



# CHIFF CHAT—MARCH 2021

THE LINCOLN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

*New Organ and renovations—new organ students—a sign of new life and hope!*

Isn't a new or renovated organ exciting?! Or perhaps there is a new console, or an old organ in a new location, or a church that hasn't had the chance to hear their organ in years, because a wonderful volunteer of countless decades has died, a new organist begins to play! What about a grandmother teaching a younger person or grandchild about the organ? 4 examples of this give me such joy that you will read about in this issue of the Chiff Chat.

Bedient Pipe Organ Company with our own Ryan Luckey and Mark Miller have been busy at work in our neighboring state of Kansas with an exciting organ renovation, giving new life to an old organ.

Saint Mary's Catholic Church in Denton has been blessed by the wonderful music of their organist Rose Clements for countless years. I had the joy of meeting Rose recently as she wanted to begin lessons to be more proficient on their new organ. She brought along a high school daughter of a friend to learn!

Saint Patrick's Catholic Church in Havelock is not a stranger to our community. Their priest, Father Troy Schweiger, serves as our chaplain. He and that church, with Bedient Pipe Organ, rescued a wonderful pipe organ not that long ago from Iowa and now it helps add beauty to their liturgies and concert life. A chance to see the church and organ with Troy will be available later on March 21.

The First Presbyterian Church of Wahoo recently had their organ console renovated by Bedient Pipe Organ. That church has seen a renaissance of new ministries and outreaches to their community, all finding energy and excitement in paralleling the new life of their beautiful pipe organ.

As spring comes, as more people get the vaccine, as the health dial goes down, as more churches resume in-person masses or worship services, as new people play the organ, or as organs speak new once again in our communities, may your heart be filled with hope and joy and music!

God bless,  
-Brent Shaw

## FROM THE CHAPLAIN...

Today, I am reminded of the beginnings of Lent as we welcome the much desired gift of warmth in our weather after a brutal assault of snow and then cold a few weeks ago. As we start this season, we can feel the desolation of Lent. In our services, the organ becomes more subdued, taking on songs that emphasize minor tones, even a certain disquiet and perhaps even disharmony can prevail in the music. The flowers and colors of Christmas are gone and now replaced with the muted colors of purple. Penance and self-reflection enter into our mindsets. We begin to have the “ornamentation” of our lives stripped away so that we can focus on the true blessings and presence of God in our lives. Brent has raised up for us in his article this month a beautiful reminder of the many blessings that are occurring in our organ world and in the lives of the various congregations. What wonderful gifts! As our organ music becomes simpler during this time of Lent, it takes us back to the essential, to the prime meaning of music in raising our minds to God. I want to thank each of you for the simple blessing of your service to others through your organ playing. Soon we will be caught up in the frenzy of preparation for the incredible feast of Easter when our organs will cry out from the top of their “lungs” the joy of the day. I encourage you to take this time of reserve and (somewhat) quiet to reconnect to that deeper call of service through your organ playing. Hear the blessing of God entering your hearts during this time of reserve and subdued music.

Have a great month!

Fr. Troy Schweiger, chaplain



ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH

6111 Morrill Avenue  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68507  
(402) 466-2752

**YOU ARE INVITED to a CHURCH AND ORGAN TOUR!**

Sunday, March 21 at 4pm—a tour of the church and organ with Father Troy Schweiger at Saint Patrick's in Havelock. The organ console will be available for anyone to play. Attendance limited to 10, RSVP with Brent at [organman77@gmail.com](mailto:organman77@gmail.com) or 919-609-5362.

The story of Fr. Schweiger working so hard to save a pipe organ to install at Saint Patrick's in Havelock, as well as all the work that went into building the church is so inspirational!

Read an article later in this Chiff Chat about the saving of their organ from another church.

## BEDIENT PIPE ORGAN COMPANY UPDATE



The Bedient Pipe Organ Company of Lincoln, NE has completed a major rebuild and expansion of a Kilgen & Son organ at Trinity Lutheran Church in McPherson, Kansas.

This organ has been a part of the congregation since it was installed in their “red-brick church” in 1938. A new sanctuary was built in 1970, along with a fellowship hall, classrooms, and offices. At first, there were no plans to move the organ into the new sanctuary. A last minute decision saved the organ, but no space had been prepared for installing it. Temporary chambers were created behind the altar with hopes of enlarging them someday. The congregation voted to renovate and update the sanctuary in 2018. The organ was a central part of those renovations.

