**The Newsletter of the Northern NJ Chapter**

**American Guild of Organists**

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**May 2020 – Special Edition**

**A NOTE FROM YOUR EDITOR**

Due to the Corvid-19, and in line with state and federal guidelines, we’ve changed our

In discussions with our Dean, Cathie Ruppi, I am focusing this special edition of REVERBERATIONS on coping! That means talking about our new reality - what our churches and synagogues are doing in lieu of services plus some creative ideas. **Enjoy reading how our members are coping!**



As of the date of this edition, the AGO NATIONAL CONVENTION is going ahead as planned! We have a number of members who will be attending. Want more information? Check out the website for the convention!

***agoatlanta2020.com***

**COPING WITH COVID-19 !**

**From Elizabeth George, Director of  Member Engagement and Chapter Development:**

##### The AGO is in the process of curating recitals and workshops for our website that everyone can listen to but could also be used for virtual chapter programs.  We will also be posting Q&A about qualifying for unemployment insurance and the relief bill just passed that addresses this for “gig workers.”

**“Stay in Touch with Modern Technology”:** Chapter leaders and members and stay in touch with free online platforms such as:

* **G Suite/Google Hangouts** https://cloud.google.com/blog/products/g-suite/helping-businesses-and-schools-stay-connected-in-response-to-coronavirus
* **Zoom:**  (free sign-up) <https://zoom.us/signup>
* **Skype**: https://www.skype.com/en/get-skype

**Coping - From Sal Lagattuta:**

The regular Sunday service is done completely. It is also left on the church’s website for later viewing. We have gotten the gratis “One License” offer to take care of copyrights. There is a soloist from the choir who leads the singing of the service each week including singing a solo. We are going to pre-record Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil services and post them at the normal evening service times. We are doing this because of the evening travel restrictions that are in place and these services usually occur in the evening. My own employment hours have not changed. Those of my paid singers have. I am engaging them one at a time each Sunday to lead the live streaming singing. I can practice as much as I want or need. It is only myself in church. I do it during the daytime hours. My church has started a telephone calling protocol to make sure everyone in the congregation is doing fine on a weekly basis. They also see if the older parishioners need anything from the stores and those items are obtained for them by fellow parishioners. The church is also ”Zooming” weekday prayer services for anyone interested.

**Coping - From Gloria Norton:**

Thanks for asking......we're fine, and hoping the same for you, your family, and all my AGO friends.  My family in the Albany area (including my pregnant daughter) are all well. My church is, of course, not having regular services, but we've had one successful ZOOM service with good music; and will continue to do that until we're out of the woods.  I have been practicing.  Nobody else ever touches the organ so I believe I'm safe there.  It's nice to learn some new music with the intent to play it sometime in the future.  Also, I'm taking advantage of the time to go through a lot of music stuff I've accumulated at church, and throwing out great gobs of materials I'll never need again. I've been reading a lot, and that is a luxury I don't usually have. Jon and I are thankful for clement weather -- we walk nearly every day.

**Coping -From June Marano-Murray:**

I feel like I’ve gone from being a musician to a computer navigator. I am on the computer for hours a day out of necessity.  My Protestant Church is closed through Easter, we will not be doing the opera at Manhattan School of Music, I have to coach online for William Paterson and my husband has had to set all that up for me because I have not a clue how to do it.  That is supposed to start on Friday.  My niece’s husband has tested positive for the virus and has been quarantined for 2 weeks.  It may be spreading to his family.  It is a new world. My Protestant Church has cancelled everything, but there will be occasional Bible classes online and also the sermons.  My husband and son are still working, but Melissa’s two jobs have been cancelled until further notice.  Today I cancelled the brass and percussion for Easter Sunday since we will not be having any services for Holy Week. Today Melissa and I took a walk which was fun.  I’m trying to value the simple things of life and be grateful that none of us are sick.  I’m trying to remain more relaxed and optimistic, and not be frustrated by what we cannot change.  Hopefully the future will be brighter.

**Coping - From Claudia Smith:**

St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Haworth has been without a priest in charge for two years now. While we have been very fortunate to have found supply clergy for Sunday worship and had even managed to line up clergy for Holy Week and Easter, it has been an increasingly difficult journey as more and more churches without clergy compete for a shrinking pool of available clergy. The onset of the Coronavirus pandemic and the accompanying social distancing discipline has hit St. Luke's very hard. Among my other volunteer "jobs" at church, I have taken on responsibility for producing our church's newsletter as well as maintaining our website and Facebook page. Recently, given the schedules of our supply clergy, I started sending out an additional weekly eBlast to keep people informed about changing service times and other need-to-know news. Parishioners have told me how much they appreciate my efforts at Communications ministry. I'm afraid I haven't been able to use the technology in the same way as others to continue St. Luke's  music ministry. Instead, I have been pointing people to the Washington National Cathedral and other churches in our Diocese and NYC who are able to offer online services with wonderful music, both on Sundays and during the week.  I'll be curious to see how others are coping.

