

# Northern California WELS Organist Workshop

## Workshop Schedule

St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
Citrus Heights, California  
Saturday, July 22, 2006  
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

- 9:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast (*Fellowship Hall*)
- 10:00 a.m. Opening Devotion (*Chapel*)
- 10:15 a.m. Welcome and Introductions (*Chapel*)
- 10:30 a.m. PART ONE: The Ministry of Music – It's More than Mechanics (*Luther Room*)
- 11:00 a.m. PART TWO: Organ Registration (*Luther Room and/or Balcony*)
- Four categories of organ stops
  - Pitch levels
  - Combining stops
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch (*Fellowship Hall*)
- 1:00 p.m. PART THREE: Hymn Playing (*Balcony*)
- Hymn introductions
  - Establishing and maintaining tempo
  - Achieving variety with hymn stanzas
  - Other hymn performance issues
- 1:45 p.m. PART FOUR: Service Playing (*Balcony*)
- Frequently the least prepared aspect of the service
  - Registrations and tempos for different parts of the service
  - Setting a common practice among all organists in a parish
  - Resources for enhancing the liturgical aspects of the service
- 2:30 p.m. Afternoon Break
- 2:45 p.m. PART FIVE: Planning Service Music (*Luther Room and/or Balcony*)
- Suggested publishers
  - Organizing music for the service
  - Planning the service
- 3:45 p.m. Conclusion: Questions and Answers, Complete the Workshop Survey, Closing Prayer

# Northern California WELS Organist Workshop

St. Mark's Lutheran Church; Citrus Heights, CA  
Saturday, July 22, 2006

Workshop Presenter: Pastor Johnold J. Strey  
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church; Belmont, CA

## **PART ONE: The Ministry of Music – It's More than Mechanics (10:30 to 11:00 a.m.)**

- A. List anything about this morning's opening devotion that was "different" from your usual worshipping experiences. What struck you? What did you like? What made an impression?

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- B. Non-verbal communication is becoming more and more important in today's post-literate culture.

"Clinical studies indicate that only about 20% of human communication is verbal – the other 80% is non-verbal. It is important to use symbol well, for that is the way that most communication takes place during our celebrations. Unfortunately, we approach liturgy the same as we approach so many other things in our cerebral, technological world – with a rationalism that causes love to wane and heart to wither. It is this approach that has worked against a better liturgy in our contemporary world."

Dennis Smolarski, *How Not to Say Mass*, 9-10

- C. Think about the results of paying attention (or not paying attention) to non-verbal, symbolic communication...

- in everyday life – with your spouse or children
- in worship – by the presiding minister
- in worship – by the organist

- D.** Evaluate: After the Sunday service was finished, Pastor Jones complimented the musicians who participated in the service. He said, “On behalf of the congregation, I would like to thank \_\_\_\_\_ (*insert musicians’ or musical groups’ names*) for beautifying our service today.”
- E.** Since non-verbal communication (or symbolic communication) is becoming so important in our current culture, consider the importance of the organists’ work:
- Knowing how to register the organ ... what messages can registrations send?
  - Selecting service music ... what messages can service music selections send?
  - Being well prepared for the service ... what message can musical preparation send?
- F.** The organist’s (and other musicians’) involvement in the service just as important as the pastor’s involvement. This is not to suggest that the music is as important as the Scriptures, sermon, or Sacrament. But this does suggest that the organist’s work supports the proclamation of the gospel. Since music in worship is a form of symbolic communication, the organist’s work is more than mere mechanics.

Since music in worship is a form of symbolic communication, the organist is not merely leading the people’s praises, but he or she is in fact supporting God’s service to us through gospel proclamation.

- The organist proclaims the gospel symbolically through his or her choice of service music, registrations, tempo, and overall preparation for the service. (Nobody leaves the service humming the sermon).
- The organist enables the congregation’s participation, especially the people’s response to and proclamation of the gospel in song. (The congregation will tolerate a pastor stumbling through his words more than an organist stumbling through a hymn).

