

Quarter Notes

The Royal Canadian Collège of Organists
Le Collège Royal Canadien des Organistes Section de
Windsor Essex Centre



Spring, 2026

President's Message Renewing Our Song in Lent and Easter

As we move through Lent and look toward Easter, I'm reminded how these seasons quietly shape the work we do as church musicians here in Windsor Essex. They invite us to slow down, listen more carefully, and rediscover why our music matters—not only to our congregations, but to our own sense of calling.

Lent has a way of drawing us inward. Our registrations soften and even the most familiar hymns take on a reflective quality. Many of us find ourselves leaning on the quieter colours of our organs. Messiaen once described the organ as “the voice of eternity,” and during Lent that voice often speaks in a whisper.

But this quietness is not a retreat. It is preparation. It is the slow gathering of breath before Easter's great outpouring of joy.

When Easter morning arrives, the organ becomes something more than accompaniment. It becomes proclamation. The brilliance of mixtures, the warmth of foundations, the triumphant reeds—all of it expresses a hope that words alone cannot carry. Whether we serve in a large sanctuary or a small chapel, we help our communities feel the story of resurrection as much as hear it.

Here in Windsor Essex, our organ community is wonderfully diverse. Some of us play every Sunday; others substitute occasionally; some are retired but still deeply connected to the instrument and its music. Regardless of our roles, we share a commitment to keeping this tradition alive and vibrant.

In a time when many churches face shifting expectations and limited resources, the presence of a thoughtful, dedicated organist is more important than ever. We are not only musicians—we are teachers, collaborators, and caretakers of a tradition that continues to speak powerfully.

Our RCCO Centre exists to support that work. Through recitals, workshops, shared resources, and simple collegial conversation, we strengthen one another.

Lent and Easter together offer a natural moment to renew our commitment to our craft and to one another. This might mean:

- ♪ exploring new repertoire that deepens our liturgical leadership
- ♪ sharing ideas or registrations with a colleague who could use encouragement
- ♪ attending an upcoming centre event or recital
- ♪ inviting a young musician to explore the organ for the first time
- ♪ reconnecting with the joy that first drew us to this instrument

As we continue through Lent and approach Easter, I encourage you to stay connected with our Windsor Essex RCCO community. Come to an event, share your music, offer your experience, or simply reach out to someone you haven't spoken with in a while. Each contribution strengthens the whole.

May this season bring you renewed energy, deeper reflection, and the joy that comes from making music that truly serves. And may your Easter playing—whether bold or gentle—be a blessing to all who hear it.



Sunday, September 27, 2026

Organ Plus: Soundscapes for Organ and Instruments

3:00 pm

Riverside United Church

881 Glidden Ave, Windsor ON N8S 2N6

Discover the pipe organ like you've never heard it before! Organ Plus brings the power and colour of the organ together with an exciting mix of other instruments, creating bold, unexpected sound worlds. From familiar pairings to imaginative and surprising combinations, this concert showcases the organ's remarkable versatility and creative range. Whether you're an organ enthusiast or simply curious, Organ Plus promises an engaging, vibrant musical experience that's anything but ordinary.

Help Us Make History on International Organ Day!

The Windsor Essex Centre of the Royal Canadian College of Organists (RCCO) is calling on the community to join an unforgettable celebration on Saturday, April 25, 2026—International Organ Day—as we set out to reclaim our title as the Organ Capital of Canada!

Our exciting “Play the Organ” event will be happening at several locations across the region, (see the list below) from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Everyone—of any age or experience level—is invited to drop in, sit at the keyboards of “the King of Instruments,” and play anything you like. Come listen, explore, and experience the organ’s rich, powerful, and sometimes awe inspiring sound up close!

This joyful, hands on event is all about celebrating the organ and its music—and about setting a brand new record for the most people playing an organ on International Organ Day.

Windsor Essex proudly set the very first record in 2023, only to see it claimed by the Victoria RCCO Centre in 2025. Now it’s time to take it back! Our ambitious goal is to welcome 200 people from across Windsor and Essex County to experience the thrill of making an organ sing.

No formal keyboard experience? No problem! Everyone who participates will also have the opportunity to learn more about the RCCO, including our training programs and scholarships.

Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 25, bring your friends, neighbours, children, and grandchildren—and help us put Windsor Essex back on the map as the Organ Capital of Canada!

LOCATIONS:

- ♫ Académie Ste-Cécile International School, 825 Cousineau Rd., Windsor
- ♫ All Saints Anglican Church, 330 City Hall Square West, Windsor
- ♫ Church of the Epiphany, 96 Main St. West, Kingsville
- ♫ St. Johns Anglican Church, 60 Erie St N, Leamington
- ♫ Corpus Christi Church, 1400 Cabana Rd W, Windsor
- ♫ Glenwood United Church, 1825 Grand Marais Rd W, Windsor
- ♫ Paulin Memorial Presbyterian Church, 3200 Woodland Ave, Windsor
- ♫ Tecumseh United Church, 333 Lacasse Blvd, Tecumseh

OUR GOAL is at least 25 players per location to make our record over 200!

