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# Summer Newsletter '23



Elisabeth Pintar greets the assembled audience for Thomas Sheehan's recital April 23 at Campbell United Methodist Church. Approx. 73 were in attendance, and Mr. Sheehan delivered a spectacular performance, with improvised encore. If you missed Mr. Sheehan's workshop on contemporary music and would like a handout, please email [Margaret Kvamme](mailto:Margaret.Kvamme).

## Dean's Letter

Dear friends,

Schools are finishing up, graduation celebrations are starting, and many music students and members are polishing their pieces for services and spring performances. I do hope you will be able to enjoy the next few weeks of early summer to recharge and explore a little bit of the beautiful, blooming world that surrounds us! We had a wonderful AGO season with the return of activities and events **in-person**. I look forward to the 2023-2024 year as your Dean, with both familiar and new faces on the Board.

Please mark your calendar and save a few hours for our Annual Installation and Dinner on Sunday, June 25th. The festivities will be held starting at 4 pm at First Congregational Church of San Jose, 1980 Hamilton Ave @ Leigh. (See the Spring newsletter for a write-up and photo on their sanctuary remodel which has enhanced their acoustics and organ sound!) We will have a Hymn Sing from 4-5pm, followed by the installation of the officers who will serve the chapter for the next year, and also acknowledge with gratitude those who have served so faithfully this past year. See below the names and positions of our slated board for next year.

Should you want to play a hymn of your choice and a variation on it at the hymn sing, please reach out to [Susan Snook-Luther](mailto:Susan.Snook-Luther) by June 19, as spaces are limited. We will then enjoy each others' company with a light dinner of salads, sandwiches, and desserts. The Chapter will provide the drinks and paper products. Please bring enough for 6-8 people, and follow the guide below to get your assignment:

Last name A-H: salads

Last name I - Q: sandwiches

Last name R - Z: desserts

I look forward to seeing and breaking bread with you in a few weeks.

**Slate of Officers for San Jose Chapter AGO Board  
2023-2024**

Dean: Elisabeth Pintar

Sub-Dean/Programs: Vlada Volkova-Moran

Secretary: Melanie Cervi

Treasurer/Registrar: Colin Whitby-Strevens

Auditor: Cathryn Wilkinson

Newsletter Editor: Margaret Kvamme

Historian: Valerie Sterk

Members-at-Large:

David Snook-Luther (2023-2024), Kay Lee (2023), Mike Cala (2023-2026)

Please email [Dean Elisabeth Pintar](mailto:Elisabeth.Pintar@ago.org) or any of the current board members (see bottom of the newsletter) if you have any concerns.

Thank you to our nominating committee:

Paula Seo (chair), Joyce Rhodes and Susan Snook-Luther



# Frasier Scholarship Winner

Congratulations to Renee Gastelum, winner of the 2023 Frasier Organ Scholarship! The Frasier audition was held on Saturday afternoon, May 13, at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church. The judges were very impressed with Renee's audition performance, and highly recommended that we award her the \$1000 scholarship. They also invited Renee to perform a solo organ recital in the San Jose area next year, as one of our AGO chapter events.

For her Frasier audition, Renee performed Bach's Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor (BWV 542), Brahms' chorale prelude on *O Welt, ich muss dich lassen*, Vierne's *Naïades*, and the hymn *Christ the Lord Is Risen Today* (Easter Hymn).

Renee is a talented young organist from Gilroy, and just graduated *cum laude* with a Bachelor's degree in Organ Performance from Brigham Young University. Her organ teachers include Dr. Don Cook, Dr. Neil Harmon, and Harold Stuart. Renee plans to begin work on a Master's degree of Organ Performance at BYU in September, and hopes to later pursue a Doctoral degree of Music Teaching and Learning.

Renee is a dual member of the Utah Valley and San Jose AGO chapters. At age 19, she earned her AGO Colleague certification, and completed her AGO Associate certification at age 22. Renee currently serves as the principal organist at the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Provo, Utah. She also accompanies campus-wide devotionals at BYU. She has served as a substitute organist for Episcopal, Congregational and Baptist services in Provo and in San Jose.

