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## Spring Newsletter '23



Students and helpers with the PVC-pipe organ enjoying Pedals, Pipes and Pizza at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church, Feb. 4, 2023. Read a full review in the upcoming May issue of *The American Organist*.

## Dean's Letter and a

# Perspective from a new chapter member

Happy Spring, fellow musicians.

As we enter Holy Week may your fingers, health and mind remain strong! Last night I had the pure joy of attending Anna Lapwood's organ concert in a completely sold out venue. It was an absolute delight to see, hear, and feel not only her love of the organ but her desire to make our beloved instrument relevant to everyone. Even though all seats were filled, it was still a very intimate concert. I overheard many people saying that this was the first time they heard an organ and couldn't wait to hear more. They opened their social media apps to follow her — the ultimate compliment in this day and age. The bar has been set but I can't wait to attend another such event (hint, hint, it's next month: see details about Thomas Sheehan's upcoming program sponsored by our chapter).

This month's message is short as I would like to include what was sent to me this past week about how the AGO has benefited a new organist. Enjoy, and blessings to all!

~ Elisabeth Pintar

Transitions from pianist to AGO organist...

As a music teacher for K-12 voice and piano in the SF Bay Area, the pandemic has altered my sunset path as an "over 50" music professional. Changing from a regional cavalier baritone and repetiteur to organist was never a thought. Using piano as a tool for teaching students was all that I could imagine in terms of keyboard work after the prime of my career had finished. Substituting as a church pianist on Sundays was something that I had done before the Covid-19 crisis, but when the churches were closed, that extra income disappeared. When gatherings were allowed, I began to fill in occasionally as a pianist and cantor, but that was not steady work.

I saw an opening in a Facebook ad that wanted an organist sub (manuals only) which seemed intriguing, so I applied and got the extended substitute position. Bach, Beethoven, and Clementi miniature works could be played and would suffice for this position. After four months, another manual-only position became available and I began to work both jobs for a while. The repertoire of hymns was enjoyable again as I was experimenting with the stops (my own little orchestra). Learning to play two different types of organs was a challenge, so seeking expert advice (the AGO) was my next idea.

It is now with much gratitude I say thank you to the AGO online instruction of 30 lessons for transitioning pianists. Sometimes, we pianists feel like dead weight to organists, so I emailed the National Office and told them that I would not ask to be a part of the AGO unless I had gone through their educational training online. After about six weeks of experimenting with the lessons and their practical use in church, I joined the AGO.

The most beneficial part of the organization has been The American Organist (TAO) magazine. I used several ideas that were suggested therein. The first was the use of a glockenspiel stop for carols, then Women Composer Sunday, and lastly the numerous organ announcements of celebrating J.S. Bach. Another informative publication has been the San Jose AGO newsletter where I could find organ concert announcements, camaraderie of members, and new organist info that have helped me adjust to the organ where I live. There is no need to be alone as an organist,

whether you are new or mature, when the AGO is there.

~ Gregory Smith

Help get the word out about our post-pandemic celebration concert! Invite your colleagues and friends; post to your social media page too!

Contact [Elisabeth Pintar](#) if you would like paper flyers.  
Contact Margaret Kvamme if you would like an e-poster.

**April 22 - 23**

**Guest artist, Thomas Sheehan**

**2 events:**

1. Sunday Organ Concert, 4 pm (with reception following)
2. Workshop the preceding Saturday morning, 10 am:  
“Saying the Same thing in a New Way”  
*Practical Approaches to Contemporary Music*

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Workshop is free for AGO members  
Both Events held at Campbell United Methodist Church  
Concert Details & tickets prices on poster below:



The San Jose Chapter of the American Guild of Organists Presents

# Thomas Sheehan

Associate Director of Music,  
Washington National Cathedral  
Washington, DC

In concert on the **Schantz Pipe Organ**

**Sunday, April 23 at 4:00 PM**  
Campbell United Methodist Church  
1675 Winchester Blvd



**Admission:**

\$25 General

\$10 Seniors and AGO members

Age 17 and under free

A meet-the artist reception will  
follow the performance.

