

CHECKLIST FOR SUBSTITUTE ORGANISTS NOT UNDER CONTRACT

Worship Services

- What is the style of the service(s)?
- Who is my primary contact? (organist, pastor, or someone else?)
- Contact numbers/emails for secretary, pastor, janitor, special musicians, etc?
- How many services, and at what times?
- How many organ voluntaries are needed, and what is the required length of each?
- Is the prelude included before or within the hour or worship?
- How soon can I have the music for the service (hymns, service music, and any special music)?
- Are the hymns announced?
- What is a typical hymn introduction?
- Is the congregation ok with alternate arrangements?
- How are the hymn tempi?
- Are hymns sung with an Amen?
- If service music is used, where will I find it?
- Do I give a pitch for any chanting, and what pitch is it?
- Are introductions for the service music marked?
- Is the doxology long- or short-meter? With an Amen?
- What special music will there be (soloist or choir)?
- If there will be communion:
 - How is it served?
 - Is there music during the distribution? If so, what is it?
 - Am I invited to participate? If so, at what point?
- Does the congregation remain seated for postlude?
- Will there be a service bulletin? If so, what is the bulletin deadline?
- Can a copy of the bulletin be sent to me in advance?

Advance practice and Sunday Morning

- What hours are available for advance practice, and how will I get in?
- Where are the lights and bathrooms?
- How early can I get in on Sunday morning?
- Will there be other events during my practice time that I need to know about or that may interrupt me?
- If there is a choir or soloist rehearsal as part of Sunday morning, who runs it? What are my responsibilities?
- How soon before the service do I need to quit practicing?
- Am I expected to vest? If so, where will I find an appropriate vestment?
- Will the clergy or another musician be available to go over the bulletin with me before the service?

The Organ

- What kind of instrument is it?
- Is the organ locked? If so, where is the key?
- How does it turn on?
- Where are the console and pedal light switches?
- How do I set the pistons (if not by a usual method)?
- What presets are usually used for congregational singing and service music?
- What levels and pistons are available for my use?
- Do the pistons need to be re-set?
- Are there any known mechanical issues?
- Who should I contact in case of an emergency with the organ?

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Funerals

- Who is my primary contact? (organist, pastor, family, or someone else?)
- What is the general tone of the service? Is it a funeral or a celebration of a life?
- What is the order of service? Will there be a printed bulletin?
- What is expected in terms of prelude and postlude music?
- What are the hymns and service music? How will I get the music for these?
- Are there “typical” registrations?
- Will people be offended by something bright (reeds/mixtures, etc.)?

Weddings

- Who is my primary contact? (organist, pastor, couple, or someone else?)
- What is the contact information for the couple and the church?
- Am I expected to meet with couple and help them choose music?
- To what extent does the pastor need to approve the music?
- What music is acceptable or non-acceptable?
- Are there any additional musicians? How soon can I get their music?
- Clarify expectation that any other musicians will be well-prepared.
- Am I expected to attend the rehearsal? If so, what is the compensation for that?
- What time is the ceremony?
- How early can I get into the church, and can I warm up before the ceremony?
- What is the expected length of the prelude and postlude?
- What is the cue to begin the processional music?
- Are there any breaks in the processional (between mothers and bridesmaids, or bridesmaids and bride)?
- Will the pastor invite the congregation to rise before the bride’s processional? Is a fanfare expected?
- Is there any incidental or cover music expected during the ceremony?
- Will there be any hymns?
- Will any music be required for a unity candle or during communion?
- Will the pastor announce the couple before the recessional? If not, what is the cue for the recessional?

Compensation

- What is the standard fee? (Rehearsals on a separate day should pay an additional fee.)
- When will I be paid and by whom? (It is reasonable to expect payment before you begin to play any service.)
- Do you need my Social Security number and address?

Prepared by Pauline M. Fritz and the Columbus Chapter AGO Executive Committee, September 26, 2011