Not only is Renee a concert and church organist, she is also a concert pianist, choir accompanist, jazz pianist, improviser, composer, and educator. She has accompanied choirs at BYU and various community choirs in Utah Valley. Renee teaches 20 piano students in the Provo area, encouraging them to learn additional music skills and participate in musical service opportunities. She has also taught Mandarin Chinese, and has served in local and international service projects including volunteer work in Taipei, Taiwan from 2019-2020. This summer Renee is organizing music camps for Utah Valley refugees and for an orphanage in Taiwan.

To learn more about Renee, please visit her [website](#).

Our chapter extends sincere appreciation to Dick Coulter, Margaret Kvamme, and

Dian Ruder, who served as the three judges for this year's Frasier scholarship auditions. We also thank Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church and host organist Valerie Sterk for arranging practice time and the audition day.

## **Pipe Organ Adventure: Coming again soon!**

On August 19, the Peninsula/Palo Alto AGO chapter is hosting a Pipe Organ Adventure for students entering grades 5 to 12, at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Palo Alto. The event will start at 9:00 am and conclude with pizza and snacks, ending at 12:30 pm. A responsible adult (parent or sibling over age 18) must be present with each student. St. Mark's is blessed with two pipe organs (sanctuary and chapel), and there will be a homemade organ, loose pipes, and a chance for each student to play their piano pieces on the organs. Space is limited to 15 piano students. This is a free event, but registration is required by June 18. Please help spread the word, and this link below:

[Click HERE to register for POA](#)



It's not too late to register for the **Region West AGO Convention** this summer, July

10 – 13 in Portland, Oregon. Click [here](#) for a registration link and more details.



**AGO 2024**  
**SAN FRANCISCO**

**SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 30-JULY 4**

The next National AGO Convention is one year away, to be held June 30 – July 4, 2024, and it's in our own backyard! There will be concerts and workshops galore, not only in San Francisco, but also in Oakland, Berkeley and Palo Alto. In addition, the final round of National Young Organ Playing Competition will be held in Sunnyvale prior to the convention, on June 27. Consider lending your aid as a volunteer, or as a donor/sponsor of one of the performances. The link for donations is on the convention website: <https://www.sfago2024.org>

Questions: Contact convention chair [Matthew Burt](#) or fundraising chair [Brian Larsen](#).





## Review of Faythe Freese Recital

*Written by Elizabeth Kamas, age 15 (Elizabeth is shown above with Dr. Freese, following the recital)*

On May 12, 2023, I had the absolute pleasure of hearing Dr. Faythe Freese give a concert at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Palo Alto. The concert was a glorious experience, with colorful repertoire ranging from composers long dead to those living

today. Dr. Freese was an amazing performer, with a charismatic personality and stunning technique.

First on the program were three excerpts from *Neuf Pièces*, by Jean Langlais, which Dr. Freese brought to life with her energetic playing. Second came *Revêtu de Lumière* (which translates to 'Clad in Light'), by Alesh Jermar. This piece began with recorded sounds of whale songs, seagull cries, and crashing waves, with which Dr. Freese masterfully blended the organ, so well that I almost didn't realize when she began playing! Next came Félix-Alexandre Guilmant's *First Sonata in D Minor, Op. 42*. Dr. Freese played all three movements of this piece, which amounted to at least 25 minutes of almost non stop playing. I was amazed by her stamina! Dr. Freese deftly registered these movements to show the two main themes of the movements, then blended them together, creating wonderful melodies that stayed in my head throughout the intermission.

After a brief intermission, Dr. Freese brought tranquility to the returning audience with her beautiful performance of *In Quiet Mood*, by Florence Price, played on clear, soft flutes. Next, Dr. Freese played three pieces by Pamela Decker, which were based on works of art by an artist known as Nall and owned by Dr. Freese. Before playing, Dr. Freese gave us a bit of background on these pieces, known collectively as *The Freese Collection*. The concert closed with an exciting rendition of Leo Sowerby's *Pageant*. This piece features the pedals, and it was very impressive. Dr. Freese's feet seemed to fly across the pedalboard! After the thunderous applause, which quickly developed into a standing ovation, Dr. Freese gave an encore piece, *Londonderry Air*, composed by Henry Coleman. I fell in love with this piece, and have added it to my ever-growing list of pieces I would like to learn!