The organ was essentially unaltered when it was moved in 1970 and its original voicing style had been retained. The chests and reservoirs were due for releathering and decades of dust had accumulated. The biggest problem was service access. It was nearly impossible to enter the chambers for tuning. Tonal egress was also limited because of very small expression shade openings.



New organ chambers are cantilevered out and above the back of the chancel. The larger chambers not only allow much better service access, but also make room for the addition of eight new voices. The first priority was selecting ranks that would enhance the organ’s ability to lead worship and congregational singing. The second goal was ensuring that all the additions would be in the same tonal aesthetic as the original Kilgen stops. It was very important that no stop sounded “added on”. A clear Fifteenth and rich, low-pitched Mixture in the Great lead congregational singing. A dark chorus Tuba enhances the plenum and is extended to the pedal to provide a 16’ Tromba. A facade was designed using the new Double Open Diapason, adding clarity to the abundant existing pedal stops. A Geigen Principal 4’ was added to the Swell to create a secondary principal chorus. The former Great Trumpet was moved to the Swell where it serves as both a solo and chorus reed. Vintage Vox Humana and Unda Maris ranks round out the additions. The new expression shades are nearly twice as large as the old shades and the organ speaks clearly into the room. A Virtuoso Control System provides many additional registration aids and unlimited memory levels.

Two weeks of tonal finishing brought out an incredible amount of color from the individual stops. They now can be combined in numerous, creative ways for leading worship and playing a wide range of organ literature. A dedication recital will be scheduled at a later date.









## A NEW ORGAN FOR SAINT MARY'S!

Rose Clements, organist

Congratulations to Saint Mary's Catholic Church in Denton and their organist Rose Clements! They had a Baldwin organ that faithfully served them for many years. The sanctuary does not have extra room for a pipe organ so they knew a digital organ would be the most appropriate option for them. They worked with Gerre Ohering of Church Organs of Nebraska and David Schmidt of the Cathedral as a consultant. The beautiful new Johannus organ speaks beautifully into their church sanctuary.

Rose has such a spirit of love and energy in her sharing her music with the congregation and a teaching spirit! She already has worked to help the high school daughter of a friend be introduced to the organ and take lessons at her church as well! They are learning together and from each other. Rose is preparing music to play for her niece's wedding that will happen in a few months. What a celebration of new things—a new marriage and family with music on a new organ! Congratulations to all







## HERITAGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN LINCOLN

Priscilla Kliewer, organist

Heritage Presbyterian Church is a beautiful A-frame sanctuary with a cathedral-like front and a wonderful pipe organ built by Gene Bedient in 1971. The organ console says that is number (or opus) 4. The sanctuary has beautiful, vibrant new stained glass windows depicting Bible stories. The organ also has wonderful chimes that hang on a wall near the front chancel, visible to the congregation, that speak beautifully into the room.

Pris is a beloved music teacher to many children. She herself plays flute, piano, and organ and has delightful recitals at the church with her students. A favorite of many is her annual Christmas recitals where she will demonstrate the organ to her students and some will play some of their Christmas piano pieces on the organ! Thank you to Pris for bringing the excitement and love of music and the organ to so many of our youngest generation! You can see a short video of the organ and church on the Lincoln AGO Facebook page.



## CONGRATULATIONS TO COMPOSITION COMPETITION WINNER!



Congratulations to Nathan Pennington for winning the 2020 Lincoln Student Organ Composition Competition!

Thanks to all the students who participated from Seward to Council Bluffs.

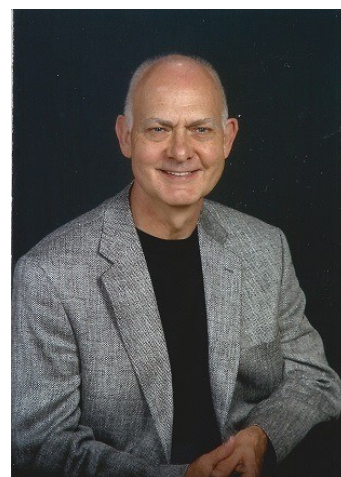
Nathan is a second year student at Concordia University hoping to serve a local church after graduation.

Thanks to all our volunteers, committee, and judges who made this event possible!

Ross Mosier and Dr. Brian Lew,  
competition committee

Nathan will be recording his piece sometime soon to share with the membership online. The Executive Council of our chapter voted to award Nathan a membership to our chapter. We now have members who are students at Concordia, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska Wesleyan University and Union College! We hope to continue to hear from them as we work to find ways to support students learning the organ and as we continue to work, and hopefully finish soon, the process of developing our chapter's scholarships for those wanting to take organ lessons.

