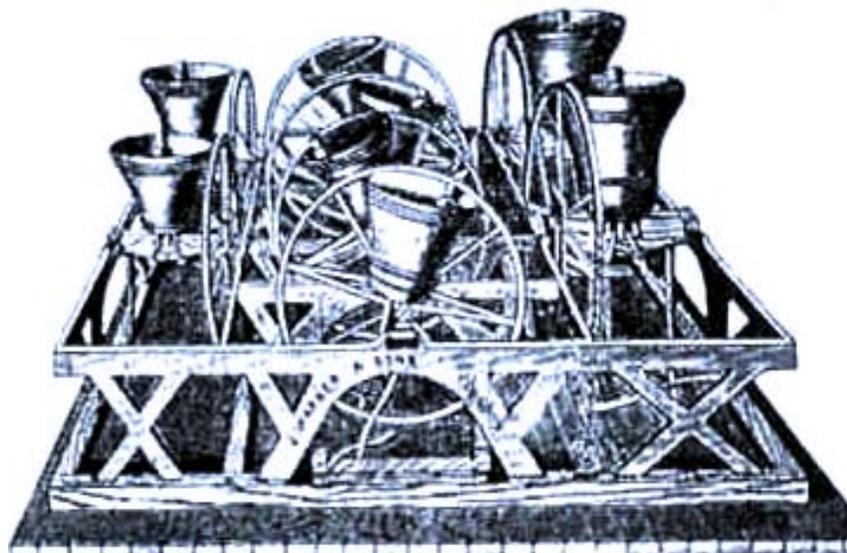


Chiff Chat – Monthly Newsletter

Springfield Massachusetts Chapter
American Guild of Organists

JANUARY 2002



THE NEWSLETTER

Chiff Chat is published monthly, September through June, and is the official Newsletter for the Springfield, MA, Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

Please submit Calendar and short News Items to the Editor by the 10th of the preceding month.

Feature Articles, written by members, are actively solicited by your Editor and are due by the 1st of the preceding month. Additionally, all Chapter members are encouraged to submit articles.

Please provide material to your Editor in writing, either by email (much preferred) or by US mail. For last-minute items, which are very close to the 10th cut-off date, you may want to telephone the Editor directly at home (see Executive Board). Also your Editor may be contacted at his University office (413-545-1253).

The Chapter's website is www.springfieldago.org. Executive Board members may be contacted directly via this site, as indicated under their name and telephone number. Messages are forwarded automatically to the personal email address of the board member.

The Chapter's webmaster is Michael Dulac. Please send suggestions and comments to MDulac@springfieldago.org.

The Newsletter is mailed from Hadley, MA, before the last week of each month using first-class postage to insure timely delivery for Chapter members.

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CHAPTER EVENTS

2001 – 2002 Season

September 9th - Sunday at 3:00 PM

"Opening Reception and Installation of Officers" at Charles Page's residence, Enfield, CT.

October 1st - Monday at 6:00 PM

"Anthem Reading Session and Potluck Supper" at Calvary Presbyterian Church, Enfield, CT.

October 26th – Friday at 7:00 PM

"Organ Phantasmagoria" at United Church, Holyoke, MA.

(Above event was CANCELLED)

October 27th - Saturday at 8:00 PM

"Organ and Orchestra" co-sponsored with the Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra, Grant Moss, Organist, at Smith College (John M. Greene Hall), Northampton, MA.

December 8th – Saturday at 3:00 PM

"6th Annual Publick Carol Sing" at Christ Church Cathedral, Springfield, MA.

FEBRUARY 11th – Monday at 6:00 PM

"Pastor-Organist Dinner and Public Recital at 8:00 PM by Brett Maguire, Organist" at United Church, Wilbraham, MA

MARCH 16th - Saturday from 9:30 AM to 2:00 PM

"Pedals, Pipes and Pizza!" at Smith College (John M. Greene Hall), Northampton, MA.