## Frasier Scholarship Application

The scholarship is open to current San Jose AGO chapter members and to organ students studying with, or sponsored by current members. The Frasier Organ Scholarship is awarded on the basis of demonstrated talent and potential, and must be used for specified continuing education in organ. The scholarship amount is \$1000. Click these 3 categories for details: [Qualifications](#), [Hymns](#), [Application](#).

The deadline (for the application form and two recommendations) is **April 10, 2023**. Auditions (in person) in May. Please encourage any potential scholarship applicants

ASAP.

Our chapter continues to seek a person interested in creating and/or maintaining a fresh, new website. We also need to update our social media presence. If you are interested in helping in any of these technical capacities, please contact Elisabeth Pintar, Dean: [sjagodean@gmail.com](mailto:sjagodean@gmail.com)



## Renewed, Revised, Reverberant: First Congregational gets a fresh look and sound

When the Sanctuary of First Congregational Church of San Jose (pictured above) reopened after 6 months of renovations with our "Doors Wide Open" celebration in November, congregants were looking forward to seeing a brighter, more welcoming worship space accessible to everyone. They were not disappointed; it truly looks inviting! But the improvements are not just visual.

The acoustics are delightfully enhanced, enlivening both choral and instrumental music, making it sound brighter and more present. In choral music the consonants sound clearer (even through masks), the high range of the piano rings through with good balance, and the organ sounds like it might be in a small cathedral!

The two-manual Schantz organ always had a lovely sound, with stops that blend well with one another, but now they sound more assertive and focused. My husband, AGO board member David Snook-Luther, and I had wanted the console to be movable for concert performances. We were told that option would be too expensive and

cumbersome, but, amazingly, the company that disassembled the organ (to protect it during renovations) and reassembled it after, figured out a clever way to move it easily! Hence, organ performances with pedals in view are now a possibility! The SJAGO organization and its members are welcome to schedule events here.

Kristin Link, Music Director at FCCSJ, directed a free concert on Sunday, February 26th at 3 pm. *Harmonium California* (a newly-formed local string orchestra) performed works by Gerald Finzi, John Ireland, and the beloved *Adagio in G minor* by Remo Giazatto based on a fragment by Albinoni, featuring Susan Snook-Luther on organ. The event drew 150 audience members and was a huge success! We hope to see many AGO members soon in our “new” space.

Contact [Susan Snook-Luther](#) for more information.





Barbara Sunseri (pianist) and Susan Snook-Luther (organist) at First Congregational Church concert on February 26

**Jobs Available**

The Episcopal Church in Almaden, San Jose: **Music Director/Organist/Pianist**. Part-time position (10 - 15 hours per week) with competitive salary (\$20,000 – \$25,000) and negotiable benefits. Essential prerequisites include familiarity with Episcopal/liturgical worship, ability to work collaboratively, experience with choral conducting and ability to recruit and nurture choir members, and a range of experience with musical styles and genres. The organ is a 3-manual Phoenix from England (2001). One Sunday morning service at 10:45 am. preceded by the once-per-week Adult Choir rehearsal. The yearly schedule for the Music Director is relieved 6 - 7 times per year by the Folk Choir/Band which leads the service those weeks (Music Director not required to attend). See the detailed job listing at <https://www.churchinalmaden.org/news/churchinalmaden/job-details/music-director-search>. Apply by March 1, 2023. Contact: Contact: Todd Axtell, Music Search Committee: 650-856-2020; 408- 693-4089; toddger@aol.com

Campbell United Methodist Church: **Organist/Pianist**. Sunday morning worship services employ a wide variety of musical styles – classical, contemporary, gospel, and world. Instrument specifics: Worship – three-manual Schantz pipe organ and a 9'2" Knabe grand piano; Rehearsal – Yamaha upright piano. Provide leadership, solo work and accompaniment for Sunday worship services (12 months) and other special services, including Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Special Concerts, Weddings and Funerals (first refusal). Choir Rehearsals: weekly evening rehearsals Sept – June; Soloists and other ensembles, children's choir and African choir (occasionally before worship rehearsals). Coordination of additional events (such as Advent Concerts) as assigned. The Organist/Pianist is responsible for verifying copyright coverage by the church's livestreaming licence. 3-5 years experience, preferably in a church with a multi-faceted music program, is a plus. This is a 15 hour, exempt position. Compensation is commensurate with experience. Contact Barbara Wade, Administrator of Church Business: [office@campbellunited.org](mailto:office@campbellunited.org)

Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos, 16575 Shannon Rd, Los Gatos, CA, is looking for a **Part-Time Organist/Pianist** to play one to two Sundays a month plus a choir rehearsal the same week, and for various church holy days. Sight reading skills and a background in music and liturgy are required. Pay is competitive and available upon request. The church currently needs a third organist/pianist, who will join a rotating roster with two others. Each organist/pianist plays one or two times a month throughout the year. When the choir is in session (Sept - early June), the organist/pianist on duty that week rehearses with the choir the previous Thursday. Our pipe organ is a 3-manual Möller/Schoenstein, and the sanctuary piano is a newer Yamaha grand. The congregation is enthusiastic about all kinds of music, with a special appreciation for the pipe organ. Experienced applicants please send resume, references and letter of intention to: [michael.taylor@pclg.org](mailto:michael.taylor@pclg.org)

St. Clement's Episcopal Church, Berkeley: **Director of Music**. This is a half-time (20 hours per week) position to begin no later than August 2023. The DOM is responsible for leading the music program and expanding the music ministry at St. Clement's. Reports directly to the Rector. Seeking an experienced organist and choir director with a shared appreciation of traditional liturgy and inclusive values. Duties include providing organ music and directing the choir at the principal Sunday morning service and special seasonal services and events. Weekly choir rehearsals (currently on Sundays), hiring and overseeing vocal section leaders and instrumentalists, collaboration with the Youth Choir Director, attending weekly staff meetings, and overseeing the maintenance of the 2-manual, 14-rank Swain and Kates organ (to be stored this spring), a single-manual John Phillips harpsichord, and several pianos. Compensation is \$42,000 – \$50,000 with benefits. Please submit an email to the Church Administrator: [stclements@stclementsberkeley.org](mailto:stclements@stclementsberkeley.org) with the subject line "Director of Music application." Include a cover letter, resume, and contact



information for 3 professional references. Recordings of choral conducting and/or organ performance are welcome but not required.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Belvedere: **Music Director** (organist and choirmaster). Work collaboratively with the rector and staff and volunteers. The church has excellent acoustics and a Frobenius pipe organ [mechanical action, II/33 (1989)], a grand piano and 2 octaves of handbells. Duties: Recruit, train, supervise, accompany and direct the choir in weekly rehearsals (4 paid section leaders and over a dozen volunteers). Choose hymns and provide music information in a timely fashion to the office staff. Provide pastoral care for the music ministry as needed, in consultation with the rector. Work with staff and volunteer to publicize music events sponsored by the church. 10:00 am Sunday service and all Christian holy days. Stipend for this 30-hour-per week position begins at \$60,000 plus benefits. 4 weeks vacation and one week continuing education per year. Please send resume and letter of interest to: The Rev. Kyle Dice Seage, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 97, Belvedere, CA 94920 [office@ststephenschurch.org](mailto:office@ststephenschurch.org)  
\*Please note that notice of this vacancy arrived between editions of the newsletter, and the church's original deadline was March 15. Apologies from this editor.

## Other Concerts and Special Events

*(Listed by venue, in order of least to greatest drive time from downtown San Jose; note embedded Livestream links for some venues).*

*\*Asterisk denotes San Jose AGO Chapter-sponsored event.*

### **Campbell United Methodist Church, 1675 Winchester Blvd, Campbell**

\*Saturday, April 22, 10:00 am: Workshop by **Thomas Sheehan**; details above

\*Sunday, April 23, 4:00 pm: Recital by **Thomas Sheehan**, Organist and Associate Director of Music, Washington National Cathedral; Admission: \$25 General; \$10 seniors and AGO members; children free. Poster and details above.

