



2027

Woman Composer Sunday Organ Composition Competition

The AGO Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee invites women composers, and composers who identify as women or nonbinary, to submit new and unpublished organ compositions to celebrate Woman Composer Sunday on March 7, 2027. This year, entries will be accepted in four categories: Short Composition for Worship Services Based on a Hymn Tune, Short Composition for Worship Services Freely Composed, Anthem, and Young Composer Prize. In addition, the IDEA Committee will commission Katherine Wright to compose a concert work of 3–5 minutes for \$1,500 (generously donated by Dobson Pipe Organ Builders).

Short Composition for Worship Services Based on a Hymn Tune

- 2–4 minutes *and* 2–3 pages, suitable for use as a prelude, voluntary, or postlude.
- Organ score *must* be submitted.
- \$750 prize, generously donated by the Women's Sacred Music Project and Kevin Cartwright.

Short Composition for Worship Services Freely Composed

- 2–4 minutes *and* 2–3 pages, suitable for use as a prelude, voluntary, or postlude.
- Organ score *must* be submitted.
- \$750 prize, generously donated by Christian Mucha.

Anthem

- Submissions must set “Creating Word,” an award-winning text by Carol Meier (below), exactly as written (no alterations; limited repetition permitted); be approximately 4 minutes (4–6 pages) in length; and include two versions: one for two-part mixed/organ *and* another for SATB/organ with identical accompaniments. The anthem should be written with practical, small-to-medium church choirs in mind.
- A verse-anthem structure (e.g., V1 unison, V2 parts, V3 ATB unison with soprano descant, plus short introductions/interludes) is suggested but not required. We encourage creative adaptations of the form.

Creating Word by Carol Meier

1. Creating Word, your voice resounding, called forth the heav'ns, the land and sea, filling them all with life abounding. How good this gift and mystery. Speak once again, the silence breaking, and through the chaos, sound it clear: our call to join you in creating a world made whole, your heaven here.

2. Sustaining Love, your heart is beating; it pulses through creation's veins. But our neglect has caused your grieving; our selfish greed, creation's pains. Turn us again in your compassion; forgive our apathy and pride that we may serve the world you fashioned, and share the bounty you provide.

3. O Living Breath, from the beginning, the Timeless Source of ev'ry birth. Your wind has set the planets spinning; your song still rings throughout the earth. Breathe now again, these dry bones raising. Bring forth a world restored, renewed. The cries of earth be turned to praising and all our lives be gratitude.

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- \$750 prize, generously donated by the John Ellis Endowment for Liturgical Music, based in Missoula, Montana.

Young Composer Prize

- Highest-placing work by a composer under 30 in any category.
- \$500 prize, generously donated by Billie Busby Smith and Sid Smith.

The winning compositions in both Short Composition for Worship Services categories will be published in the January and February issues of *THE AMERICAN ORGANIST*, and QR codes for the other winning compositions will be included in the March issue for performance on Woman Composer Sunday. Videos and/or PDFs of all winning entries will be posted on the AGO website and promoted on the AGO's social media channels.

Competition Requirements

- New, unpublished, and not-yet-performed works. The composer/author will retain copyright, with the AGO granted permission to publish the work in *THE AMERICAN ORGANIST* and/or post the video performance on social media, in conjunction with the competition.
- Previous winners may not submit entries in any category.

Submissions

- Complete the application found on the Competitions page at AGOhq.org (under the Education tab) by August 15, 2026.
- Winners of this competition should expect their submissions to undergo a review process by the IDEA Committee. As part of this process, composers may be asked to make revisions, so that the final publication reflects their original work alongside collaborative feedback and recommendations from the committee.
- For all compositions, a PDF score with the composer's name and/or identifying information omitted.
- For organ compositions, a link to a live MP3 recording will be required (performed by the composer or an organist of their choice).
- For anthems, a link to a live MP3 recording of the organ accompaniment and choral reduction of unaccompanied sections will be required (performed by the composer or an organist of their choice).
- Winners will be selected by a jury appointed by the AGO IDEA Committee and notified by October 15, 2026.