The organist’s role, then, cannot be underestimated when it comes to the congregation’s worship life.

- G.** The various facets of organ playing that we will consider in today’s workshop may be practical, but each of these practical points has the ability to help the organist proclaim the gospel in song.

**Colossians 3:16.** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. (NIV)

## PART TWO: Organ Registration (11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon)

### A. Four Different Categories of Organ Stops

- Principals (basic organ sound)
- Flutes (two types: open and closed)
- Strings
- Reeds (the “solo” voices of organ stops)

Principals and Flutes are considered “foundation stops.”

### B. Pitch Levels

- Numbers on organ stops reflect the normal length of the pipe that produces the lowest note on the keyboard (two octaves below middle C)
- An 8-foot stop means that the pitch matches the actual note that is played. Larger numbers (multiples of 8) reflect lower pitches. Smaller numbers (divisions of 8) reflect higher pitches.

32'	two octaves lower
16'	one octave lower
8'	pitch matches note
4'	one octave higher
2 2/3'	one octave and a fifth higher
2	two octaves higher
1 3/5'	two octaves and a third higher
1 1/3'	two octaves and a fifth higher
1'	three octaves higher

- Some stops are marked with Roman numerals. These stops sound more than one pipe for each note that is played. A stop marked “Mixture IV” plays four pipes (or four different pitches on electronic organs) for each note that is played. These are most often used at higher pitch levels.
- A *celeste* is a quiet stop (usually a string, sometimes a flute) that is deliberately tuned sharp. A celeste must be used with its accompanying regular stop (e.g. an 8' string celeste must be used with an 8' string; however, if the stop is marked with a Roman numeral II, it automatically includes the regularly pitched rank of pipes). The combination produces a shimmering effect similar to turning on the tremulant.

### C. Combining Stops

**Plenum Registration:** A plenum is made with two or more foundation stops, where the top stop *must* be a principal, the lowest stop is at the 8' level (or 16' level in the pedal), and the stops are combined at successive pitch levels (i.e. a plenum cannot be formed from an 8' flute and a 2' principal; the 4' level is missing). This is the basic registration used for playing hymns and canticles, as well as for music involving one manual on the organ.

- Principals are preferred in the lower registers as well unless there is not a principal stop available or the organist wants to achieve a quieter effect.
- There is some debate as to whether or not an organist should use two stops at the same pitch level (for example: forming a plenum with these four stops: 8' principal, 8' flute, 4' principal, 4' flute). *It will depend in large part on the individual organ.* If you do form a plenum with more than one stop at the same pitch level, be consistent and use multiple stops at *each* pitch level (if possible) rather than at just one level (for example: 8' principal, 4' principal, 4' flute, 2' principal).
- Do not use celestes or the tremulant with a plenum registration (except in the rarest of cases!!! – and even then you should ask yourself if it really is the “rarest of cases”).
- A *reed plenum* is exactly what the term suggests – a plenum strengthened with a reed stop.

**Solo Registration:** One of the organ manuals has a registration that is clearly distinctive from the other manuals and is intended to stand out above the other manuals' registrations.

- Usually this involves one of the reed stops: trumpet, krumhorn, oboe, etc.
- Lighter solo registrations can also be achieved by a combination of (usually flute) foundation stops. A few examples:

$$8' + 2'$$

$$8' + 4' + 1\ 1/3'$$

$$8' + 2\ 2/3'$$

$$8' + 4' + 2\ 2/3' + 2' + 1\ 3/5'$$

- Make sure the “accompaniment” registrations don't overpower the solo registration. For lighter solo registrations, the accompaniment should be with flutes and/or strings, and limited to the 8' and 4' stops, or only 8' stops (16' and 8' stops in the pedal). For stronger solo registrations (involving louder reeds), a plenum may be used.
- To strengthen a reed, add one or more foundation stops at or above the 4' level (e.g. 2 2/3' flute, 2' principal, 1 3/5' flute, mixture, etc).

