One of the Christmas traditions celebrated by many persons in the English-speaking world is to tune in on Christmas Eve, either on radio or television, to the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, originating from King’s College, Cambridge. This tradition began in 1918, was first broadcast in 1928, and is now heard by millions around the world.

In 1919, Arthur Henry Mann, organist at King’s College (1876-1929), introduced an arrangement of “Once in Royal David’s City” as the processional hymn for the service. In his version, the first stanza is sung unaccompanied by a boy chorister. The choir and then the congregation join in with the organ on succeeding stanzas. This has been the tradition ever since. It is a great honor to be the boy chosen to sing the opening solo—a voice heard literally around the world.

The author of this text, Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895), was born in Dublin, Ireland, and began writing in verse from an early age. She became so adept that by the age of 22, several of her hymn texts made it into the hymnbook of the Church of Ireland. Alexander [née Humphreys] married William Alexander, both a clergyman and a poet in his own right who later became the bishop of the Church of Ireland in Derry and later archbishop. Aside from her prolific hymn writing, Mrs. Alexander gave much of her life to charitable work and social causes, something rather rare for women of her day.

“Once in Royal David’s City” first appeared in her collection, *Hymns for Little Children* (1848), in six stanzas. This particular text was included with others as a means to musically and poetically teach the catechism. It is based on the words of the Apostles’ Creed, “Born of the Virgin Mary,” and is in six stanzas of six lines each. Even though this text is included in the Christmas liturgical sections of most hymnals, the narrative painted by Alexander truly relates to the entire “youth” of Christ and not just his birth.

The first time the text appeared with its most popular tune pairing, IRBY, composed by Henry John Gauntlett (1805-1876), was in the *Appendix to the First Edition of Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1868). Gauntlett, born in Wellington, Shropshire, England, was trained in the fields of law and music, and is said to have composed over 10,000 hymn tunes. IRBY is the primary tune for which he is known in the United States.
This is one of Alexander’s most narrative and vivid texts, shattering perceptions of the picturesque Nativity with the realities of the lowly stable, and the weak and dependent baby. The hymn’s controversial nature comes from the language expressing the cultural patronizing of children during the Victorian era (words such as “little,” “weak” and “helpless” are ones found particularly appalling in a 21st-century context).

In the spirit of the Romantic poetic era, Alexander speculates in stanza three that Jesus was “little, weak, and helpless” when there is no biblical account to support this. To the contrary, the one biblical witness we have of Jesus’ boyhood in Luke 2:41-52 indicates that he strayed from his parents and caused quite a stir in the temple when teachers “who heard him were amazed at his wisdom and his answers.” (Luke 2:47)

One could make a case that Alexander’s third stanza was more concerned with supporting Victorian child-rearing principles—children as submissive and “seen, but not heard”—rather than providing an accurate account of Jesus’ life. On the other hand, the child who is God incarnate surely felt the human and childlike feelings that all children face.

The final stanza moves from actual childhood to a metaphorical family in which we are all children of God. The poet explores the paradox that this “child, so dear and gentle” is actually the “Lord in heaven” who “leads his children on to the place where he has gone.”

The original final stanza explores another paradox—the journey from the “lowly stable” to a place “at God’s right hand.” The little child who sings this song then joins the throngs in heaven who will shine “like stars”:

Not in that poor lowly stable,  
with the oxen standing round,  
we shall see him; but in heaven,  
set at God’s right hand on high;  
when like stars his children crowned,  
all in white shall wait around.

Dr. Hawn is professor of sacred music at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University.

Ms. Hanna is a candidate for the Master of Sacred Music degree at Perkins.
As we approach the end of another year, I would like to share with our membership several areas of discussion and brainstorming your Charlotte AGO Executive Board has recently discussed:

1) **Membership Care:** Your Executive Board over the next year plans to begin an intentional focus on hospitality and engaging everyone in our guild’s initiatives. We want YOU, our membership, to know that we value your presence and role in the Charlotte AGO. Should you receive a phone call or an e-mail personally inviting you to guild functions—or to assist with a volunteer effort—do not be alarmed! We are intentionally reaching out to you in order to create a stronger, more unified chapter.

2) **Educational Opportunities:** For the “King of Instruments” to continue as a viable presence and inspiration to the forthcoming generation, the board has plans to begin several educational initiatives, including *Weekday Open Consoles* for elementary and middle school students, a POE-Advanced for 2016, and continued support of our renowned Stigall Scholar program.

3) **Emphasis on Community Collaborations:** We want to begin a greater effort of reaching out into our local community to create wider visibility through collaborations with charitable and non-profit organizations. This may include, for example, an annual benefit concert.

Should any or all of these areas be of interest to you, WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! Keep these initiatives in mind as you consider ways to become more involved in your chapter this next year.

In closing, I would like to thank our Executive Board for their support, wisdom, and encouragement in being forward-thinking and excited about moving our Charlotte AGO forward into an era of progressive endeavors.

Onward,

**Matthew**

P.S. The January edition of EN CHAMADE will be delayed to your inbox due to the holidays. Please expect your newsletter by January 10, 2015.
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AREA EVENTS

Sunday, 12/14, 2pm
Advent Lessons and Carols
St. Philip Neri Catholic Church
292 Munn Rd, Ft. Mill, SC
Donations received.

Saturday, 12/20, 7 and 8:30pm
Christmas at St. Mary’s
Carolina Pro Musica presents a program for the entire family including medieval and Renaissance music with readings of the season and carols for all to sing. Bob Sweeten returns to narrate.

