

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OTTUMWA, IA – First Presbyterian Church, 228 W. Fourth Street in Ottumwa, announces four public events for this year’s The National Undergraduate Organ Competition weekend.

The National Undergraduate Organ Competition was first held in 1973 following a proposal by Dr. H.L. Wormhoudt to the First Presbyterian Church session to hold a competition that “would stimulate undergraduate students in their studies as well as provide the community and surrounding area with an opportunity to enjoy good organ music.” Clyde Holloway served as the first judge for the inaugural competition on the newly installed Tellers Organ. Since then, judges from across the nation have served as recitalists and judges for the competition. Competition winners, including Lynn Trapp in 1984, who will be the recitalist on Friday and one of the judges on Sunday, have gone on to hold various positions in churches and institutions of higher education. The competition was held yearly up until the early 2000’s when it was stopped due to various circumstances. A serendipitous series of events beginning in 2020 led to renewed interest in resurrecting the competition. In 2021, First Presbyterian Church contracted with Matthew Penning of Iowa City to help reorganize the competition and work to resume the tradition in 2023. While the competition has always had a goal of encouraging future church musicians, this year’s event has been designed to have a greater focus on the music of the church. The competition is made possible by a generous gift from the Mort and Virginia Schmucker Charitable Trust. The Schmuckers were ardent music supporters and longtime members of First Presbyterian Church of Ottumwa.

The first event is a public recital by Dr. Lynn Trapp on Friday, March 24 at 7:30 pm at First Presbyterian Church. Dr. Trapp, a consummate artist of the highest caliber holds a distinguished career as concert organist, pianist, conductor, composer and liturgist. From Carnegie Hall, NYC to Westminster Abbey, London his many concert appearances, more than 100 publications with nine major publishers, academic awards, and clinician work has brought him great respect nationally and internationally.

The second event is an introduction to the pipe organ for students in grades 4 and up on Saturday, March 25 at 10:00 am at St. Mary’s Catholic Church, 216 N. Court Street in Ottumwa. Participants will have the opportunity to build an actual pipe organ from a kit build by OrgelKidsUSA, an organization that promotes the pipe organ. Interested participants should register by email at organcompetition@ottumwafpc.org.

The third event is a workshop led by Dr. Lynn Trapp on Saturday, March 25 at 1:00 pm entitled, *Organ Repertoire and the Art of Composition*. Dr. Trapp draws upon his vast experience as a church musician and composer to present helpful resources for the church organist. The event will be held at St. Mary’s Catholic Church, 216 N. Court Street in Ottumwa.

The fourth and last event is the organ competition on Sunday, March 26 at 1:30 pm at First Presbyterian Church. The public is invited to hear three of the most talented undergraduate organists in the country compete for the top prize. Each competitor will play in front of three judges works by Bach, hymns, and a piece of their choosing. The audience will also take part in the judging, resulting a special audience prize to a player voted best performer.

For more information on this press release, contact:
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