

Learning Organ

Learning organ can be *great*: a full bodied experience that lends itself well in service to the church. While LutheranHomeschool.com can't offer organ lessons, we *can* gather resources to share, especially for beginners! We're gathering a) free resources, b) recommended resources, c) a few tips, and d) some information about copyright. (The product is a downloadable PDF of the information below.)

Free Resources

[Organ Playing 101](#): The LCMS compiled six online videos by Lutheran Kantor Kevin Hildebrand to help with learning organ. Videos are 8-10 minutes each.

- [Organ Registration](#) — What do all these names mean and how do I know which stops to use?
- [Hymn Introductions](#) — How to add variety and interest.
- [Hymn Playing](#) — How to lead the singing of the congregation with appropriate tempo, pulse, and phrasing.
- [Liturgy Playing](#) — Ideas for leading Divine Service, Setting One.
- [Liturgy Playing](#) — Ideas for leading Divine Service, Setting Three.
- [Leading New Hymns and Liturgical Settings](#) — How to help yourself and your congregation.

American Guild of Organists also offers a YouTube playlist of 30 videos, "[Lessons for the New Organist](#)."

Recommended Resources

Concordia Theological Seminary offers a fantastic [Organist Workshop](#) every year, open to all ability levels.

Method Books

- *The Concordia Organ Method* by John Behnke (available through [Concordia Publishing House](#) and [Amazon](#))
- *From the Piano Bench to the Organ Bench - Feet Don't Fail Me Now!* by Alan hommerding. The series consists of one method book and six volumes of organ repertoire.
- *Instruction Book for Beginning Organists* by David N Johnson
- *Little Organ Book for Beginners in Organ Playing* by Flor Peeters
- *The Organist's Manual* by Roger E Davis
- *Method of Organ Playing* by Harold Gleason
- *Discover the Basics Series* by Wayne Leupold

Organ Shoes

- Organmastershoes.com
- Tic Tac Toes
- Capezio Dance Shoes (Even tap shoes without taps, often a size larger)
- "Mary Janes" with very flexible soles

A Few Tips

- It is often recommended to have three to five years of piano before learning organ.
- Piano players can play the organ "manuals only," leaving out the pedals until they become more comfortable with other aspects of the organ. Some organs have a helpful stop known as a bass coupler, which matches a pedal tone with the lowest note played on the Great.
- One can also begin by essentially adding pedals for I, IV, and V chords.
- Pedals follow the bass line, freeing the left hand to focus on tenor, when playing the hymnal.

Copyright Issues

You can certainly play music you have purchased at home, but if someone wants to *perform* a piece in public (and church counts as public), it's best to check copyright. (Streaming adds an extra layer of complication, but it isn't too bad). For musicians at church, congregations typically handle copyright licenses rather than the player(s). If music is in the public domain, feel free to perform (live or streamed). If it's owned by CPH, you can read their policies [here](#). Just so you know, LCMS churches often already have a license with CPH. Other common licenses are CCLI or One License.

Anything else we ought to suggest? Let us know!

<https://www.lutheranhomeschool.com/product/learning-organ/>