

# American Guild of Organists



*Although the American Guild of Organists is an educational organization, the vast majority of its more than 21,000 members are church and temple musicians. To this end, we have produced this brochure in order to apprise you of the ways in which the AGO might be helpful to you. For further information, please contact:*

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*Photograph by Victor Hoyt*

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What the Clergy and Congregations  
Should Know About the AGO

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# What the Clergy and Congregations Should Know About the AGO

**1** The American Guild of Organists (AGO) is the world's largest organization of organists and choral conductors. Through its network of 330 chapters, it supports the education and career development of church and temple musicians. The AGO provides programs at the local level as well as biennial programs at the regional and national levels to foster the continuing education of professional church and temple musicians in all facets of their musical and administrative responsibilities.

**2** The AGO is the greatest advocate for the use of the organ in support of congregational singing. It promotes excellence in the presentation of the highest quality music in religious and liturgical contexts.

**3** THE AMERICAN ORGANIST Magazine, published monthly by the AGO, is the most widely read organ and choral journal in the world. Each month, articles are presented that address the work of the church and temple musician, as well as the history and current state of the art of organ and choral music in religious contexts.

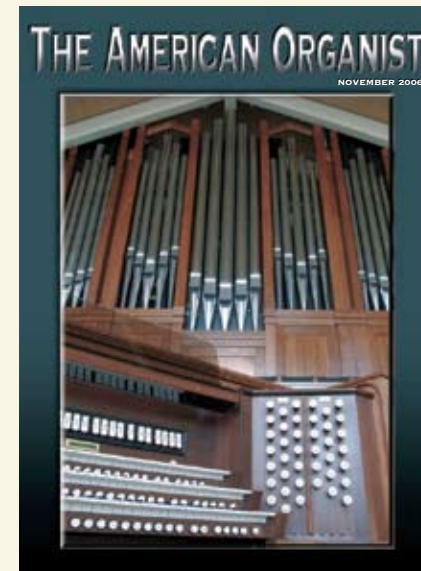
**4** AGO job posting services provide the best exposure for religious institutions seeking to hire a new organist or music director. The Guild offers free listings in THE AMERICAN ORGANIST Magazine and a highly cost effective online job postings program through its Web site. AGO

chapter newsletters and Web sites provide additional exposure for job listings.

**5** The AGO publishes recommended salary guidelines, model contract provisions, and a model for the annual review of organists serving religious institutions. The Guild also publishes a model handbook for religious institutions to use in establishing their own wedding policies.

**6** AGO members abide by the Guild's Code of Ethics and Code of Professional Standards, ensuring their employers that they are committed to working at the highest level of professionalism.

**7** The AGO administers a five-tier professional certification program that fosters excellence in performance, theory, and composition. Individuals who hold the Service Playing Certificate (SPC) or who have earned certification as a Colleague (CAGO), Associate (AAGO), Fellow (FAGO) or Choir Master (ChM), have demonstrated their ability to pass professional examinations prepared, administered, and graded by their peers. The Guild's charter, granted by the Board of Regents of the State of New York in 1896, authorizes the organization to administer these examinations and issue certificates in organ playing, choir training, music theory, and general music knowledge.



**8** The AGO's Web site includes a wide array of educational and professional resources many of which are available online as free downloads. The current physical inventory includes more than 100 books, audio and video recordings, and pamphlets on how to purchase a new organ among a variety of other topics.

**9** Local AGO chapters conduct programs, publish newsletters, and maintain Web sites for the church and temple musicians in your community.

**10** The AGO's Committee on Seminary and Denominational Relations 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.