Lutheran Resumes Wednesday Recitals**

Wednesday Midday Organ Recitals, presented by Michael Olson and Friends, began on Wednesday, September 5 at 12:45 p.m. at First Lutheran Church in Fargo. Michael plays the majority of the recitals, but occasionally will have a friend come in to play a recital.

This fall, there are three friends playing a Wednesday recital. Jeffrey Patry from Robbinsdale, MN will be playing the recital on September 19. Jeffrey has played several organ recitals here in the past.

Another guest to play a recital this fall is Nate Koppenhaver, Michael's newest organ student. Nate will be playing the recital on October 24. He is a home-schooled junior and lives in Fargo.

If any of you would like to play an organ recital—or a piece in a recital—please let Michael know at (701) 235-4567 ext. 135 or [Molson@flcfargo.org](mailto:Molson@flcfargo.org) and he will get you on the schedule!

## In Honor of Wilbur Held's 98th Birthday

Choral and organ music composer Wilbur Held was born on August 20, 1914 in Des Plaines, Illinois. He was surrounded by music during his early years in his home and in his church. His earliest studies in piano and organ were with the organist of his. He never considered piano as a strong point and did not feel that good piano technique was particularly important for organ playing. "It was helpful if you knew the keyboard and had some facility in your fingers, but I've never felt that you had to have a big piano background to start the organ. I've always felt you can continue to build at the organ".

Although Held was always interested in the organ, the church and church music, upon graduation from high school in 1932, during the Depression, he had to decide if it was going to be music alone, some other kind of school, or just go to work! To pursue the organ seemed logical, but the process of deciding to become a church musician was a gradual one.

He took up studies at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago with Frank Van Dusen (Organ) and John Palmer (theory/composition). While at the Conservatory he began a seven-year association with St. James Cathedral in Chicago as an assistant to Leo Sowerby, who influenced him greatly.

In 1942, Held entered Ohio State University as head of the keyboard department and established an organ department where there had never been one before. He remained in that position for over 30 years. While at OSU, Held received a Doctor of Sacred Music degree from Union Theological Seminary in NY. He also studied occasionally with Marcel Dupre and Andre Marchal during their visits to the U.S.

Dr. Held never considered himself much of a composer. His first work, published in 1959 ("Nativity Suite") was written because he felt "there wasn't much literature for teaching that was really easy that students could play the first week". "The kids needed some very easy music that was a little more Romantic in sound that gave them a chance to explore the organ." About his works, with regard to registration, Held says, "I try to make things general enough so that they apply to almost any instrument".

Many of his published works were requested by publishers. "I never have felt really confident in myself as a composer, because I don't hear things very well! I don't have perfect pitch and I don't compose well away from the keyboard. It's a lot of trial and error—I throw away a lot of things".

Held considers his style as "Post-Romantic". "I always thought of myself as kind of a reincarnation of John Stainer.....and not very progressive." Although, he feels there is quite a lot of Baroque influence in his compositions. "The voice-leading is important to me. I'm not interested in writing big blobs of chords. Before I send a composition to the publisher, I usually go through the music and take out as many notes as I can. Why double a lot of notes, when the organ already doubles them."

Dr. Held retired in 1978 and lives in Claremont, CA. He continues to conduct clinics, perform recitals and compose. His compositions appear in several publishing house catalogs. His first publication, "Nativity Suite", alone has sold well over 25,000 copies.

[Quotes are from "An Interview with Wilbur Held" by James D. Hildreth, which appeared in the March 2008 issue of TAO. I highly recommend looking up the article and reading the entire interview. It is very informative and entertaining.]

## **Second Annual High School Organ Festival & Competition**

### **to be held in Winston-Salem, NC**

With prizes guaranteed to be at least \$3500 and potentially over \$10,000, UNC-School of the Arts, Salem College, and the Winston-Salem Chapter of the AGO are pleased to announce the Second Annual High School Organ Festival & Competition the weekend of January 24-26, 2013. The festival and competition is open to any High School Senior or younger. The competition will be held at First Baptist Church of Winston-Salem (<http://www.timothyolsenorganist.com/FirstBaptist.html>), and the Festival portion will be held on the campuses of UNCSA (<http://www.timothyolsenorganist.com/Crawford.html>) & Salem College (<http://www.timothyolsenorganist.com/ShirleyHall.html>).

This year's competition application requires a CD submitted with letters of reference by **December 14, 2012**.

Included during the weekend in addition to the competition is a masterclass with world-renowned Injury-Preventive Keyboard Technique pedagogue, Barbara Lister-Sink; an introduction to Alexander Technique; and a masterclass and individual lessons with UNCSA & Salem College organ professor, Dr. Timothy Olsen, all of which is included in the application fee.

Eight finalists will be chosen from the application pool, and will be notified by **December 21, 2012**.

For more information and application form, please visit <http://www.timothyolsenorganist.com/OrganCompetition.html>, or contact Professor Timothy Olsen: [olsent@uncsa.edu](mailto:olsent@uncsa.edu)

### **Positions Available — Choir Director**

First Congregational UCC, Fargo, is looking for a choir director to lead the sanctuary choir. The choir participates in Sunday morning worship services which begin at 10:30. Choir rehearsal begins prior to the service at 9:00. For more detailed information, please contact Pastor Kevin Cassidy-Maloney at (701) 232-8985 or e-mail at [1stcongregationalucc@gmail.com](mailto:1stcongregationalucc@gmail.com).

## Fargo's First Congregational UCC Acquires Pipe Organ

"When Hamar Lutheran of Rothsay, MN merged with another congregations, their Johnson pipe organ from 1983 came up for sale. First Congregational UCC of Fargo's music committee called me one day to say they could not find an organist to play their vintage electronic organ. I then told them about the Hamar organ and they purchased it less than a month later.

The organ had been taken out by an amateur and there was damage to the console and pipes, and two Trumpet pipes had been lost.

The organ has been designed for the balcony placement at First Congregational but within a Swell box. The Trumpet 8' made in Germany, was extended down to 16'. The Great Principal was exchanged for a larger scale Principal. An Oboe 8; and Nasat 2 2/3' were also added to bring the organ up to seven ranks. The organ was completed in August 2011 and Ruth Discher was hired as head organist.

Here is what the music committee wrote just recently (fall 2011): "We at First Congregational Church want to tell you how happy we are with our newly-installed pipe organ. Our church has wanted a pipe organ for a long time, but felt we could not afford the price...The congregation is thrilled with the sound." At the church's annual dinner, a member of the organ committee came up to Lance and said, "When I heard the first sound come out of the organ that Sunday, I felt the presence of God."

Lance E. Johnson

Johnson Organ Co.



Beginning installation, putting up the Swell Box

*Installation by Mike Johnson*

*Photos by Soni Carlson*



Putting in the pipes.



All in, ready for final touches.

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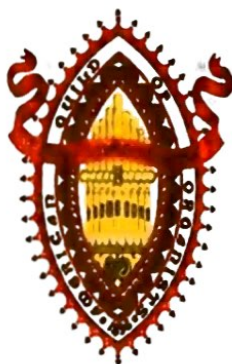
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## Upcoming Events

**Sunday, October 21, 4:00 pm**

Christopher Houlihan Concert, First Lutheran Church, Fargo

**Monday, December 10, 7:00 pm**

Christmas Carol Sing-a-long, Messiah Lutheran Church, Fargo

**Sunday, April 14, 2013**

"Celestial Sounds", Gethsemane Episcopal Cathedral, Fargo, Details TBA

**Wednesday, May 22, 2013**

Potluck and Music Exchange, Details TBA

## Contact Information

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