



## American Guild of Organists

### Professional Development Newsletter

November 2011

Greetings from your Councillor for Professional Development,

*This newsletter comes to you to share information about some of the benefits of membership in the American Guild of Organists, specifically in the area of professional development.*

A variety of resources related to the **professional development** of AGO members is provided by the national organization which includes the national council, headquarters staff and two committees which relate directly to this area. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the available resources which may be of interest to our members.

**AGO Website** ([www.agohq.org](http://www.agohq.org)) - Here you will find a wealth of information about our organization. Under the heading of Professional Development are the following documents which relate to the importance of our interaction with other musicians and our employers:

- Code of Ethics
- Code of Professional Standards
- Grievance Procedures (updated in 2011)
- Discipline
- Alternate Discipline Resolution

There are also articles and other documents which relate to education in sacred/church music, both for the church musician and for the congregations we serve. Information about contracts, employment details, salary guidelines and more may also be of interest. A link to “positions available” is an added benefit for our members.

**National Headquarters** – In addition to the downloadable documents listed above, many resources may be ordered from the National headquarters. See the listing near the front of each TAO magazine for that information. Headquarters staff members are also very helpful in answering questions or suggesting the best person to contact.

**Professional Development Committees** – Two committees relate to the area of professional development:

- **Seminary and Denominational Relations Committee** - This committee works to influence the music education of seminary students and collaborates with denominational governing bodies. Its goals are to raise the level of musical knowledge of seminary graduates and to improve clergy-musician relations in general. The committee promotes discussion of relevant topics and develops resources for musicians.
- **Committee on Career Development and Support** - The Committee on Career Development and Support develops national compensation guidelines for musicians employed by religious institutions. This committee, primarily concerned with the professional lives of AGO members, also:

Periodically reviews AGO Code of Ethics and discipline, Procedures for Dealing with Complaints about Termination, and Code of Professional Standards.

- i. Assists chapters, Councillors for Regions, and the national Councillor for Professional Development in dealing with grievance and Code of Ethics cases.
- ii. Produces AGO resources such as model contracts, the Professional Development Handbook, and the annual directory of chapter placement services.

For more information about these committees or to contact a member, please see the AGO website.

**AGO 2012 National Convention in Nashville, TN** – An AGO convention is the perfect place to learn and grow as a musician and to renew or establish acquaintances and friendships. At the 2012 convention, two workshops which may be of interest to you will be sponsored by the professional development committees. In addition, our President, Dr. Eileen Guenther, will also present a workshop of interest. Here are overviews of these presentations. More information is available at [www.ago2012.org](http://www.ago2012.org)

Local Motion: Initiating Salary Guidelines in Your Chapter - National guidelines establish a powerful baseline for salary negotiations, but they are not realistic in all situations. The AGO Committee on Career Development and Support presents a workshop to assist AGO chapters in developing Local Salary Guidelines for salaries and for substitutes, wedding and funeral fees. During this workshop, attendees will examine how the National Guidelines were drafted and learn strategies for crafting guidelines reflective of their own local financial realities.

Presenters: Dr. Christopher Cook and David Rhody

A Difficult Assignment: Suggestions for Leading in the Assembly - Dr. Johnson offers a diagnosis of why the calling of organists and all worship leaders is hard work in our current cultural atmosphere of subjective dissolution that is often toxic, and then suggests why Christian worship is an antidote, offering concrete suggestions as to how we as clergy and musicians can better work together to inspire a worship life that helps others to unwrap the gift of grace.

Presenter: Dr. Trygve Johnson

Musician-Clergy Relations - The relationship between clergy and musician is perhaps the most critical one on a church staff, and this workshop will explore the dynamics that come into play as well as mutual expectations: what clergy want musicians to know and what musicians wish the clergy to know. Emphasis will be placed on practical ways to build a strong, mutually supportive relationship that enables the congregation to flourish and empowers both musicians and clergy. Presenter: Dr. Eileen Guenther

I hope this information will be useful to you or someone you know. If you have questions or comments, please contact me. You may also want to visit AGO at Facebook.com.

Sincerely,  
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