



◆ EN CHAMADE ◆

The Newsletter of the Winchester Chapter American Guild of Organists

Daniel Hannemann, editor

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Our website: <http://www.agohq.org/chapters/winchester>

January 2016

FROM THE DEAN

Merry Christmas!

I hope that you all are rested after the Christmas marathon. I trust that your services went well, and that the many messages of Christmas rang out with clarity and beauty.

Happy New Year!

It is always great to begin a new year with good news, and our chapter does indeed have good news. The Candlelight Tour of Historic Houses of Worship with Mini Recitals was a resounding success! We had excellent publicity: four newspaper articles, flyers in most church bulletins, posters all over Old Town; excellent attendance (in the neighborhood of +/-225; super responses from all those attending; and we raised \$2,226.25 for WATTS (Winchester Area Temporary Thermal Shelter).

Fifteen organists at eight churches played forty-six mini recitals---people actually sat and listened. There is much we can learn from this first endeavor, and we shall, should we decide to repeat it. For now, however, let's enjoy the positive feedback and say THANK YOU, THANK YOU! THANK YOU TO ALL who helped to make this event a success. We also appreciate those members who came to support those performing.

Let's celebrate!

Epiphany Dinner

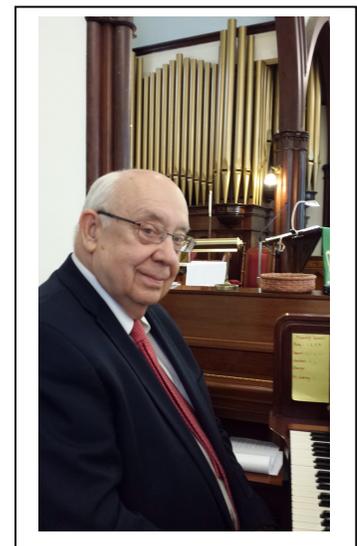
Friday, January 8

6:30 PM

501 South Loudoun Street, Winchester
(note change of location)

Host (S. Cooksey) will provide ham and beverages;
please bring additional food to share.

EVERYONE COME!!!



Steven Cooksey, Dean

*Reprint from Northern Virginia Daily
December 24, 2015*

HISTORIC CHURCHES PLAN OPEN HOUSES DECEMBER 27



Grace Lutheran Church Director of Music and Organist, Daniel Hannemann, said the stage at the historic church is set for his recitals as part of the first Candlelight Tour of Historic Houses of Worship in Winchester.

- Rachel Mahoney/Daily

WINCHESTER – Still decked out for Christmas with garlands and ornaments, a number of Winchester churches are opening their doors on Sunday for a special open house event after the holiday.

It's the first year Winchester chapter members of the American Guild of Organists have organized efforts for a Candlelight Tour of Historic Houses of Worship with the cooperation of Winchester Ministerial Association and Old Town Winchester. Participating churches will be featuring mini organist recitals on the hour and half hour and presentations by docents on the quarter hour.

The self-guided tour will include eight churches in walking distance of each other downtown: Braddock Street United Methodist Church, Centenary United Church of Christ, Christ Episcopal Church, First Baptist Church, First United Methodist Church, First Presbyterian Church, Grace Lutheran Church and Market Street United Methodist Church.

“There are eight churches and 15 organists and 46 mini recitals, which I think is some kind of record for, certainly, Winchester,” said Winchester guild chapter Dean Steven Cooksey.

Organist repertoires won't just include traditional Christmas hymns, either – Judy Connelly, minister of music and organist at Braddock Street United Methodist Church, said she'd be playing a few jazz pieces during her recitals. Some organists are planning to involve accompanists in their performances, which should run for around 10 minutes.

“The organists of the different churches are approaching it differently, so there'll hopefully be a lot of variety,” Cooksey said.

Visitors will be able to get what Cooksey said is a rare glimpse of how the instruments work, and some of the churches will be offering special children's programs around 3 p.m.

“For children to come around the instrument and sit on the bench, maybe even play a little bit, that's going to be very exciting,” Connelly said.