## MEET SOME OF OUR NEW MEMBERS!



Achen Edwards, student at Union College

Sam Eschilmann, Director of Music at Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Dr. John Casey, pathologist and professor at UNL

Nathan Pennington, contest winner and Concordia University Student





## YOU ARE INVITED-CHURCH AND ORGAN TOUR!

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### HISTORIC MUSCATINE ORGAN WILL PLAY ON IN NEBRASKA

[catholicmessenger.net/2014/10/historic-muscatine-pipe-organ-will-play-on-in-nebraska/](http://catholicmessenger.net/2014/10/historic-muscatine-pipe-organ-will-play-on-in-nebraska/)

By Lindsay Steele, The Catholic Messenger

When St. Mary Church in Muscatine closed this past summer, members of Ss. Mary & Mathias Parish faced a conundrum: what to do with the pipe organ. More than a sentimental item, the Organ Historic Society considers the 1877 Pfeiffer organ to be one of the oldest working organs in the Midwest. Clergy and parishioners struggled to find a buyer. "There are many old organs and not that many churches seeking existing instruments," said Mark Miller, vice president of Bedient Pipe Organ Company in Lincoln, Neb. As the closing of the church approached, parish leaders had received interest but no concrete bids, said Tom Hickey, Ss. Mary & Mathias parish council president. The parish considered storing it, or donating it to an organ museum, but the hope was to find a church that would use the instrument. When St. Patrick Parish in Lincoln, Neb., expressed interest in buying, fixing and installing the old organ in its new church, Ss. Mary & Mathias breathed a collective sigh of relief. "It was one of the key symbols of the church that (we) wanted to preserve going forward," Hickey said. St. Patrick Parish purchased the organ for \$1,000, and intends to place it in the new church building, which is currently under construction. The organ's selling price was far under its value, but Hickey said the parish accepted the bid because of the considerable cost to St. Patrick of dismantling, moving, repairing and installing the organ. "The St. Mary parishioners felt it was a good solution, especially that a Catholic church would continue using it." He added that, while some interested parishes turned away from purchasing the organ due to its specific dimensions, St. Patrick Parish had the flexibility of working with its architect to ensure that the building could be designed to hold the organ.

2/21/2021 Historic Muscatine pipe organ will play on in Nebraska <https://www.printfriendly.com/p/g/3YbcAp> 2/2 In August, Bedient Pipe Organ Company spent four days in Muscatine removing the organ and preparing it for shipment to the company's headquarters, where the organ will be refurbished. In order to remove the organ, parts of the banister and several pews were removed. Kevin Foley, Ss. Mary & Mathias' bid coordinator, described the process as tricky, meticulous, and sometimes heavy work. "The Bedient team removed the casework and placed each of the roughly 1,000 pipes in pine boxes for shipment. The 8-foot by 8-foot, 400-plus-pound wind chest (which resembles a bellows, responsible for maintaining and regulating air pressure and delivery to the pipes) was carefully maneuvered to the edge of the choir loft balcony and lowered to ground level via scissor-lifts," Foley said. Despite the labor and cost involved with moving and restoring an old organ — Muscatine parishioners estimated removal alone at \$25,000 — Miller of the organ company said St. Patrick is making a good investment, and other parishes building new churches shouldn't be afraid to do the same. "Although acquiring, moving, installing and renewing a vintage pipe organ is costly, it generally is less than a new instrument." The Associated Pipe Organ Builders of America estimate the cost and installation of a new pipe organ for a small-to-medium-sized church to be in the \$200,000 to \$850,000 range. The organ is being stored at Bedient's facility near Lincoln. St. Patrick's is raising the necessary funds to repair and install the organ in the new church, expected to be completed mid-summer 2015. Once the renovated organ is installed, former parishioners of St. Mary will be invited to visit the new St. Patrick's church and enjoy the treasured instrument. Miller said it will be one of the oldest mechanical action pipe organs in the area in what is planned to be an "outstanding acoustic space." Bedient president Paul Lytle, who is supervising the project, called the organ "a gem worth preserving," adding that the process of breathing new life into the organ "demonstrates good stewardship for all involved." With good care, he said, the organ should continue to play for at least another 100 years.



# **St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**Rev. Nathan A. Sherrill**

**Rev. Timothy A. Frank**

**239 Frank Street**

**Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503**

**712-322-4729**

**Presents:**

**Wednesday at Noon**

## **Lenten Organ Recitals**

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church invites you to a series of  
Lenten Organ Recitals to be held on Wednesdays at Noon during Lent.

