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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
MILLBURN, NJ
ANNOUNCES ITS 50th ANNIVERSARY
BECKERATH ORGAN RECITAL SERIES**

Millburn, NJ. In 1970, the celebrated German organ builder, Rudolf von Beckerath, designed and built a tracker organ for St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Millburn, New Jersey which quickly became a major cultural resource in the area. The mechanical keyboard action (as opposed to electronic) and pipework of this instrument, one of the finest in the state, is designed to play and sound much like the historical baroque organs of northern Germany from the time of Johann Sebastian Bach. St. Stephens has been sharing this exceptional organ with the greater community by presenting an organ recital series each year since the organ was installed.

The 2019-2020 season marks the 50th anniversary of these popular recitals which, through the decades, have featured many different performers known both locally and abroad. This special, celebratory season has been conceived to represent this history and features Dr. Paul-Martin Maki, one of the performers heard most often on the series over the years, John Charles Schucker, who has served as organist for St. Stephen's Church for the past 16 years, and, for the first time, Johann Vexo, who holds the distinction of being Organist of the Choir at The Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris.

Dr. Paul-Martin Maki will begin the series on Sunday, November 10, 2019 at 4 PM. Dr. Maki is a highly accomplished organist and is Director of Music of St. John's Episcopal Church in Larchmont, New York and a faculty member of Columbia University. He holds both Bachelor of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees, together with the Performer's Certificate in Organ from the Eastman School of Music, a Master of Music degree from Syracuse University, and the Diploma (highest honors) from the Schola Cantorum in Paris, where he was a Fulbright stipendiary of the United States Government. His organ teachers include Raymond Ocock, David Craighead, Arthur Poister, Andre Marchal, and Jean Langlais. Dr. Maki has been heard in

recital throughout the United States and Canada, in Europe and in Australia, and has performed on television and radio.

Organist and pianist, John Charles Schucker, will perform the second recital on Sunday, February 23, 2020 at 4 PM. Mr. Schucker has performed as both a soloist and collaborative musician throughout the United States and as far abroad as Japan. In the New York metropolitan area he has been heard at such well known venues as Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, St. Patrick's Cathedral and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. His performances and recordings have also been heard nationally and internationally on television and radio broadcasts. He holds both undergraduate and graduate degrees from The Juilliard School after winning first place prizes from the Reading Music Foundation and the American Guild of Organists' Young Artist competitions. Major teachers were pianist Earl Wild and organist Vernon De Tar. A professional church musician since the age of 12, he has served as organist at St. Stephen's since 2003.

The final performance of the 50th Anniversary series will feature Johann Vexo on Sunday, April 19, 2020 at 4 PM. Surrounded and influenced by a rich musical and cultural heritage, Johann Vexo's training and performance career developed rapidly and at age 25, he was appointed Organiste de Choeur at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris. Soon thereafter he was appointed Organist of the Cavallé-Coll organ of the Cathedral in Nancy. Mr. Vexo is also Professor of Organ at the Superior Music Academy in Strasbourg. He has performed extensively throughout Europe (Germany, Italy, Spain, England...), the United States, Canada and Russia including performances in Houston, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, and Montréal. Known for his generous, supportive, and captivating teaching style, Mr. Vexo has taught master classes at Rice University, the Curtis Institute of Music, and Westminster Choir College.

This recital series is made possible through financial support from St. Stephen's Friends of Music. Tax deductible donations can be made to the organization, entitling sponsors to admission to each concert and acknowledgement in the organ recital programs. Checks should be made payable to St. Stephen's Church – Friends of Music. The following donation levels are available: Philanthropists \$300+, Benefactors \$200-\$299, Patrons \$100-\$199, and Sponsors as able.

General admission tickets for each performance will be available at the door. A \$10 cash donation is suggested. Children accompanied by an adult are welcome as guests and an artist's reception will follow each performance. For more information, contact St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 119 Main Street, Millburn, NJ at (973) 376-0688, church@ststephensmillburn.org or visit the church website <http://ststephensmillburn.org/>.