***Trio Registration:*** A different registration is drawn on each manual to produce sounds of equal volume but contrasting quality. The registration is distinctively different on each manual in order to allow each voice to stand out clearly from the others.

***Registration and Volume:*** The registration that an organist selects determines not only the tone color *but also the volume*. An organist should primarily use registration to achieve difference in volume, *not* the swell box. The swell box creates the effect of distance between the listener and the sound. That “distance-effect” is useful in some types of organ literature (especially from the Romantic era), but it is detrimental to congregational singing: worshippers are often less inclined to sing out if they feel that there is a distance between them and the organ’s sound.

- On pipe organs, leave the swell box completely open. The organ should be voiced for the building it is in and therefore there is no need to diminish its sound.
- On electronic organs, find the best spot for the swell pedal and then leave it there throughout the hymns and service canticles. Since electronic organs are not always voiced for the buildings they are in, opening the swell box at full volume may be too loud in some cases. *Ask others for advice since it may seem louder or quieter to someone sitting in the church than it sounds to the organist at the console.*

## PART THREE: Hymn Playing (1:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.)

### A. Hymn Introductions

#### *Published Resources*

- Augsburg Fortress
- Concordia Publishing House
- Other published shorter hymn preludes

#### *Improvisations or “Homemade Introductions”*

- Begin with the melody and add voices one at a time as the hymn progresses.
- Play the hymn trio style.
- Add an appropriate stop on each succeeding phrase.
- Alternate unison and harmony.
- Use an instrument or handbells on the melody.
- Play the melody as a solo without harmony.
- Play the melody with an accompanying single line counter melody.
- Play the melody over a sustained pedal note or chord.
- Play selected phrases that fit together musically and are long enough for the congregation to find the page.
- Don't always play just the first and last lines.

Lynn Kozlowski, “The Hymn Prelude”  
*Focus on Worship*, Spring 1990

Don't overuse any one way; consider what is appropriate for the hymn you are playing.

### B. Establishing and Maintaining Tempo

- Use the same tempo as you used with the introduction for the hymn stanzas themselves.
- A *general* rule to follow: Shorter hymns, slower tempo; longer hymns, faster tempo. There will be plenty of exceptions to this rule (e.g. “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” may be a longer hymn, but it obviously should not be played “fast”).
- Keep the tempo moving in your mind between stanzas. Begin the next stanza with a one- or two-beat rest between stanzas (based on the hymn's speed, time signature, etc.) and enter consistently on the same beat. Imagine that a conductor is cueing you in at the start of each stanza. Your consistency will help the congregation to breathe naturally and anticipate when they will begin to sing the next stanza.

### C. Achieving Variety with Hymn Stanzas

- First things first: **LOOK AT THE TEXT!!!** This is your best source of ideas for achieving variety in the hymn. The variety you strive to achieve is most successful when it is a reflection of the words the congregation is singing (= symbolic communication!).
- Published Resources:
  - Other Hymnals (LBW, LW, Hymnal Supplement '98, LSB)
  - Other settings in CW
  - Other published alternate settings (Manz – MorningStar, Augsburg-Fortress series)
  - Books of alternate settings (101 Last Stanzas)
  - Hymn concertatos
  - Using other instruments
- Using registration and other techniques for variety
  - Solo out the melody (CW 126 st. 2&4; CW 207 st. 2)
  - Full reed plenum for last stanza of big hymns on festival days (CW 157, CW 200)
  - A reed plenum without mixtures (CW 209 st. 1-3 or st. 1-4)
  - Add more stops throughout the hymn (CW 219)
  - A quiet registration (CW 231, most evening hymns)
  - Breaking the inner voices to achieve a rhythmic effect (CW 234)
  - Intentionally keeping the same registration for each stanza (CW 270)
  - Add 2 2/3' & 1 3/5' to the plenum for sturdy minor-key hymns (CW 280, CW 349)
  - A 16' reed in the pedal (CW 431 st. 3, "Grim death pursues me all the way")
  - A bright registration with mixtures (CW 431 st. 4, "I walk with angels all the way")
  - Use the piano for gospel-style hymns (CW 451)
  - Play a stanza in octaves
  - Drop out and let the congregation sing *a cappella* (not suitable in most churches!)