**Coping – From Bob Wheeler:**

In trying to cope with all this I am still able to practice . I am reorganizing files and getting rid of old sample copies that have been piling up for years. The pastor and I discussed doing an on line service and we decided the best way for us to do this was record a service then put it up on you tube for the parishioners. We recorded our first service for Sunday March 29 and received positive feed back from folks , so we will continue doing this through and beyond Easter . I am keeping in touch with the choir through email and phone . We pray that this ends soon so we can all get back seated at the console again on Sunday mornings . Stay safe.

**Coping – From Ruth Wynbeek**:   This is some experience we never had before. We have been staying in the house most of the time except for an occasional walk, ride and grocery store for the last 3 wks. I had a difficult weekend because my sister-in-law died in Hackensack Hospital on Sat. from the corona virus. The family was called in the early morning that she had it and they were putting her on the ventilator. An hour or so later they were called that she died. She did have a lot of health issues but we were all shocked how fast she went. I am keeping my faith in God, and He is my Good Shepherd and carries me through my trials.    My heart goes out to all the medical staff who are in a difficult situation. My husband and I are praying all the time for all those affected by it. The good news is that I am getting a lot of things done around the house like cleaning closets etc. I am also spending so much time each day at my organ going through my music.I pray that all of you will stay healthy.

**Coping - From Stewart Holmes:**

Old Paramus is recording and posting an abbreviated service on Facebook each Sunday. Pastor Rob and I meet at the beginning of the week to plan, then we video (from the console) and post a short message about the music and the message – a sort of “teaser” of what is to come on Sunday. We are able to do this with the iPhone (video) on a tripod. For me this is nerve racking – hence my proclivity to have a wee dram! I am having a ball practicing every day – from 2 to 4 hours – in our secluded sanctuary. I wipe down with Clorox solution the hand rails, switches, door handles, and console about every other day, Also wiped and labeled all hymn books and folders and put them away. Music that we were supposed to singing this season is being left out in stacks so that the virus can walk away (???). I’ll file in 14 days, and have another wee dram. I’m determined to learn Bach’s Passacaglia & Fugue even if it has to be at a snail’s pace! Should I mention that my wife Jean is also loving having me practice each day???

**Coping – From Namyoung Pak**

I didn’t know Ridgewood United Methodist’s Sunday service would be suspended until Saturday morning 3/21 when the church council notified the congregation after an emergency meeting. Since then the church leadership established on-line service through Face Book. Thankfully we have an engineer who is capable of setting up the social media. So on Sunday 3/22 each member had a family service at home, but we did the first live-stream service last Sunday 3/29. I played the prelude, two hymns, and postlude on piano instead of the organ. There were four of us, pastor and his wife, the engineer, and me in the big sanctuary. So sad about the pandemic. But I’m trying my best to use this time productively, cooking for family, practicing piano and organ, and organizing music. I just heard from our dear friend and church member (89 yrs old) that he and his daughter had contracted the virus but are now getting over it. He hasn’t had too much pain and his daughter’s fever has finally broken. Hope everybody stays well.

**Coping – From Ruth Wynbeek**:   This is some experience we never had before. We have been staying in the house most of the time except for an occasional walk, ride and grocery store for the last 3 wks. I had a difficult weekend because my sister-in-law died in Hackensack Hospital on Sat. from the corona virus. The family was called in the early morning that she had it and they were putting her on the ventilator. An hour or so later they were called that she died. She did have a lot of health issues but we were all shocked how fast she went. I am keeping my faith in God, and He is my Good Shepherd and carries me through my trials.    My heart goes out to all the medical staff who are in a difficult situation. My husband and I are praying all the time for all those affected by it. The good news is that I am getting a lot of things done around the house like cleaning closets etc. I am also spending so much time each day at my organ going through my music.I pray that all of you will stay healthy.