The concert was an incredible experience, one that I will treasure for the rest of my life. Dr. Freese was an engaging presenter, with a deft hand at the organ, and amusing interactions afterward. Getting to meet her was amazing; she is such a lively person to be around! I hope very much to be able to attend more of her concerts in the near future and perhaps even take a masterclass from her!"

## Jobs Available

*Campbell United Methodist Church: Organist/Pianist.* Updated description: One

Sunday morning worship service with vibrant music in a variety of styles, a traditional choir, a Sierra Leonean choir, and an appreciative congregation that loves music and the variety of styles featured in worship. The organist provides music leadership during worship, and accompanies the traditional choir at their weekly rehearsals September – June. The organist plays at other special services, including Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, and Holy Week. 3-manual, 48-rank Schantz organ and a 9-foot, 1898 Knabe grand piano. The organist organizes an annual Advent Organ Concert Series, as well other occasional organ concerts. The organist has first refusal for funerals and weddings. The organist is expected to participate in the local AGO chapter, and to develop relationships with local organists. The organist is responsible for verifying copyright coverage by the church's livestreaming license. The ideal candidate would have 3-5 years experience, preferably in a church with a multi-faceted music program. This is a 15-hour, exempt position. Compensation is commensurate with experience. Interested candidates should send an email inquiry to [info@campbellunited.org](mailto:info@campbellunited.org)

*All Saints Episcopal Church, Palo Alto:* **Music Director/Organist** to continue and enhance the strong musical tradition of the church. Part-time position, approximately 15 hours/week. Thursday evening choir rehearsal and Sunday 10 am service, plus special liturgical services (Christmas, Holy Week, etc).

Duties: Conduct and lead the 12-member choir including 2 paid section leaders. Play the II/22 manual 1967 Flentrop organ and also the piano.

Experience directing a volunteer choir, a thorough understanding of Episcopal/Anglican liturgical tradition and the ability to incorporate inspired sacred music from different eras, traditions, and cultures while maintaining the integrity of the worship experience are required, as well as a minimum 3 - 5 years experience with a Bachelor's degree in music (Master's preferred). All Saints Church celebrates diversity, respects the dignity of every human being, and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants are encouraged to apply. Please email a cover letter, resume, 3-5 online links to recordings of organ and choral performance, and names of 3 professional references to: [allsaints125@gmail.com](mailto:allsaints125@gmail.com).

Deadline: June 30, 2023.

*St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Walnut Creek:* **Music Director/Organist** to lead the musical portions of the liturgy with a range of sacred musical offerings, from classical to contemporary repertoire. Seeking a competent organist, strong pianist and gifted accompanist and director. Instruments: 2 pipe organs: a Schlicker rebuilt in 2000 in the main sanctuary, and a Harrison & Harrison in the historic chapel, and a Baldwin

grand piano refurbished in 2019. Average weekly time commitment is 19 hours: to be spent practicing and preparing for rehearsals, leading musical worship at the main Sunday service (9:30 am) and once a month at the early service (7:30 am), and developing additional programs in collaboration with staff, volunteers, and/or other Episcopal parishes in the Diocese of California. Compensation starts at \$35,000 annually, dependent on experience; it is an exempt position with prorated vacation accrual, and reports to the Rector.

St. Paul's celebrates diversity, respects the dignity of every human being, and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. For consideration, please send a resume or CV and 3 video work samples (performance and/or conducting) by email to [applications@stpaulswc.org](mailto:applications@stpaulswc.org).

## Concerts and Special Events

*(Listed by venue, note embedded Livestream links for some venues).*

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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 are on Sundays and begin at 4:00 pm.

June 4: **Chase Olsen**, organ

June 11: **Jin Kyung Lim**, organ

June 18: **Christoph Tietze**, organ

June 25: **Arete Singers, Tim Salaver**, director. Works by Fauré, Pulenc, Duruflé, Saint-Saëns, Bach, and Mavernik

July 2: **Jin Kyung Lim**, organ

July 9: **David Hatt**, organ

July 16, **Edward Lee**, organ

July 23: **Seung See Cho**, organ

July 30: **Joy-Leilani Garbutt**, organ

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

Sunday, June 30, 3:00 pm: **Christopher Keady**, organ