APRIL 21th – Sunday at 4:00 PM

"Members Recital at All Saints Episcopal Church, South Hadley, MA

JUNE 10th – Monday at 6:00 PM

"Annual Banquet", location and special program TBA

IN THIS ISSUE

"Cover"

Drawing from an antique illustration. Handbell ringing as we know it today is generally considered to have begun in 17th century England for practicing a system of ringing tower bells called "change-ringing". Because church towers could be cold and practice sessions very disturbing to residents in the town, it became convenient to rehearse the numerous change-ringing routines using handbells.

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FROM THE EDITOR

This month we start the first of several articles on Handbells. Chapter Treasurer Arlene Howes, an expert on the subject and very active with her own handbell choirs, has prepared an article on Handbell Basics. She will write additional articles for future issues. Topics will include technique, repertoire, and other material. This article is at once useful for readers considering a handbell program, or for those already involved with handbell choirs. Arlene provides valuable pointers and tips based on her extensive experience.

DEAN'S MESSAGE

Eggnog. Cookies. Punch. Fruitcake. Aunt Bessie's secret recipe kinda-bar kinda-cake thingies. Ah, the excess of a holiday well celebrated! And the utter irony, only one week after, to be expected to reflect on the past year and make resolutions for self-improvement in the New Year.

There are obvious areas for improvement related to recent excesses: drink less eggnog and punch; ingest fewer cookies; make a pre-Lenten gesture and give up Aunt Bessie's thingies entirely.

But resolutions can also be about making us better, not just less bad. And since resolutions are, at the most basic level, nothing more than promises to oneself, nobody needs to know if we fail in keeping them all the time.

I'd like to make a pitch for you to consider this resolution – to attend at least one Chapter Event between January and June 2002.

Bring your pastor(s) to the Pastor-Organist dinner in February; encourage interested young people to attend Pedals, Pipes & Pizza in March; show your support for your colleagues at the April Members' Recital, or be daring and offer to play.

Make a promise to yourself; only you will know if you keep it.

There are two reasons prompting me to ask for this resolution: the first is "in spite of" the success of the Publick Carol Sing on December 8th. Schola Nova, Clarion Brass, Cathedral High School choristers, youth choirs from Springfield and Westfield, and three Chapter member organists performed for an appreciative audience that filled Christ Church Cathedral to overflowing. It was a great way to place our Chapter before the public, but I can count on one hand the number of Chapter members in the audience.

The second reason is for the future: a nominating committee is being formed (more in next month's issue), charged with preparing a slate of candidates to stand election for those offices and at-large positions whose terms expire in June. If you are interested in serving, please make your interest known to me or any other board member. If you are called by the committee, please give serious consideration to their request. Our Chapter needs the involvement of as many members as possible to face the challenges of a new year and a nearly-new century.

Best wishes for 2002!

Larry

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SOME REMARKS ON HANDBELLS

The world of handbells is thriving in America, and active membership in the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers (AGEHR) exceeds 9000. Several tens-of-thousands of churches already have handbell sets of at least 2 or 3 octaves. But many of these churches may or may not presently have an active program because, surprisingly, handbells in numerous churches sometimes just sit in their cases gathering dust for years after the initial enthusiasm -- awaiting another director having interest and ability in handbells. Yet, more and more churches are adding this musical capability to their overall ministry through music.

In addition to their musical value, handbells are a splendid activity for any age group. And handbell playing in a choir is a particularly outstanding intergenerational activity. Moreover... playing handbells is an almost guaranteed way for any age group to really learn to read music!



In this country, the use of handbells in worship has been largely, if not completely, eclipsed by tune ringing. While tune ringing is, of course, marvelous, the use of handbells in psalmody and with the liturgy has a rich tradition dating back centuries. A reintroduction of this is an opportunity to provide an entirely new musical dimension to corporate worship.

