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## 2026 Rules and Repertoire

### Rules

*The following are the rules governing the 2026 preliminary competition.*

1. Contestants must be enrolled as an undergraduate student in an accredited institution and currently studying with an organ teacher.
2. Preliminary contestants are required to submit recorded performances of all three sections outlined in *Repertoire* (below) as mp3 format files and sent via email. This may be a link to a Dropbox account or Google Drive. Links to other websites will not be accepted. The recording of each composition must be continuous (no editing or splicing). Separate mp3 tracks must be made for each composition and hymn with a brief title of the piece or hymn and the contestant's initials in the file name (ex. BWV661\_MJP.mp3). Hymns should be recorded in their entirety with an introduction and each stanza or verse included. Compositions employing additional instruments will not be accepted. The recording must contain no speaking or singing. **Entries shall be submitted no later than January 15, 2026** to [organcompetition@ottumwafpc.org](mailto:organcompetition@ottumwafpc.org). An early-bird rate of \$25 will be applied to entries submitted by December 15, 2025.
3. Recordings received without all accompanying materials or parts of the repertoire will not be judged. All recordings must consist of performances recorded no earlier than November 1, 2025. All submissions will be acknowledged via email upon request.
4. Recordings entered in the Preliminary Competition will be judged anonymously by a panel of musicians different from the panel of judges for the final round. Three finalists will be chosen to compete at First Presbyterian Church on Sunday, March 22, 2026. The weekend will include a Friday evening recital, a Saturday workshop, and Sunday worship service by the judges. All contestants are expected to be present for these events. Time will be scheduled on Friday and Saturday for individual practice on the Tellers Organ which will be used for the Sunday afternoon competition. Housing via home stays and several meals will be provided for the contestants.
5. Contestants will be required to provide a clean copy of any organ score to which the Preliminary and Final Competition judges do not have easy access. The Competition Coordinator will make any necessary requests.
6. Preliminary contestants will be notified as to whether or not they have been selected as one of the three finalists or two alternatives following the Preliminary Competition, which will take place the weeks following the January 15 deadline. **A response is required 5 days after the finalist notification.** If any preliminary contestant who is selected as a finalist is unavailable to compete on March 22, 2026, or if any preliminary contestant who is selected as a finalist chooses for any reason not to participate in the Final Competition, the next-highest ranking contestant will be eligible to compete in the Finals.

7. There will be four prizes for the competition: first place will receive \$3,500 and a public performance in the form of a recital or hymn festival in the fall of 2026 at First Presbyterian, Ottumwa. Second place will receive \$2,500 and third place will receive \$1,500. The fourth prize will be an audience prize in the amount of \$500. The judging will be anonymous on the day of the competition. While the finalists' names will be announced prior to the competition, their names will be kept confidential during the Sunday competition. The competition is made possible by the Mort and Virginia Schmucker Charitable Trust.
8. In addition to the recordings, the following must be attached as PDFs with the submission email.
  - a. A Contestant's Application Form providing all requested information and signatures.
  - b. A completed and signed Confirmation of Recorded Performance form.
  - c. A \$50 entrance fee, paid via the church's website. The fee is due at the time of submission. Applications made before December 15, 2025 are eligible for a \$25 early-bird entrance fee.
  - d. A stop list of the organ used for the preliminary recording including the builder's name and year. **The same organ shall be used for all repertoire.**
9. The following must be submitted by all **finalists** no later than February 15, 2026:
  - a. A listing of works comprising a proposed recital or hymn festival program of no less than 60 minutes and no longer than 75 minutes which the contestant would be prepared to play at First Presbyterian Church in the fall of 2026 in the event the player wins the competition. Programs are subject to approval by the First Presbyterian Church Organ Competition Committee.
  - b. A high-resolution professional-quality head shot of the contestant suitable for publicity.
  - c. A biographical sketch describing musical training, professional experience, and intentions for future church music or organ vocations.
10. Travel to Ottumwa is the responsibility of each contestant. However, transportation from the Des Moines (DSM) airport is available. Final contestants shall arrive by the Friday of the competition.

