



AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

## Chapter Leadership News

September 2021

### Poised for Success!

Dear Chapter Leaders,

In reviewing your responses to the chapter insight survey, two things stood out: first, you needed more officer training, tools, and resources; and second, National needed to develop special strategies to help our extra-small chapters. Regarding officer training, to date, we have presented webinars for **chapter deans, sub-deans, treasurers, webmasters, chapter membership coordinators and registrars**. We also recently presented a webinar, *Indiana Jones and the Quest to Find Chapter Resources on the AGO Website*, that shared where to find the chapter leadership toolkits (which, by the way, include a full library of resources for each of the above positions). It also covered where to register for webinars and access past webinar recordings and included information about the Achievement Awards. Hint: you can find the toolkits [here](#), register for upcoming webinars and access past webinars [here](#), and learn more about the Achievement Awards [here](#). PS: Stayed tuned regarding a new initiative we will be launching to better support our extra-small chapters.

This issue of **Chapter Leadership News** will cover the following:

- ✓ Profile of the Month: Brandon Michael Smith, Dean, Jacksonville (FL) Chapter
- ✓ The Central Iowa Chapter's Support for Dobson Pipe Organ Builders
- ✓ COVID Precautions at In-Person Programs
- ✓ The Springfield (MA) Chapter's Special Program Featuring Olivier Latry, Organist, Notre-Dame Cathedral
- ✓ Chapters Demonstrating Robust Member Recognition
- ✓ The Year of the Young Organist Recruitment Contest Tip #3
- ✓ 2020–21 Chapter Annual Fund Gifts
- ✓ Lessons in Leadership from *Ted Lasso*



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## Profile of the Month: Brandon Michael Smith, MM Dean, Jacksonville (FL) Chapter



**What's sitting on my desk right now:** *Planning for Rites and Rituals* from Church Publishing, *Liturgical Music for the Revised Common Lectionary* by Daw and Pavlechko, and *Speaking the Truth in Love* by Ruth Koch.

**If I weren't doing this I'd:** Before going into the music industry full time, I spent most of my free time in the theater. I always said that if music didn't work out, you'd probably find me at one of the nearby regional theaters. Acting, directing, stage managing, selling tickets—I love it all!

**When I'm not at work I'm** spending time with my family and friends, and probably in the kitchen because I love to cook for them. If I'm not there, you'll find me hiking or chatting up the barista at my favorite local coffee shop.

**The best advice I ever got:** When I was young my late grandfather sat me down, looked me straight in the eyes, and told me to “never burn a bridge, because the world is a lot smaller than you think it is.”

**What keeps me motivated serving as chapter dean:** My goal is to foster a robust community of artists who seek to promote their love of their craft, thus ensuring a future for our industry. While being an organist is only a small part of who I am, I hope to never lose sight of that goal.



*American Guild of*  
**ORGANISTS**  
CENTRAL IOWA CHAPTER

## **A Tribute to and Celebration of Dobson Pipe Organ Builders, Lake City, Iowa**

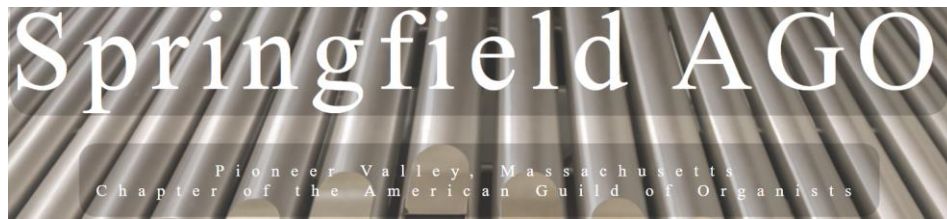
Dean Miriam Zach, on behalf of the Central Iowa chapter, shared the following article that appeared in a special addition of *The Trompette*, the chapter's newsletter.

*Some events touch us so deeply that their occurrence and where we were when we heard about them become instilled in our memories. Tragically, Tuesday, June 15th, 2021, was one of those days. Feelings of shock and grief over the loss of the Dobson facility, coupled with compassion and concerns for the craftspeople and the larger community of Lake City, were immediate and remain. These daring and passionate master-craftspeople who began and grew the company make us all proud. For we can say, we come from Iowa, home state of one of the greatest organ design and construction companies in the world. Let us unite and share ideas to support the Dobson Company (and the entire Lake City, Iowa, community) to continue to create, so the voices of more yet-to-be-built pipe organs by this amazing group of talented builders of pipe organs may be heard. We also express our profound gratitude to the Dobson company for creating and maintaining organs in churches and academic centers. We can help reconstruct history by gathering artifacts to help rebuild those recently lost and so continue the important archival legacy of the Dobson Company. We can offer music and develop programs with the exquisite pipe organs that Dobson has already created in churches and academic centers worldwide. We look forward to the phoenix emerging from the ashes . . . to the Dobson Company designing and building future beautiful pipe organs that will continue to transform more lives. On behalf of CIAGO members we are exploring benefit concerts, including on the Dobson organ at St. John's Episcopal Church in Ames, where I am music director/organist.*

In response to the tragic fire that destroyed Dobson's offices and workshop, AGO National and Headquarters staff extend our deepest sympathy to Lynn Dobson, John Panning, and all our good friends at Dobson Pipe Organ Builders.