A particularly attractive handbell sound is obtained from bells which are considered Flemish, not English, in sound. Tonally characterized by their unique "tower bell" sound because a strong minor third overtone above the fundamental is purposely not "tuned out", the firm in Holland which produced these bells ceased handbell manufacturing two years ago.

Articles will be solicited for future issues of Chiff Chat to include information about using handbells liturgically (for example, in plainsong and early polyphony) in addition to much more on tune ringing.

* * * * *

RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR

Handbell Basics - I

Arlene Howes

As you recover from the joyful but hectic Advent/Christmas season, perhaps you desire to approach the January-June period with a renewed enthusiasm for you and your handbell choir. As a learning, growing, and changing director, you might ask yourself if there are some things you might do better this second half of the year. It is always refreshing to face new experiences and new challenges.

If you are selecting music for your handbell choir, you will find the "Difficulty Level System" established by the AGEHR (American Guild of English Handbell Ringers, Inc.) very helpful. There are six levels based on three categories of criteria: rhythm, articulation, and dexterity. Of course tempo, number of ringers, handbell assignments, et cetera will also affect how difficult a given piece seems to be. These difficulty levels are assigned for "traditional size" handbell choirs: 11-13 ringers for a 3 octave or larger set.

For level one, the easiest level, there are no bell changes, no subdivision of beats, only eight basic techniques, and slow to moderate tempi. Such a piece may contain a six measure (or less) phrase of a higher technical difficulty, so look for such a "special practice" spot.

As the difficulty level increases each level builds on the previous one, and by level six, you might find unlimited meters, complex rhythms, unlimited handbell changes (chromatic) and variable dynamics and tempi.

You can purchase (\$3.00) a Handbell Notation booklet from the National office of AGEHR (1-800-878-5459).

Although you have undoubtedly already purchased



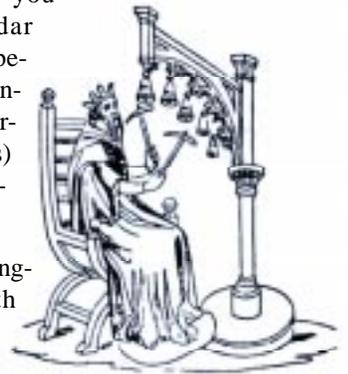
your handbell music selections for the balance of this church year, let me suggest that you apply the "Something Old, Something New" axiom. This can be used in planning for the six months, the Lenten/Easter season, or even the single rehearsal.

Which songs, techniques, and activities are "old" (familiar to you) and could be used again? Try to include some that your choir really liked and played successfully, and that you enjoyed directing.

Which songs, techniques and activities that are "new" (not yet tried by you) do you wish to introduce? Don't be a leader who hesitates to learn a new skill. Keep in mind that we constantly expect our ringers to be willing to try new experiences with music. Even a familiar hymn tune may be arranged with variations in harmony and rhythm.

As the director, you should find that new approaches stimulate your own interest and growth. When you stretch yourself and experiment with new songs and ideas, it may kindle a spark of your own enthusiasm about the upcoming months and the demands placed on your church's handbell choir(s).

Next, if at all possible, you should map out the calendar schedule for this six-month period. Consult the church calendar and schedule the dates, services, and times your choir(s) will play as well as your regular rehearsal times.



It will be most helpful to ringers and, if you direct youth choirs, their parents when your communicate in written form as much information as you have at this time. You can issue an updated version later if there are major revisions needed.

When you have put together a rough draft, be sure that you have included one or two fun activities such as a Valentine's Day party or end-of-year pizza smorgasbord. Maybe your Christmas program was the major event for the year, but, if not, a bigger project helps to pull everyone together.

Consider attending an Area-I Conference (only offered on the odd-numbered years). Choirs can go as a group, or individuals will always find a number of choirs there where you can step into a vacant position for massed ringing (500-600 ringers) and also attend individual classes to learn about many aspects of ringing.