Remember not to overuse any one technique, lest it lose its uniqueness.

### D. Other Hymn Performance Issues

- Amens at the end of hymns: Please leave them out.
- Breath marks are not fermatas: keep the tempo moving (e.g. CW 79, CW 429, CW 459).
- Observe the full amount of time at the ends of phrases; don't let the people push you.
- If you use TLH for hymn accompaniments, watch out for minor changes to the melody; don't forget that the key in TLH may be higher and in an uncomfortable range for some.
- Provide variety by using the piano or incorporating other instruments.

## **PART FOUR: Service Playing (1:45 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.)**

**A. Hymns and Liturgy are frequently the least prepared aspect of the service.** More time is usually spent on the service music (prelude, postlude, offertory). The unintended result is that the congregation's accompaniment may suffer. A beautiful Bach prelude and fugue cannot overcome a poorly played Psalm, canticle, or hymn. Make a concerted effort to spend a regular amount of time reviewing the liturgical aspects of the service. Polish the hymns and liturgical songs so that you are "unnoticeable" as the people sing.

**B. What registration would you use for these parts of the service? What tempo would you use?**

- Lord, have mercy (*Kyrie*)
- Glory to God (*Gloria*)
- The Psalm: Refrain, Verses, Doxology
- General Verse
- Gospel Acclamation
- Holy, Holy, Holy (*Sanctus*)
- O Christ, Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*)

**C. Set a common practice among all organists in a church.** Use the same tempos and registrations. Not only will the congregation appreciate the consistency, but the people are also likely to internally recognize why you made certain choices about registration and tempo, even if they can't explain it verbally.

**D. Resources for enhancing the liturgical aspects of the service** – published by NPH

- 31 Intonations for the Psalms of CW (Backer)
- Service of Word and Sacrament: Festival Setting (Braun)
- CW: New Service Settings (includes instrumental parts for many canticles)

## PART FIVE: Planning Service Music (2:45 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.)

### A. A Few Suggested Publishers

#### *Northwestern Publishing House*

Milwaukee, WI  
1-800-662-6022  
www.nph.net

#### *Concordia Publishing House*

St. Louis, MO  
1-800-325-3040  
www.cph.org

#### *MorningStar Music*

Fenton, MO  
1-800-647-2117  
www.morningstarmusic.com

#### *Augsburg Fortress*

Minneapolis, MN  
1-800-328-4648  
www.augsburgfortress.org

### B. Organizing Music for the Service

Set up a card catalogue or a computer database. Arrange the hymns by *tune name*. The name of the tune is found in uppercase letters at the bottom of each hymn. In organ music, the tune name is often found in the upper right corner of the first page of the music. Here's an example of what one card might look like:

LOBE DEN HERREN, O MEINE SEELE (CW 235)

Festival Preludes on Six Chorales; Jan Bender. p. 15

21 Hymn Introductions; Jan Bender. p. 29

Praise and Thanksgiving, Set 3; Michael Burkhardt. p. 14

19 Hymn Introductions; James Engel. p. 22

Improvisations on Hymns of Praise; Paul Manz. p. 10

5 Hymn Settings; Frank Stoldt. p. 11

### C. Planning the Service

- How soon do you get the hymns for each service? Obviously the sooner, the better. A resource like *Planning Christian Worship* may be a worthwhile investment for your pastor if he is slower at selecting the hymns for the service.