**Coping – From Brian Tricoli:** So how am I dealing with the COVID-19 ordeal? Thankfully I did get in a last minute lunchtime handbell concert in at The Reformed Church of New Brunswick which we had turned it into an online streaming concert.  We had about 275 people watch from all over the world.  It was an interesting thing to do as there was no audience, but a neat thing to do in any event.  I did get a lot of positive feedback from it. In addition, I was no longer able to use my practice room for my handbells due to the church not wanting anyone to meet in it during this event.  So I moved all of my living room furniture to one side and set up all 76 handbells in the living room so I can practice when I get the chance. or in the case I need to be quarantined. Work wise is a different story.  Many of you may or may not know I am a Security Guard and EMT with the Passaic County Sheriff Dept.  I was recently reassigned to be part of 1 of 2 EMT crews to man an ambulance at the COVID testing site at William Paterson University.  We are here just in case there are any medical emergencies.  Thankfully so far, I have not had any since we started a week ago.  The risk of exposure for me is very great so I have not had any personal contact with any friends or family just to be on the safe side.  It’s a bit nerve wracking at times, but it is part of the job to help others in difficult times like these.  It will be an adventure I will not soon forget. That is what I have been up to at the moment. I may look into trying a livestream handbell concert from my living room for a little time of musical relaxation for anyone who would like it or need it.  Our jobs as musicians are going to be so important in the near future to help bring some peace and happiness to so many stressed people. I wish everyone a safe path through this all and look forward to seeing everyone on the other side of this event.

**Coping - From Shannon Murphy:** I've been trying to keep little daily routines: keeping a to-do list every day, making time for walks, calling one friend a day and listening to/playing one piece by J.S. Bach. Things I've been doing to stay musically active and connected to my congregation: 1. Livestreaming services through StreamYard, which enables section leaders and I to sing and play from home while pastor leads from the church building. 2. Livestreaming musical meditations a few days a week on our church's facebook page. 3. Creating new arrangements of hymns and recording all parts myself using the Acappella app. Distributed to choir and church's social media as encouragement and inviting others to sing along 4. Livestreaming virtual hymnsings with section leaders, taking requests from audience. 5. Making educational videos for the children in Sunday School, and teaching music in Sunday Zoom meetings post-service. 6. Started a new VLog on youtube called Hymn History, exploring the history behind well-known hymns. Looking forward to seeing what others are doing ! Hope you're staying well and safe.

Important Dates

**Program Committee Meeting – NEW DATE!** May 12, 7:00 pm

**Executive Board Meeting**  June 15, 2020, 7:00pm

We will let you know if these two meetings are held “virtually” or “live”…

**Save the Dates:**

* **Monday, May 18th:** While the Members’ recital has been cancelled, we are hoping to feature a “virtual” gathering. Details are being considered. Stay tuned!
* **Monday , Sept 14th: Welcome Back meeting in September.** More information coming next month.

***NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT***

The Nominating Team has done their job! Here is a great slate of officers for the coming season. Note the newer members stepping up to take leadership positions! A big Thank you to Tom Charsky, Peggy Hsiao, and Richard Tegtmeyer.

Dean June Marano-Murray

Sub-Dean Claudia Smith

Treasurer David Macfarlane

Secretary Brian Tricoli

Chapter Administrator Stewart Holmes

Membership Coordinator Richard Tegtmeyer & Bob Wheeler

Newsletter & Web Editor Stewart Holmes

Historian Bob Wheeler

Hospitality Gloria Norton

Past Dean Cathie Ruppi

Class of 2022 Grace Eunkyung Woo, Stacie Yao

Class of 2024 Ed Hedlund, Shannon Murphy

*Electronic Ballots for voting for our slate of officers (and hard copies for those without email) will be sent out by April 31st . They must be submitted/received by May 31, 2020.*

*The new officers will begin their term on July 1, 2020 and officially installed at our September meeting****.***

**POSITIONS AVAILABLE**

**Zion Lutheran Church 96 E. Allendale Rd, Saddle River,N J 07458 zionsr.org** This is a part time position. Under the guidance of the pastor, she/he will select hymns and music in accord with the church's liturgical calendar. Be responsible for playing at all Sunday worship services as well as special services and special non-worship events. Direct the weekly choir with rehearsals and direct the bell choir. Assist with Sunday School and pageants. Provide organ music for weddings and funerals held in the church. Be an active member of the Worship and music committee and attend meetings. Currently, one Sunday morning worship service. Church has an Allen Organ, keyboard & piano.

Contact for Additional Information?:email to: zionsaddleriver@optonline.net or jjones1818@hotmail.com

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Sunday, February 11 at 3:00 pm