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### **Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos, 16575 Shannon Rd, Los Gatos**

Sunday, April 2, 7:00 pm: **Messiah Sing**, complete work. The whole audience sings the solos! **Colin Whitby-Stevens** (organist) joins the full orchestra. This is a free event, but you are asked to **register** by emailing: [messiahsing@pclg.org](mailto:messiahsing@pclg.org). Reception to follow.

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### **Mission San Jose, 43300 Mission Blvd, Fremont**

Saturday, April 15, 9:00 am: demonstration of the unique 1989 renaissance style Rosales organ by resident organist, **Ron McKean**, and a chance to play it. Bring Spanish renaissance scores. Sponsored by the Palo Alto/Peninsula chapter AGO. All organists are welcome. Email [Rani Fischer](mailto:Rani.Fischer) for more information,

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### **St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Palo Alto, 600 Colorado Ave.**

Friday, May 12, 7:30 pm: **Faythe Freese**, organ. Co-sponsored by St. Mark's and the Palo Alto/Peninsula AGO Chapter. Admission: \$20 General; \$10 seniors and AGO members; children free.

Saturday, May 13, 10:00 a.m: Masterclass with **Faythe Freese**. Email [Rani Fischer](mailto:Rani.Fischer) for more information.

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## **St Patrick's Seminary Chapel, Menlo Park, 320 Middlefield Rd**

Sunday, April 30, 4pm: Karen Clark, contralto and Jonathan Dimmock, organetto & organ.

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**St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Cathedral, San Francisco, 1111 Gough St. @ Cleary** (Parking under/beside the cathedral). These concerts are live-streamed and available here (simply click on the url):

<https://YouTube.com/cathedralofstmaryoftheassumption>

All begin at 4:00 pm.

Sunday, April 2: "Young Artists Showcase": Murietta High School Chamber Singers, Brad Allen, Director

Sunday, April 9 (Easter): Paul Rhodes, Cello, with Jeanette Wilkin Tietze, Piano. Beethoven Cello Sonata

Sunday, April 16: Victoria Shorokhova, organ

Sunday, April 23: Bay Area Reger Festival: David Hatt, Organ. Preludes and Fugues, Op. 56

Sunday, April 30: Bay Area Reger Festival: Abraham Ross, Organ

Sunday, May 5: Spring Concert of the Cathedral Choir School, featuring the St. Brigid School Honor Choir

Sunday, May 14: Festival of Marian Hymn, featuring the Benedict 16 with Rebekah Wu, Director

Sunday, May 21: Maurice Clerc (France), Organ

Sunday, May 28: Joel Mahan, Mandolin

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**Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, 110 California St. at Taylor** (pay parking underneath the cathedral, entrance is on Taylor Street between California and Sacramento streets. A \$10 donation is requested. These concerts are live-streamed and available here (simply click on the url): <https://gracecathedral.org/watch-grace-cathedral/>

Sunday, May 7, 4:00 pm: **Maurice Clerc**, organ

Sunday, June 4, 4:00 pm: **Margaret Martin Kvamme**, organ (music by women composers)

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And, every Saturday at 4:00 pm, there are free organ recitals (for Bay Area residents) at the **Palace of Legion of Honor, San Francisco, in the Presidio**. Usually these are played by **Jonathan Dimmock**. More info here: <https://www.famsf.org/events/organ-concert>

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### **Your SJ AGO Board 2022 - 2023**

Dean: Elisabeth Pintar

Secretary: Melanie Cervi

Treasurer: Eric Holderman

Newsletter Editor: Margaret Kvamme

Handbook/Directory: Kay Lee

Education/Resources; Historian: Valerie Sterk

Budget/Auditors: Christine Merjanian, Cathryn Wilkinson

Members-at-large: David Snook-Luther, Paula Seo, Laura Green

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The next newsletter will be published in early June. The deadline for submitting concert listings,

articles, photos, job listings and notices of instruments for sale, etc. is **May 29** (Memorial Day).  
Click on the red button below for a set-up email where you can conveniently type and attach items.

submit newsletter content



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c/o Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos

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