*A thought:* The opening and closing hymn can be chosen well in advance of the service, and the Hymn of the Day is already appointed. These can be selected ahead of time, leaving the post-sermon hymn to be chosen by the pastor to match his sermon for the week.

- Select as much service music as you can that fits the hymns chosen for the day.
- If more service music is needed, look at the Scripture lessons for the day to determine the general focus of the service. Think about other hymns (besides the hymns that have been chosen for the day) that carry the message of the readings for the day.
- Hymn based music is generally preferable because it has the ability to call forth the messages contained in the hymn texts. Non-hymn based music does not have that ability. That does not completely exclude its use; there may be times when a non-hymn based prelude is still able to carry the theme or overtone of the service.
- Allow sufficient time to practice so that the service music, hymns, psalm, and liturgical items are well prepared.
- Have your music organized for the service. It may be helpful to place your music in a stack to the right of the organ's music stand in the order that you will need to use it. A second stack to the left of the organ's music stand can be the place for the music you no longer need.

## FOR FURTHER READING AND STUDY

- *Christian Worship: Manual*. Edited by Gary Baumler and Kermit Moldenhauer. © 1993 Northwestern Publishing House; Milwaukee, WI
- *Christian Worship: Handbook*. C.T. Aufdemberge. © 1997 Northwestern Publishing House; Milwaukee, WI.
- *Come, Worship Christ: A Worship Curriculum for the Lutheran Parish*. James Tiefel and Stephen Geiger. © 1996 WELS Commission on Worship; Milwaukee, WI. A self-study curriculum for organists and choir directors is included in this resource.
- *Not Unto Us: A Celebration of the Ministry of Kurt J. Eggert*. Edited by William H. Braun and Victor J. Prange. © 2001 Northwestern Publishing House; Milwaukee, WI.
- *Church Music Pamphlet Series*. Edited by Carl Schalk. © [various years] Concordia Publishing House; St. Louis, MO.
  - Acoustics in the Worship Space
  - An Introduction to Organ Registration
  - The Hymn of the Day and Its Use in Lutheran Worship
  - Letters to My Choir
  - Music in Lutheran Worship
  - The Pastor and the Church Musician
  - The Theological Character of Music in Worship
- The WELS Commission on Worship Website. Shortcut: [www.wels.net/worship](http://www.wels.net/worship). Then select “ARTICLES about WORSHIP.”

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## WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Please give your input on each of the five sections of the organists' workshop. For questions asking for a rating between 1-5, *1 means "not very useful"* and *5 means "extremely useful."*

### Part 1: The Ministry of Music – It's More than Mechanics

Please rate the usefulness of this section of the workshop:      1    2    3    4    5

What did you appreciate most about this section?

What suggestions or ideas would you recommend to enhance this section?

### Part 2: Organ Registration

Please rate the usefulness of this section of the workshop:      1    2    3    4    5

What did you appreciate most about this section?

What suggestions or ideas would you recommend to enhance this section?

### Part 3: Hymn Playing

Please rate the usefulness of this section of the workshop:      1    2    3    4    5

What did you appreciate most about this section?

What suggestions or ideas would you recommend to enhance this section?

**Part 4: Service Playing**

Please rate the usefulness of this section of the workshop:      1    2    3    4    5

What did you appreciate most about this section?

What suggestions or ideas would you recommend to enhance this section?

**Part 5: Planning Service Music**

Please rate the usefulness of this section of the workshop:      1    2    3    4    5

What did you appreciate most about this section?

What suggestions or ideas would you recommend to enhance this section?

**Additional Questions**

Please rate the overall usefulness of the workshop:      1    2    3    4    5

Please rate your skill level as an organist (1 = beginner, 5 = advanced):    1    2    3    4    5

Was the time and location for the workshop reasonably convenient for you?    YES    NO

If not, please explain how it could be more convenient for you.

Please offer any additional comments for enhancing the workshop in the future. Signing your name is optional. Thank you for your input!