The free recitals begin at 12:00 p.m. lasting 40 minutes.

No lunch will be served this year.

Please observe social distancing. Masks are optional.

### **2021 Series includes:**

**February 17<sup>th</sup> ~ Jeffrey Hoffman**

**Organist & Choirmaster ~ St. Barnabus Catholic Church, Omaha**

**February 24<sup>th</sup> ~ Timothy Schreiber**

**Junior Organ Major, University of Kansas  
Former St. Paul's Music Conservatory Student**

**March 3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Dr. Jeremy Owens**

**Professor of Music, Briar Cliff University, Sioux City  
Former St. Paul's Music Conservatory Student**

**March 10<sup>th</sup> ~ Joan Ebersold**

**Organist, Saint John Lutheran Church, Council Bluffs  
Former, St. Paul's Music Conservatory Student**

**March 17<sup>th</sup> ~ Timothy Conner, SPC**

**Part-time organist at Zion Lutheran Church, Manning  
Current St. Paul's Music Conservatory Student**

**March 24<sup>th</sup> ~ Peggy Wolverton**

**"Retired" Organist, Omaha**



## TRIBUTE TO LINCOLN AGO MEMBER GAIL LANNING

Thanks be to God for the life and witness of longtime Lincoln AGO member Gail Lanning. Gail was known as an encourager in our chapter, giving rides to concerts for those who couldn't drive and trying to attend events at every church he could. His smile to all he encountered will be missed!

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/journalstar/name/gail-lanning-obituary?pid=197767200&fbclid=IwARog3X2DmZtDz3K6w4Lvfa34LIN3oHQsF8CCAABrS8cGXBILuLo8vHlr9ls>



Gail A. Lanning, 82, passed away at his home in Eagle, NE. He was born January 7, 1939, to Orris and Esther (Gerhard) Lanning. Gail graduated from Eagle High School and Milford Trade School. He was active in the Eagle Methodist Church when he was younger. After graduation, he worked for Caterpillar Tractor as a diesel specialist. Gail enlisted in the Navy Reserves and then served on active duty from 1961 to 1966. He received an award as Outstanding Navy Reservist. Gail served on the Planning Commission for Eagle for many years. Gail was preceded in death by his parents, brother Jerry, and step-brother Dean. Survived by several cousins. A memorial service was 2 pm Saturday, Feb. 20, at Roper and Sons Midtown Chapel, 4300 O St, Lincoln, with Pastor Brian Kottas officiating. Memorials to the Senior Center, Elmwood, or Kidneeds. "Hugs from Home", condolences, and Livestream of service online at [Roperandsons.com](http://Roperandsons.com).

Thank you to Sinda Dux and Jim Hejduk for representing AGO at the memorial.

## UPCOMING LINCOLN AREA ORGAN EVENTS



### IN-PERSON CHURCH AND PIPE ORGAN TOUR

Saint Patrick's Catholic Church,. Sunday, March 21 at 4pm. With Fr. Troy Schweiger. Attendance limited to 10 people. After a presentation on the history of the church construction and organ renovation, the organ console will be available for anyone. RSVP with Brent at [organman77@gmail.com](mailto:organman77@gmail.com) or 919-609-5362.

### ONLINE REGIONAL YOUNG ORGANISTS' COMPETITION 2021

Highlights from this year's competitors via the Lincoln-Wichita chapters will be available to watch online April 11. These will either be sent out via email or available on the Lincoln Chapter, American Guild of Organists' Facebook page.

IN-PERSON AND ONLINE: Wahoo Presbyterian Organ Rededication with Ross Mosier (rescheduled for February 27 on YouTube); Some Union College organ students sharing music in worship at Piedmont Park SDA Church (Saturday, March 6 at 10:50a.m. on the church's Facebook page).

IN-PERSON PRESENTATION—joint gathering of Mu Phi Epsilon and AGO open to all. Presentation on piano building and technology by AGO and Mu Phi member Morgan Cowell at M.T. Cowell piano services. 2738 N. 48th St. April 13 at 7:30pm.

IN-PERSON VESPER SERVICES-vesper services at the Denton Seminary are Sunday evenings at 5pm. Dates the organ will be featured are March 7, 14; April 4; (no vespers April 11 due to Easter break); Vespers April 18 -May 23 then summer break.

ONLINE RECITAL— Congratulations to Concordia University Student, Aaron Jackson, on his senior organ recital. Aaron is a student of Dr. Jeffrey Blersch. Aaron's organ recital is available on his personal Facebook page as a livestream on March 20 at 3pm.