'Quarter Notes' Strikes a New Chord!

If this issue of Quarter Notes feels a little different, you're absolutely right—you're holding a fresh new look in your hands. With this change comes an important moment of gratitude and celebration.

After more than 15 years at the helm, Dale Burkeholder is stepping aside from his role as newsletter editor. For well over a decade, Dale has been the steady rhythm behind Quarter Notes, shaping it with care, clarity, and an unwavering commitment to keeping us informed, connected, and inspired by all things organ related throughout Windsor and Essex County. His dedication, skill, and consistency turned a newsletter into a trusted companion—and that legacy will resonate for years to come. Thank you, Dale, for the countless hours, the quiet excellence, and the remarkable service you've given our community.

This edition has been created using a new publishing program, so you may notice that some familiar features from previous issues didn't make the transition. Think of it as a new arrangement of a beloved piece—different, but full of possibility.

Looking ahead, we're delighted to welcome Carmen Danner, who has kindly agreed to take on the editor's role going forward. Carmen warmly invites your ideas, feedback, and news as Quarter Notes begins this next chapter. The music continues—just with a new conductor.

Volunteers wanted:

Would you like to be a performer in...

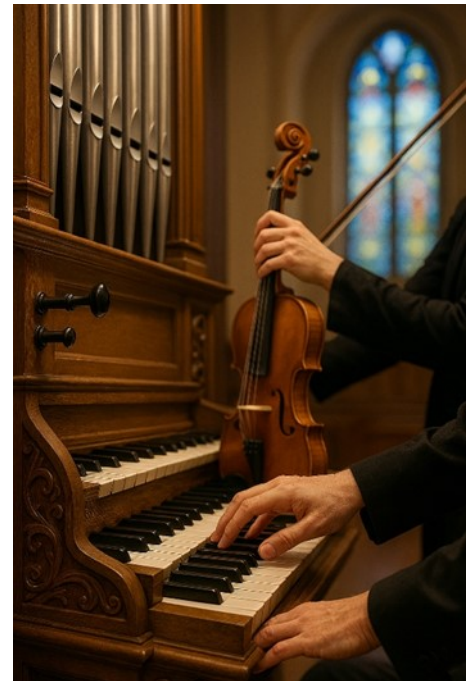
Organ Plus: Soundscapes for Organ and Instruments
Sunday, September 27, 2026

3:00 pm

Riverside United Church

881 Glidden Ave, Windsor ON N8S 2N6

If so, HORRAY! Just drop a note to
paul.wharram@gmail.com



GRACE NOTES

By Rev. Dr. Catherine Collins-Barker

The chaplain's role of the Windsor-Essex chapter of the RCCO has been defined and redefined in the last year or so based upon my interest and willingness to listen to Members who experienced problems which have arisen in their ministry settings.

Some ministry relationships are clearly defined when either the new clergy or music director is hired. Other relationships are not so transparent. This is when potential problems arise. Of course, it also makes a difference if the clergy has any church or liturgical music background. It is not merely having music from the 21st century being shared, but hymns and contemporary Christian songs being shared in a blended and cohesive way. When this blending occurs, worship music works. But if the music seems to be mixed together "just because" the feedback from the worshipers is simply confusion. This is why it is essential for communication to occur- maybe not just between clergy and musician, but through the work of worship leaders as well. Worship is not a solo performance, it is a community gathered to give glory to God.

As chaplain I have been able to share some insights with regard to non-profit organization practices and offered some suggestions regarding possible outreach for RCCO to get a higher profile. But the members need to be willing to step up and try new things-- even as we all age!

It has been an honour to serve as Chaplain and as I prepare to move into the next chapter of my life I will continue to pray for you- music leaders. May God's grace continue to inspire you!

When in our music God is glorified and adoration leaves no room for pride, it is as though the whole creation cried 'Hallelujah!' (From Voices United 533)

Organ reliable relative humidity.

Do organs like a cold winter? Short answer...

NO!

Most churches have converted to modern comfortable forced air furnaces. They operate by taking cool air and passing it through a hot chamber that not only heats the air but also dries it out. This dry air lowers the relative humidity in the church, often to dangerously low levels.

Why is this dangerous? Organs are made mostly of wood which has a significant percentage of moisture - typically around 55% humidity. The wood absorbs humidity when the air is moist but also loses relative humidity or RH to dry air.

As the wood changes its RH, it also swells or shrinks considerably. Consider a guitar in a room with 50% RH. Measure its width. Let the RH fall to 30%. The guitar will now be 1/8" thinner! There are many parts of an organ much larger than a guitar so the change in dimensions has major effects.

