

# Mid-Atlantic Regional Competition for Young Organists

Congratulations Clara Gerdes (1st place, left) and Carina Sturdy (2nd place, right)



The purpose of the Regional Competitions for Young Organists (RCYO) is to encourage young organists to gain musical excellence and performance experience. Held in odd-numbered years, these competitions are sponsored and administered by the seven regions of the AGO. Competitors must be under 24 years of age as of August 1 of the year the competition is held. Membership in the AGO is not required. The first rounds of competition begin at the chapter level. Each competitor may compete in any one of the chapter competitions held within the AGO region of their home or school. This year, 29 chapters hosted chapter competitions between February 15 and April 15. The

final rounds, in which the winners of the chapter competitions within each region compete with each other, are held directly before the regional conventions. Required repertoire and official rules are published in *The American Organist* magazine. In each region, the prize for first place is \$1,000 and for second place is \$500, and the first-place winner is featured in a recital at the regional convention.

**Carina Sturdy – 2nd Place winner** – studies organ performance at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts under Dr. Timothy Olsen and serves as organist at Main Street United Methodist Church in Kernersville, NC. She has previously held positions at Augsburg Lutheran Church in Winston-Salem and Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg, VA. Carina has placed in numerous regional and national music competitions. She also enjoys playing harpsichord, piano, handbells, fife, and baroque flute. She won the Tidewater Chapter AGO playing competition.

**Clara Gerdes – 1st Place winner** – from Davidson, NC, is a third-year student at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, where she studies with Alan Morrison. She was the

winner of the Albert Schweitzer Organ Competition and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts organ competition, as well as the recipient of the first annual AGO Pogorzelski-Yankee scholarship. Clara is a Wanamaker Grand Court Organ assistant organist, a frequent collaborator with Philadelphia early music ensembles, and the Organ Scholar at St. Mark's Church in Philadelphia. She won the Philadelphia Chapter AGO playing competition.