Also as church musicians, we need to consider an outreach project. Nursing homes usually welcome groups and are especially pleased at times other than the Christmas season. Residents there really love to sing along, so plan a few familiar hymns using the hymnbook or even use their piano (check to see that it is in tune!) and simply play a melody line with or without basic chords.

Hopefully, you set up an attendance policy back in September, but this is a good time to remind your ringers that they are responsible not only to you, but to the other ringers as well. Nothing seems more demoralizing than a rehearsal where three

MEET BRETT MAGUIRE

Organ Recitalist Pastor-Organist Dinner



or four positions are empty and only two notified the director in advance. You can possibly cover the most important notes for one or two ringers, but this naturally distracts from your conducting leadership. With many missing notes it is difficult for the ringers in attendance to hear and feel the flow of any composition.

Now you are ready to plan an individual rehearsal. Remember that a certain amount of routine, of always doing things in the same way, will increase efficiency and save time (in a rehearsal). Know what you want to rehearse, with what aim, for how long, and in what order. If you also direct singing choirs, the same general procedures apply. Start (begin) and end with something fairly familiar, work on the most difficult music about 1/3 of the way into the rehearsal, cover the most essential music (such as the selections chosen for the next Sunday or two) near the beginning of the rehearsal, and alternate songs with different speeds, keys, or techniques. This variety increases interest and attention and, therefore, efficiency.

Finally, one should know and mark the music and assign ringing positions. Also know its form and some background about the composer, the forms, the ringing techniques, et cetera. Anticipate new techniques and problem spots and plan a variety of ways to attack and learn them.

When the actual time for the rehearsal arrives, there is much physical preparation so be sure to enlist some helpers. If necessary, move the bell tables into position, bring out bell cases, place notebooks in the proper positions, and have each ringer obtain rehearsal gloves and available chromatic bells and handchimes for assigned positions.

To begin the rehearsal give announcements and directions quickly, and establish a pattern of saying things only once and expecting results.

Starting the rehearsal with that familiar, well-liked composition will set the tone for a sense of accomplishment in the rehearsal. Remember to be flexible enough to adapt to any situation while still accomplishing your essential goals for that rehearsal.

Most importantly, take a moment now and then for you and your choir to have fun, to relax, and to laugh at amusing moments (or of choir memories) in the rehearsal!

* * * * *

As part of the Pastor/Organist Dinner Event on February 11th, there will be a public organ recital. The organist, Brett Maguire, is the College of the Holy Cross Organ Scholar for the class of 2002. He studies with James David Christie.

Brett grew up in Nashua, NH, where he was appointed to his first church job at the age of 14. When he was 16, he was appointed Church Music Intern at the First Congregational Church in Shrewsbury, MA.

Formerly a piano student of Malcolm Halliday in Worcester, he has also played in masterclass with Marie-Claire Alain, Olivier Latty, Ludgar Lohmann, and Jean-Pierre Leguay.

When your Editor asked Brett about his favorite music he replied: "Although I feel the most at home in the North German Baroque school (to play a fugue of Bach on a great instrument is to truly be alive), having studied the piano seriously throughout high school, I have a definite affinity for the French Romantic school as well."

Brett won first prize in the National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance, which was held in Portland, ME, this past July. He is currently interim Music Director at Saint Paul's Cathedral in Worcester, MA.

Responding to your Editor's question about his interests outside of music he said: "The real love outside of music, though, is good beer. This passion has led me to homebrewing, a hobby I have pursued for several years now. It is a dream of mine that one day all Americans will know the pleasure to be found in doppelbocks, Trappist beers, and the ales of England." (EDITOR: The engaging references to good beer, as described by Pete Beardsley in his October Chiff Chat article about his European organ odyssey last Summer, just might suggest that Brett and Pete would enjoy comparing notes on the subject!)

Chapter members, guest clergy, and the invited public look forward eagerly to Brett's February concert.