### Dates-at-a-Glance

**November 1, 2025** | Recordings may be made

**December 15, 2025** | Early-bird deadline

**January 15, 2026** | Deadline for applications

**February 3, 2026 (week of)** | Finalists and alternates will be announced

**February 15, 2026** | Finalists' proposed programs, photos, and biographies due

**March 20-22, 2026** | Final Competition weekend

## Repertoire

The repertoire for the competition is in three sections: select chorale preludes of J.S. Bach, hymn playing, and a choice piece. Repertoire played for the Preliminary and Final Competitions shall be the same.

### I. J.S. Bach

Select a chorale prelude from the following

(note: if *Liebster Jesu* is selected, both BWV 730 and 731 must be submitted):

#### Orgelbuchlein

O Mensch, beweine deine Sünde gross, BWV 622

#### Leipzig Chorales

Nun danket alle Gott, BWV 657

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 659

Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein, BWV 668a

#### Miscellaneous Chorale Preludes

Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier, BWV 730 and 731

### II. Hymn Playing

Select one hymn from each list.

**List 1** hymns shall be treated as if included in a hymn festival or festival worship service. They shall include a suitable extended hymn prelude (published or self-published) as the introduction (à la J.S. Bach/Paul Manz chorale prelude tradition) and all stanzas/verses. If the introduction is “self-published”, it must be submitted in a readable format.

Interludes, modulations, or stanza/verse designations are permitted. Alternate harmonizations are encouraged (published or improvised). See example below. All hymns must be played from *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (1990). Copies of the hymns are available upon request.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (VENI EMMANUEL) — #9

All Glory, Laud, and Honor (ST. THEODOLPH/VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN) — #88

From All That Dwell Below the Skies (LASST UNS ERFREUEN) — #229

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (EIN FESTE BURG) — #260

God of Grace and God of Glory (CWM RHONDDA) — #420

*Example (not on this year's list):*

Jesus Shall Reign (DUKE STREET) — #423

Introduction by David Cherwien (© A.M.S.I./Sacred Music Press)

Stanza harmonizations by John Ferguson (© G.I.A. Publishing)

Stanza 1: All

2: Women & Children, *in unison*

3: All, *in harmony*

4: Men, *in unison*

5: All, *in unison*

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**List 2** hymns shall include an introduction and all stanzas/verses. Interludes, modulations, or stanza/verse designations are permitted. All hymns must be played from *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (1990). Copies of the hymns are available upon request.

From a Distant Home (ILSA DEL ENCANTO) — #64  
Lift Up the Gates Eternal (PROMISED ONE) — #177  
Christ, You Are the Fullness (ARIRANG) — #346  
I Want Jesus to Walk with Me (SOJOURNER) — #363  
Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (LINSTEAD) — #514

### III. Choice Piece

*This piece, selected solely by the performer, should be suitable as a joyful postlude (for any season of the church year) and written by a living composer or someone who lived past 1900.*

*Examples:*

Jehan Alain — Litanies, JA119  
Adolphus Hailstork — Toccata on Veni Emmanuel  
Egil Hovland — Toccata 'Nu la oss takke Gud' (Now Thank We All Our God)  
Jean Langlais — Hymne d'Action de grâces "Te Deum" from Trois Paraphrases Grégoriennes  
Henri Mulet — Carillon-Sortie  
Charles W. Ore — A Mighty Fortress  
Charles-Marie Widor — "Finale" from *Symphony No. 6, Op. 42, No. 2*  
Louis Vierne — "Carillon" from *24 Pièces en style libre, Op.31*  
Louis Vierne — "Finale" from *Symphony No. 1, Op. 14*

Questions?

*If you have any questions regarding the competition, please contact Matthew Penning, competition coordinator, [organcompetition@ottumwafpc.org](mailto:organcompetition@ottumwafpc.org).*