Many of the sanctuaries and all of the parishes have a long history – some as old as the town itself. Daniel Hannemann, director of music and organist at Grace Lutheran Church, said his own parish dates back to 1753, the year after the city was officially founded.

“We limited the event to the walking area downtown because it is a historic district and these churches all date at least to the early 1800s,” he said.

Cooksey and Hannemann said timing the event to land a few days after Christmas was no accident, as Christmas decorations will already be set up and the candles will hopefully still be burning. Between the history, music and decorations, Hannemann said the event is a great opportunity for those in the area to get acclimated with the churches in a casual and family-friendly atmosphere. *(continued)*

“I’ve been in all these churches, but I’ve not been in any of them at holiday time because I’m so busy here – I don’t have the opportunity,” he said. “There’s a lot to be shared from all of us with each other.”

The organizers said they modeled the event on a similar program that’s been a tradition in Frederick, Maryland, for 30 years.

“In Frederick, it’s a really big thing: they close off the streets downtown and 1,000 people come,” Cooksey said. “We were inspired by them, but then we went off on our own route.”

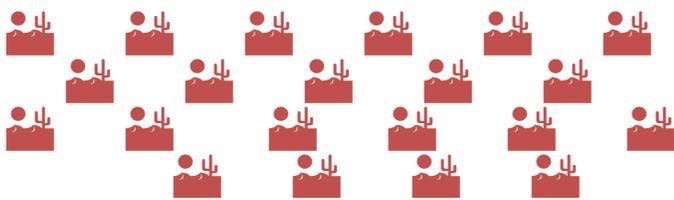
One defining feature of the Winchester tour is that during the event, each church will be accepting donations toward Winchester Area Temporary Thermal Shelter.

Despite landing the event a couple of days after Christmas, members of the guild are looking to give tour-goers from both within the city and out of town a true taste for the season before breaks and vacations are over and the decorations wilt.

“We’re unusual that we have a number of churches close together with wonderful instruments and wonderful players,” Cooksey said. “We hope to spread the Christmas spirit by having people come and see the beautiful decorations and hear some wonderful music.”

IF YOU GO: 2-5 p.m. Dec. 27 at eight participating churches in downtown Winchester. This is a free event. Read the event program online at <http://tinyurl.com/p5rcr8t>.

Contact staff writer Rachel Mahoney at 540-465-5137 ext. 164, or rmahoney@nvdaily.com



WAGO member moved by support

To the editors of The Star and to Winchester community: Thank you for the excellent coverage of our inaugural Candlelight Tours of Historic Houses of Worship and Organ

Recitals, sponsored by the Winchester Chapter of the American Guild of Organists (WAGO).

While the organization promotes excellence and education in organ performance and is international in scope, this event was specifically a local and seasonal effort by our members to give joy and beauty back to the community while supporting the Winchester Area Temporary Thermal Shelter (WATTS) program.

While I was part of this new event and am a member of WAGO, I am writing on a personal note in gratitude for the overwhelming welcome, kindness, and support I have been shown while I was out promoting this recital program in the weeks prior.

I am a recent resident of Winchester, moving from the more urban and impersonal Northern Virginia area after a lifetime of professional and volunteer involvement in music. The welcome of the site churches and those many churches who supported through communication and attendance was universally friendly and positive. The local businesses that displayed posters and fliers never hesitated to say “yes” to my request and seemed interested in this new opportunity to enjoy the holiday season. People on the streets and in shops were equally courteous and kind.

My colleagues in WAGO are so extraordinary in talent and humble in character that I was surprised at their quick welcome of me as a member. Finally, the staff at The Star gave an accurate promotion and follow-up coverage through its excellent journalism.

At a time on the calendar when so many things tug at our energies and attentions, I am moved to write a “thank you” to the community, The Star, the various churches and their congregations, and WAGO. The event was spectacular, but the elements of a community rooted in embracing newcomers and visitors and supporting each other have been the best representations of the holiday spirit yet. I am sure it will continue in the New Year.

Linda W. Beville
Winchester
(Reprinted from



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