* * * * *

HUMORESQUE

The Ten Commandments For Organ Practice

EDITOR: This humorous piece was received from New South Wales, Australia, via Ed Boadway. Enjoy!

1 – Thou shalt practice every day, even if only for a short period.

2 – Thou shalt never practice faster than thou canst play perfectly, for it is written: 'Perfect Practice Makes Perfect'.

3 – Thou shalt not put off working on the hard parts; David did not invite Goliath to come back for tea.

4 – Thou shalt work out a usable fingering, inscribe it on thy papyrus, and never vary from same, for: 'Fumble Fingers Find Fate Fickle'.

5 – Thou shalt never apologize for thy playing, or say "oops!" when thou makest a mistake, for thou wilt only draw attention to things which otherwise would not have been noticed by the think people.

6 – Thou shalt practice each composition in short segments so that thy fingers may not break off more than thy mind can chew.

7 – Thou shalt listen, and not only to organists, for it is written: What this untidy world needs is fewer organists and more musicians who can play the organ.

8 – Thou shalt not play pedals without shoes, for thy Odor-Eaters may be spent, and besides, it leadeth to sloppy playing.

9 – Thou shalt begin and end each practice session with something thou canst play readily, that thou mayest not be discouraged.

10 – Thou shalt always remember that thy practice is a labor of love and that by persistence (oft proved by thyself in other undertakings) thou canst bring to pass many wonders.

NEWS ITEMS

"Chapter Events"

PUBLICCK CAROL SING: This annual event was held on December 8th in Christ Church Cathedral. As in past years, a capacity audience provided significant public awareness of AGO community outreach.

"Other News"

NUNC DIMITTIS: The Chapter was saddened to learn that Lawrence R. Buddington, 72, died on Tuesday afternoon, December 11th. Born in Springfield in 1928, he graduated from

Technical High School and American International College. Following his service in the US Army in the Korean War, he attended Yale University School of Music. He was a High School Science Teacher in the Agawam and Springfield school systems. Larry was a Gilbert and Sullivan enthusiast, and appeared in many of the productions of the Wilbraham United Church Players. Until his recent illness, he was a driving instructor for Winchester Auto School.

From 1946 onward, he was also organist-choir director at several local churches, among them the First Congregational Church in Westfield, Bethesda Lutheran Church, Springfield, and his current position at the First Congregational Church of West Springfield. In the American Guild of Organists, he was a Charter Member of the Springfield Chapter, and was twice past Dean: 1959-1961 and again in 1973-1974. At the time of his death he was a member of the Chapter's Executive Board.

He is survived by his wife, Elisabeth (MacDonald) Buddington, two sons and a daughter, and seven grandchildren. He also leaves two brothers. A graveside service was held at Baptist Village Cemetery in East Longmeadow on Friday, December 14th, at 9:30 AM followed by a memorial service at the First Congregational Church of West Springfield at 11:00 AM. Larry had a high and abiding interest in the Chapter's Organ Academy. Contributions in his memory may be made to the Organ Academy, Springfield Chapter, American Guild of Organists; or to the Salvation Army.

DUES INCREASE NEXT YEAR: For the first time in 4 years, AGO membership dues will be increased starting with the 2002-2003 year. National considered the added services and programs now provided by the AGO, inflation over the past 4 years, and dues of comparable organizations. The new annual dues in the various membership categories will be: Voting Member \$80, Special Member \$57, Full-time Student (with ID) \$30, Dual \$30, Student Dual \$10, Chapter Friend (set by each Chapter, no TAO, Chapter participation only).

At the Chapter's November Executive Board meeting, it was voted unanimously to increase Chapter Friend dues to \$25. Chapter Friends membership includes free attendance at all Chapter Events (except where an additional fee is noted for all members), and a subscription to Chiff Chat, the Chapter's Monthly Newsletter.

JANUARY BOARD MEETING: The Executive Board will meet on January 27th at 6:00 PM at St. Andrew's Church, Longmeadow. Pizza will be available.

