

The organ in St. Luke's – A brief history

In November 1910, the world-renowned firm of Casavant Frères, Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec installed a new organ in the newly-added chancel of St. Luke's. Opus 424 consisted of three manuals and 30 stops.

An additional echo organ by Casavant Frères was given to the church and installed in 1912. The several ranks of pipes were arranged in an opening created by the removal of the west window on the second floor of the newly-completed tower. The organ now consisted of three manuals and 36 stops. Both organs were controlled from the console installed in the north (Cantoris) side of the quire in the chancel under the pipe façade.

When a long time and influential parishioner, Mr. W.H. Gardner, died in 1951, monies were left to the church to renew the organ, a bequest fully in keeping with his interest in music and liturgy. A new organ and organ façades were designed by Dr. Herbert White, the Organist at the time, who was an architect by trade.

The array of pipes in the façade which used to be on the north side of the nave beside the pulpit was removed, and the new organ cases installed. The new console was placed across the chancel from the former location to the south (Decani) side of the quire. It was originally oriented so that the Organist faced across the quire rather than face the chancel screen as he does now.

The organ was reconstructed and a new console built by the renowned British firm Wm. Hill & Son and Norman & Beard Ltd., incorporating mechanicals and pipework from the 1910 Casavant Frères instrument. The new organ had approximately 4,000 pipes, 200 kilometers of electrical cabling, 8,000 electrical contacts, and two electric blowers. The new console was now four manuals and the specifications had grown to 61 stops.

In 1979, R. Buck and B. Mantle of Winnipeg made revisions to the tonal structure and specifications of the organ. Still four manuals, but now 59 stops. In 2001, a solid-state-logic capture action replaced the

rather temperamental mechanical capture action with 25 channels of memory and an increased number of console controls.

In the summer of 2010, after a hundred years of faithful service, the main wind reservoir of the chancel (east) organ required extensive maintenance which was undertaken and completed in record time, eliminating many leaks and whistles which resulted from decayed and aged leather seals, hinges, and bellows. The parts used are 21st-century material which should last almost indefinitely.

The Present

As with most instruments of this age – *now almost 109!* – there are repairs and modifications that must be made to ensure the organ's continuing reliability and support for the music program at St. Luke's.

In the past few years, notes on the Choir manual (the bottom manual – of four) have become silent. The original Casavant mechanism is suffering from age. This condition will continue and more notes in the Choir manual will become silent if left unattended. This, of course, makes it difficult to use the Choir manual which is often coupled to other manuals and the pedals to provide maximum flexibility for the Organist. The Choir manual contains stops of the most colourful style and variety, much like a baroque organ of J.S. Bach's time.

A proposal was received from R. Buck and B. Mantle, long-serving technicians, to remove the defective parts and replace with a more up-to-date mechanism which will be much more reliable and restore the Choir keying action to a "better than new" condition. Again, 21st-century materials are being used and the vast knowledge and skill of the two men will be evident at every stage of these repairs.

As we are stewards together of this magnificent instrument, we as parishioners are charged with its continuing maintenance, repair, and tuning. Due to expenditures from the W.H. Gardner Organ Fund having been made over the years, there is now little monies left in the fund available for this important and vital project.

How you can help

We ask you to contribute, if you are able, to the Organ Fund at this time to cover the costs of the repairs. We would like to see \$10,000.00 raised by this appeal. **Anything over that amount will be kept in the Organ Fund for continuing maintenance, repairs, and tuning.**

Contributions to the Organ Fund can be sent to the Parish Office with cheques made out to *St. Luke's Anglican Church* and then, in brackets, *Organ Fund*. Also, in the memo line, include your envelope number so that your contribution will be tracked properly and the amount appear as part of your tax receipt at the end of the year.

You may also make a donation today by visiting the secure website: <http://www.canadahelps.org>. Search for *St. Luke's Anglican Church, Winnipeg*. Click on *Donate Now* or *Donate Monthly*. Enter your donation amount. Where it says, *Fund/Designation*, select *Organ Fund* and type in any message or instructions in the space provided.

You may dedicate the donation as a gift in memory of, or in honour/ on behalf of someone.

Your contribution to the Organ Fund at this critical time ensures that we can continue our stewardship of the organ at St. Luke's and provide an instrument not only worthy of receiving praise but worthy of providing and supporting praise to Almighty God through worship and singing his praises.

If you have any questions, please contact Blair Anderson, our Organist and Choirmaster:

E-mail: <bda@stlukewinnipeg.com> • Phone: 204.962.0248.

Thank you.

The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul.

– Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

The Organ Fund



The Parish Church
of St. Luke

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