## **COVID Precautions for In-Person Programs and Events**

We are all now aware that the Delta variant continues to spread nationally and globally. Because there may be members who have chosen not to be vaccinated, all necessary precautions should be taken when planning in-person events. National recommends that a chapter's executive committee meet to discuss policies, that may include requiring all members to be masked when attending a chapter program. If, for example, a program should take place in a member's home, the homeowner should be able to decide who may enter his or her home and under what circumstances: vaccinated only, masked only, vaccinated and masked, etc. Let's all stay safe for the health and well-being of our members!



*On July 14, the chapter was delighted to host a fascinating program featuring Olivier Latry, titular organist at Notre-Dame Cathedral. He joined us live from his home in Paris via Zoom. Approximately 50 attendees tuned in from across the U.S. and England. The program began with video clips of Olivier playing Bach, Daquin, Dupré, Guilmant, and Stravinsky on the great Cavallé-Coll organ before fire engulfed the cathedral. After watching the videos together, Olivier spoke with us live for an hour-long question and answer session. Some of the topics discussed were the last restoration and how well-balanced the organ is, the differences between French and English organs, descriptions of some of his predecessors, his teachers, the nine pipes from 1402 (!), and the history of the site and its previous structures. Of course, we also discussed the current status of restoration efforts at the cathedral and were glad to hear that progress is being made, with approximately 200 workers, on a daily basis. Because of the overwhelming presence of lead melted by the fire, each person entering has a time limit of two hours, after which they must enter a mandatory decontamination area. Olivier has recently published a book called À l'orgue de Notre-Dame, soon to be published in English.*



Many thanks to Dianne Rechel, Springfield chapter board member, for sharing this wonderful program information.

## **Member Care at Its Best**

### **➤ A personalized renewal email from a chapter dean**

Each month I email chapter deans with the names of members who have reached the end of their three-month grace period after the expiration of their membership, to notify them that they will be dropped very shortly. (The AGO sends three emails prior to a member's expiration date and three additional emails after their expiration date if a member has not renewed, encouraging them to do so immediately.) Having a dean or registrar personally contact a chapter member can make all the difference in the world about whether this member decides to renew. I was recently copied on an email that Tyrell Lundman, dean of the Westchester (NY) chapter, sent to a member about to be canceled that I want to share with you.

Hi Debbie,

I wanted to reach out to you personally and invite you to renew your membership in the Westchester AGO.

We were fortunate to be able to maintain great programming throughout the pandemic, with a combination of in-person and virtual events, and we look forward to another exciting year. We heard young virtuosos at St. Pius in Scarsdale, played for each other in White Plains, and learned a lot about recording and video production techniques through a series of workshops.

The fall will focus on skills related to certification, as well as including our annual Rising Stars concert and Members Recital. In the spring, we will continue our education series and be able to bring in one of many wonderful professional recitalists.

Please check out the updated and improved website and I hope to hear from you soon.

Just so you know, if any financial considerations are stopping you from renewing, there are still some funds available from national to help out. Please let me know.

<http://www.agowestchester.org>

All best,  
Ty Lundman  
Dean  
AGO – Westchester Chapter

The next day he received this response: “I believe in you and will renew.”

I want to thank Tyrell for sending such a personal and persuasive email that truly articulated the value of being a member of the Westchester chapter.

### ➤ **Welcoming New Members**

Kudos to the Jacksonville (FL) chapter for beginning their recent weekly news announcement with a warm welcome to new members.

Dear Jax AGO Colleagues,

I would like to first welcome our new members. Within the past few months we’ve had several new AGOYO members join us. On behalf of the chapter and the entire guild, WELCOME! This community is made up of organists, pianists, choir directors, clergy, and music lovers from every walk of life. ***Regardless of where you are on your musical journey, there is a place for you in the AGO.***



# YEAR OF THE YOUNG ORGANIST

*“Investing in the Future”*

July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022



## The Year of the Young Organist Chapter Recruitment Contest Win \$1000 for Your Chapter!

Beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2022, how many young organists can you recruit? Each month, we will be sending you a new recruitment tip to help your chapter recruit as many young organists as possible. We’ve created a page on our website that will include each tip and additional resources: <https://www.agohq.org/year-of-the-young-organist-recruitment-contest-2/>. Keep checking this page to see which chapters are leading in recruiting young organists!