JOHNSON/GILBERT UPDATE: Shortly after the December Newsletter was printed, your Editor received more information relating directly to the Johnson/Gilbert organ article. Specifically, data on when the original Johnson Organ was installed had not been available -- either from church records or from the builders consulted. However, your Editor later had an opportunity to review a 1984 publication of the Boston Organ Club Chapter of the OHS entitled the Johnson Organs (by John Van Varick Elworth and edited by Donald R. M. Paterson). The opus list indicates this organ was Johnson #367 (2/25), and was installed in the Park Street Congregational Church of West Springfield in 1872. This church later became known as West

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Springfield's First Congregational Church, and this date ties exactly with the completion of the present building. Other information in this valuable publication states "It [the organ] was partially electrified with 'pull-down' action by Albert Carter in 1938 (Homer Blanchard's notes indicate that the electrification was by J. W. Morrison, in 1942); the work was completed in 1945. In 1976, Theodore Gilbert of Wilbraham, Mass, rebuilt the organ once again, incorporating several ranks of pipes from Op. 472".

NATIONAL CONVENTION: As Chapter members already know from TAO, the National Convention of the Guild will take place in Philadelphia this year from July 2nd through July 6th. Those who regularly attend these biennial events realize how inspiring and educational they always are. The close proximity of Philadelphia to us will make this convention particularly affordable to Chapter members, in that transportation costs will be very low. It is not too early to begin making plans to attend, and a substantial discount to the registration fee is being offered to those who register before January 31st. The city has many outstanding organs that will be featured as part of the numerous events planned. If you have never been to a National convention before, you owe it to yourself to seriously consider attending the AGO-2002 National Convention. Please consult TAO or the AGO Headquarters website at www.agohq.org.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

The Placement Director is Becky Isaacson. She may be contacted at 413-734-1623.

ORGANIST ONLY

The Congregational Church, Granby, MA. part time position open January 2002, pipe organ, ability to improvise and transpose preferred, salary \$125/week, vacation negotiable, excellent music program being developed. Contact choir director Harrison 413-788-3983.

DIRECTOR ONLY

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst, MA, 01002, 1 adult choir (18-24 members), 8 hours/week, salary \$6000, 12 weeks vacation (Summer). Contact Robert or Anne Weaver (413-549-0322), bweaver@mtholyoke.edu.

SINGERS ONLY

First Park Memorial Baptist Church, 4 Garfield Street, Springfield, MA, 01138, soprano and tenor section leaders for adult choir, Thursday rehearsal (7:30-8:30 PM), Sunday service at 10 AM, \$35-\$45/week depending on experience. Contact Michael Daunis, Music Director (413-284-0003). mداunis3@cs.com.

Sunday, December 30

7:30 PM

St. Peter's Church, Main Street, Great Barrington, MA, The Music of Christmas: Old & New, Schola Nova, Michael Dulac (Director and Organ). Works by Josquin, Gabrielli, Rheinberger, Susa, Willcocks, Willan, and others.

Sunday, January 06

4:00 PM

Holy Family Parish at Mont Marie, Ingleside, Holyoke, The Music of Christmas: Old & New, Schola Nova, Michael Dulac (Director), Edith Gilbertson (Organ). Works by Josquin, Gabrielli, Rheinberger, Susa, Willcocks, Willan, and others.

Sunday, January 27

4:00 PM

Church of the Atonement, Westfield. Inaugural concert by John Rose, organist of Trinity College Hartford, on the church's new Ahlborn Galanti electronic organ.

Sunday, February 03

4:00 PM

Old First Church, "CONCORA - Connecticut Choral Artists", professional chorus, honors the 100th birthday of Maurice Durufle, and features his choral and organ music including the "Requiem". FREE

4:00 PM

Ecumenical Vespers at St. Paul the Apostle RC Church, Choir of St. Paul Lutheran Church (East Longmeadow), Dr. Alan Dickinson (Director), Reverend Rolf Hedberg (Homilist).