Nearly every organ I look after has suffered damage this winter. The furnaces have been running much more to counter the effects of the polar vortex that afflicted the region. The wood swells and contracts as the RH changes. Below 30% RH, problems begin to appear. Below 20% causes damage. Windchests develop cracks, leaks form, ciphers or dead notes or runs between notes occurs. Glue joints have shrinking wood pulling against them causing splits. This causes unreliability and unexpected maintenance expenses. In some cases, extreme damage occurs. One church in Chatham this winter has suffered many big cracks in the large pedal Bourdon pipes, requiring removal and expensive repairs.

Organs in churches with hot water or steam radiators fare much better but even they can reduce the RH considerably by extended running time of the furnaces.

The best thing to do is to place hygrometer organ chambers so the RH can be tracked. There are several ways to control RH in the winter.

I am always available to discuss these methods.

Welcome the Interim Treasurer of the Windsor Essex RCCO Centre

We are pleased to inform you that William Cornies, CPA has agreed to become our Interim Treasurer.

William Cornies, CPA

William Cornies is a Chartered Professional Accountant and Consultant based in Windsor, Ontario. He has extensive experience with the Canada Revenue Agency and holds a degree from the University of Waterloo.

He is recognized for his professional contributions to the accounting field and maintains an active professional presence on LinkedIn.

Professional Experience

- 27-year career with the Canada Revenue Agency
- Large Corporation Income Tax Auditor, Tax Interpretations (Winnipeg, Manitoba)
- Specializes in financial analysis and tax consulting for large corporations

Consulting Services

- Full-charge bookkeeping
- Representation with the Canada Revenue Agency
- Tax consulting and advisory services

Community Involvement

In a volunteer capacity, William Cornies serves as Treasurer of the Church of the Epiphany in Kingsville, Ontario.



Carol-a-thon 2025: A Marathon of Music and Holiday Spirit

On December 14, 2025, the Windsor Essex RCCO and the Church of Epiphany in Kingsville transformed the traditional marathon into a festive musical journey with the first-ever Carol-a-thon. Instead of pounding the pavement, over 200 vocal “runners” gathered to conquer 26.2 classic Advent and Christmas carols, crossing the finish line with a chorus of “Glorias” that rang out in joy and anticipation for the holiday season.

The Carol-a-thon was no ordinary singalong. It was designed as a marathon in music. The event’s ‘coach’ challenged participants to pace themselves through five distinct phases, each echoing the stages of a long-distance race. The setlist began with gentle Advent hymns to warm up voices, moved through technical “hills” requiring breath control, offered a “recovery” with soothing manger lullabies, and powered through narrative carols to keep spirits high. The final stretch was a triumphant sprint, culminating in “Joy to the World” and a reprise of “Gloria in Excelsis Deo”.

More than 200 participants crossed the finish line together, each “runner” joining in a rousing chorus of “Glorias.” The atmosphere was filled with laughter, camaraderie, and the joy of shared celebration. Many commented that the Carol-a-thon put them in the best of spirits, filling them with anticipation for Christmas and a renewed sense of community.

One participant commented: “I’ve never felt so energized and joyful at a holiday event. Singing with so many voices made the Christmas spirit come alive!” And another shared that “the marathon format was brilliant. Each phase brought new excitement, and by the end, I was singing louder than I ever have before.”

Participants left not only with tired vocal cords but with hearts full of festive cheer, ready to carry the spirit of Christmas into the weeks ahead. The hot chocolate served after crossing the finish line—handed out as the event’s “trophies”—added to the sense of accomplishment.

The Windsor Essex Centre is happy to share the Carol-a-thon format with any other interested centre wishing to use it in 2026 – complete with the ‘playlist’ of carols, the ‘coach’s’ commentary, and the words of the carols in a PowerPoint presentation.

Clergy/Organists Dinner: Exploring the Role of Music in Worship

On January 23, 2026, the Windsor-Essex RCCO Centre hosted a special dinner and discussion for clergy and organists, focusing on the transformative role of music in worship. The evening's guest facilitator was Reverend Jane Piercy-Ballard, an Anglican Deacon with deep expertise in religious studies, pastoral ministry, and the spiritual power of music. Jane joined the group online from Leduc, Alberta, bringing insights from her academic work and years of chaplaincy experience.



The event welcomed 23 attendees, representing a mix of clergy and organists from across the county. Guests enjoyed a delicious meal, which set the stage for an evening of conversation and meaningful exchange of ideas.

Jane offered thought-provoking questions to spark dialogue, inviting everyone to reflect on their hopes for congregational experiences, the possibilities of exploring new musical styles and instruments, and the balance between perfection and authenticity in worship music. The discussion also delved into the influences that guide music selection, from scripture and congregational preferences to musicians' input and personal inspiration.

The conversation highlighted the importance of collaboration and innovation in worship and it inspired the clergy and organists in attendance to continue enriching their congregations through meaningful musical experiences.