Sunday, 12/21, 4pm
Renaissance, under the direction of Bob Pritchard and accompanied by Dr. Patrick Pope, will perform a Christmas Concert at Unity Presbyterian Church in Fort Mill, SC. An offering will be received.

Sunday, 12/21, 5pm
Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols
First United Methodist Church
217 S. Church St., Salisbury, NC

Tuesday, 1/13, 7:30pm
Mediterranean Baroque
Davidson College Presbyterian Church, 100 N. Main St. Davidson, NC. Beverly Biggs, harpsichord; Jane Cain, organ; Barbara Krumdieck, cello; playing music of Spain and Italy from the Baroque and early Classical period. Concertos for organ and harpsichord by Soler, and music for cello by Vivaldi.

Thursday, 1/20, 7pm
Handbell Choir of Westminster Choir College
St. John’s Episcopal Church
1623 Carmel Road
Charlotte, NC 28226
704-366-3034, ext. 235

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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Rolande Falcinelli plays The World Awaiting the Savior from Symphonie Passion by Marcel Dupré
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qS2e+tQ6Jo
FROM YOUR REGIONAL COUNCILLOR . . .

I write this as fall is in the air. Crisp nights, clear skies, and just a bit less humidity indicate that we in the southeast are nearing Advent and the holiday season. I hope that the fall season has brought exciting events to your chapter, energy to your churches, and focused rehearsal among your choir members and students! Changes have been afoot within the AGO. Let me bring you up-to-date on a few things:

1) Online renewal (ONCARD) is up and running for most chapters within our region. As to be expected, there were a few bumps and hiccups, but in general, I think things are progressing. Forward, ho! One thing to keep in mind: if you have members in your chapter that are not tech-savvy or don’t want to use the online system . . . never fear! One can still send a check into the national office. Please take the time to ensure that all of your members have renewed. It is important for your chapter and the national organization!

2) The AGO has a number of initiatives in which your chapter can become involved. To name a few: POE (+/Advanced/Technical); January Jubilee; hosting a chapter RCYO/Quimby competition; hosting a regional convention; becoming an exam center. Gee, the list is endless! I encourage your chapter to get involved!

3) We all need to support Charlotte as they host our regional convention this summer! What a great program they have in store for us. Check it out and register now: http://www.agocharlotte2015.org

4) Money, money, money. Yes, I receive the phone calls, e-mails, and letters just like you. I do answer the ‘call’ to support my American Guild of Organists. Remember to support the guild through individual and chapter contributions to the annual fund (a high percentage of chapter and individual member involvement makes a better case for the grant writers in the national office!). Other options: perhaps make a contribution to one of the special funds???? Maybe a couple of you are in the financial position to become Lifetime Members? If not, consider the AGO in your will with a commitment to the Clarence Dickinson Society.

Okay, if it sounds like I am an AGO cheerleader, I am! We all like to speak of the challenges in our profession, but let’s work together to support the organization that endeavors to move things forward! Support the guild, support your local chapter, support the instrument you love!

As always, feel free to contact me at LREllis@ufl.edu. Like the Southeast Region on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/pages/AGO-Southeast-Region/312313912115500?ref=hl) or check out our Southeast Region Blog (http://agoregionivblog.blogspot.com). The American Guild of Organists mission: enriching lives through organ and choral music. What are you doing to assist?

We look forward to welcoming Dr. Laura Ellis to Charlotte as a guest of our 2015 Southeast Regional Convention!
"The Miracle on Moore Street"

June 15, 2014 marked the 150th homecoming coming anniversary of First Baptist Church on Moore Street in Fayetteville, NC. This date also marked the 7th anniversary of the beginning of the organ committee's search for a new organ to replace the Rodgers 890 installed back in the early 1980s. The relationship between David Eggleston, Music Director and Al Murrell of R. A. Daffer Church Organs began in June 2007 at the Hampton's Ministers Conference at Hampton University when David contacted Al about the churches desire to replace their current organ. Over the next seven years several attempts were made by the organ committee to gain the support of the church and their Pastor, Dr. Cureton Johnson to proceed with getting a new organ. The committee finally felt in the Fall of 2013 that the time might be right and they traveled to Chester, Virginia to hear the dedication concert on the newly installed Rodgers 361 at Chester Baptist Church and to have a presentation made to them on this organ by Al. On April 18th, 2014, members of the church discussed the purchased a new organ and raising the necessary funds. The idea was to raise 100K by Homecoming Sunday, June 15th. After 30 minutes of discussion one member asked "Where is your Faith". He got everyone's attention. The church decided to raise the needed funds. After 58 days, Pastor Johnson stood in the pulpit and told the congregation that they needed 30K more to reach their goal. About 70K had been raised since April 20th. When the offering was counted after the service, 29K more had been raised. The next morning on June 16th, a check was received in the mail for $1,300.00 from an insurance company on behalf of a deceased widow of the church who sang in the choir for 40 years and was president of the choir for 20 years. She had died a year earlier without a penny to her name other than this small insurance policy. She had made the church the beneficiary of this policy. This final gift allowed the church to obtain their goal and on June 16th a contract was signed for the new Rodgers organ. Don Lewis will play the dedication concert on the new Rodgers at 4 PM on September 21th. Everyone is invited to share in "The Miracle on Moore Street".

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