Tuesday, February 05

10:30 AM

Esther B. Griswold Theatre, AIC. Tuesday Morning Music Club, Recognition Day of Past Presidents. Karen McCarthy, flute; Horace Moody, baritone; Paul Surapine, clarinet; Eileen Ruby, mezzo-soprano. Guests are invited. Guests \$7, Members FREE

Monday, February 11

6:00 PM

Chapter Event, United Church Wilbraham, "Pastor-Organist Dinner and Public Recital at 8:00 PM by Brett Maguire, Organist". PRICE TBD

Friday, February 15

8:00 PM

Grace Episcopal Church, Amherst. Arcadia Players, Bad Boys in Spain, Chamber music intrigue, mystery and romance. Diversions from Old and New Spain. Tickets call 413-584-8882. \$30/\$15/\$10/\$5

Saturday, February 16

8:00 PM

Unitarian Universalist Society, Springfield, Arcadia Players, see February 15th program for other details.

Sunday, February 17

2:00 PM

AIC, Tuesday Morning Music Club, Open Meeting. A program by members of the Junior Extension of the club. We welcome the public as our guests.

(Sunday, February 17 cont'd) 4:00 PM

Center for the Arts, Northampton, Arcadia Players, see February 15th program for other details.

Sunday, March 03

4:00 PM

Old First Church, Springfield, Music at First Series, "Duo Piano", Luis de Moura Castro and Paul Bisaccia. FREE

4:00 PM

Ecumenical Vespers at St. Paul the Apostle RC Church, Choir of Christ Church Cathedral (Episcopal), Springfield, Peter Beardsley (Director), Reverend James Monroe (Homilist).

Saturday, March 16

9:30 AM to 2:00 PM

Chapter Event, Smith College (John M. Greene Hall), Northampton, "Pedals, Pipes and Pizza". FREE

Sunday, March 24 (Palm Sunday)

2 PM

St. Mary's Church, Northampton, Arcadia Players, Handel Messiah, Tickets 413-584-8882. \$30/\$15/\$10/\$5

Sunday, April 07

4:00 PM

Ecumenical Vespers at St. Paul the Apostle RC Church, Choir of St. Michael's RC Cathedral, Lad Pfeifer (Director), Reverend William Hamilton (Homilist).

Friday, April 19

7:30 PM

First Congregational Church, High Street, Suffield, CT, Music on High Performing Arts Series, "Jazz – Cool & Hot", music of Berlin, Mancini, Coleman, Rodgers and others. FREE

Sunday, April 21

4:00 PM

Chapter Event, All Saints' Episcopal Church, South Hadley, "Members Recital". FREE

Sunday, April 28

4:00 PM

Old First Church, Springfield, Music at First Series, "The Copenhagen Royal Chapel Choir". FREE

Sunday, May 05

4:00 PM

Ecumenical Vespers at St. Paul the Apostle RC Church, Schola Nova, Michael Dulac (Director), the Choir of St. Paul the Apostle RC Church, Catherine Waldron (Director), Rev. C. Lee Gilbertson (presider).

Friday, May 17

7:30 PM

First Congregational Church, High Street, Suffield, CT, Music on High Performing Arts Series, "Connecticut Valley Young Artists' Showcase", features the area's most talented young pianists, instrumentalists, and singers. Includes works for duo-piano. FREE

Monday, 10 June

6:00 PM

Chapter Event, "Annual Banquet", location TBA, PRICE TBD

Next Chapter Event

ANNUAL PASTOR - ORGANIST DINNER

Featuring a

PUBLIC ORGAN RECITAL

Brett Maguire, Organist

Wilbraham United Church

Wilbraham - Massachusetts

Monday, February 11th

Reception & Dinner Starting at 6:00 PM

Organ Recital Begins at 8:00 PM