**September, Tip # 3:** The AGO has created a recruitment flyer for you to share with colleagues, students, and teachers. It can be downloaded from the **Year of the Young Organist Recruitment Contest** webpage, listed under the Membership drop-down tab on our home page: <https://www.agohq.org/year-of-the-young-organist-recruitment-contest-2/>.

At the end of the **Year of the Young Organist**, we will run a report to see how many new members you have recruited over the past twelve months. The AGO will award one small (up to 60 members), one medium (61–125 members), and one large (126+ members) chapter with \$1000 each, based on the net increase of *primary* young organists they have recruited (dual memberships will not be counted, so no double dipping!). The number of members you have recruited will be based on the net gain. This means that if you recruited 15 young organists, but lost 5, your net gain would be 10, so keeping your current young organists as members is equally important!

Regarding identifying the new young organists who have joined your chapter, Molly Davey, membership coordinator, shared this tip: Go to the member roster page of chapter administration, filter by member type (Young Organist), include an expiration date, and then click “process.” All the Young Organists (Primary and Dual) will appear on the screen as noted below:

Filter Records:			
Membership Status:	All	Dual Members:	Include
Membership Type:	Young Organist	Has an Email Address:	
Expiration Date >= (mm/dd/yyyy)	06/01/2021	Chapter Sponsored Members?:	--
Records Per Page	20		
Sort Order:			

## Welcoming and Engaging Young Organists

I've been hearing about some wonderful events planned to welcome and engage new young organists into the lives of our chapters. The Chicago chapter has planned a special welcome reception for this fall, and the Northern Virginia chapter has planned a recital that will feature their young organist members.

The following is an email I recently received from the Twin Cities chapter:

We would like to make everyone in our chapter aware that July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, is the AGO's *Year of the Young Organist*. There are many exciting in-person and online activities designed to recruit and engage young musicians who have shown an interest in the organ. This initiative includes one year of free membership in the AGO and a subscription to The American Organist magazine. For more information, connect to this link.

The TCAGO would like to "reach out," too, and the first step is to get to know who our young organists are. Are you teaching one, or do you know of one who would like to take lessons? The TCAGO has the PIPEDREAMS Scholarships, and AGO National offers a number of other "encouragements," which you can learn more about here.

Help your TCAGO Program and Education Committees by sharing information. Do you have or know about current or prospective students? How many, who are they, and at what stage of facility/interest? May we contact them directly, or through you?

Please send us information ASAP, so that we can move forward with some of our own new youth initiatives. Contact (all three, simultaneously, please):

- Jacob Benda, *TCAGO Dean* [jacob@ourladyoflourdesmn.com](mailto:jacob@ourladyoflourdesmn.com)
- Philip Asgian, *Educational Outreach* [philasgian@gmail.com](mailto:philasgian@gmail.com)
- Jennifer Anderson, *Program Committee Chair and TCAGO Sub-Dean* [jennifera@centralforgood.org](mailto:jennifera@centralforgood.org)

Thanks for your help. We look forward to hearing from you!

What have *you* planned to recognize and engage your new young organist members? Please email me ([elizabeth.george@agohq.org](mailto:elizabeth.george@agohq.org)) so that each month we can highlight what a chapter has planned.

## 2020–21 Chapter Annual Fund Gifts

The AGO fiscal year comes to an end on August 31. If your chapter has already sent a gift to the Annual Fund this year, thank you! If not, you still have time to do so. We will be recognizing all chapter contributions received by August 31 in the December issue of TAO.

## Lessons in Leadership from *Ted Lasso*



I'm not sure how many of you subscribe to **Apple TV+** and have seen *Ted Lasso*, but this funny and heartwarming show has helped me survive the last few months of the pandemic. The premise of the show, starring actor Jason Sudeikis, revolves around an American football coach who has been hired as a coach for an English soccer club. He's been hired because the owner actually wants the team to fail (I won't go into details). Upon his arrival he is ridiculed and not taken seriously by the team's members. He ignores their insults and shares motivational homespun wisdom. A recent *Wall Street Journal* article wrote about how his leadership style has affected coaches throughout the sports world; they are realizing that tyranny won't work but *empathy* will. The article shares that coaches are getting the most out of their players by relating to them, not dictating to them; keeping them accountable without coddling them. They are behaving more like Ted Lasso. To quote WSJ, "the takeaway from the series is that the best coaches are the best managers of people. Ted injects his players with confidence. He uses emotional intelligence to balance competing personalities, foster an environment where everyone is capable of good work and build the culture of a team initially resistant to his charms. Coaches who are secure enough to empower people around them, tend to be the ones who understand that a good idea might come from anyone or anywhere. They have the curiosity to ask for help and the humility to accept it."

From my point of view, this style of leadership can and will help you get the most out of your team.

Are you a Ted Lasso?