

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
THE STORY OF OUR PIPE ORGAN
By Tom and Joyce Christie
2010

In 1979 the repair technician for the original organ of Faith Congregation, a Baldwin Electronic instrument purchased in 1958, informed the congregation that the Baldwin Company was no longer manufacturing replacement parts for our electronic organ and that future repairs would become difficult and eventually impossible. He said we should consider replacing our instrument with a new one. With that suggestion, we began a seven-year investigation of various organ types and companies.

The original organ selection committee consisted of Tom Christie, Joyce Christie, Audrey Pingolt, Sue Karlman, Lois Stephan, Lois Krueger, and Pastor Ron Mach. The committee first considered replacing the organ with another electronic instrument and met with representatives from three leading electronic organ manufacturers. The committee visited a number of churches to hear the various brands of organs and talk with the church organists about their instruments.

By 1983 the committee learned that before a new organ could be installed in our church, an acoustical renovation needed to be done in order to increase the reverberation time of the nave. To this end, Scott Riedel was engaged as an acoustical consultant, and his recommendations were executed in the 1984 interior renovation, replacing the ceiling tiles with rock lathe and painting ceiling and walls with a hard surface "Pitt-Glaze."

Scott R. Riedel is a consultant in acoustics and organ design from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He also teaches the course, "Science of Acoustics" at Columbia College, Chicago, Illinois, and at the time of our project was Organist-Choirmaster at the Sherman Park Lutheran Church, Milwaukee. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin School of Architecture, and the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music. Mr. Riedel has served on many church music committees and boards, including the Milwaukee Lutheran Musicians Guild, The American Guild of Organists, and The Royal School of Church Music, Midwest Branch. His booklet "Acoustics in the Worship Space" is published by Concordia Publishing House.

In 1985 the organ committee decided to investigate the possibility of installing a pipe organ in order to have a genuine worship instrument instead of an electronic, imitative one. Scott Riedel was again engaged as consultant and the committee gained Kay Jensen as a member. Scott Riedel was very helpful in providing suggestions for viewing and hearing a variety of pipe organs. He called various churches and made the appointments with their organists to speak to us about their instruments. The committee made visits to a dozen area churches to hear the various brands and types of pipe organs and examine the workmanship. Scott did

not steer us or force us in any way toward any of the pipe organs, but let us tell him what sounds we liked and didn't like about the various organs. We met with organ company representatives to discuss organ design and the various specialties of each.

After most of a year of investigation Scott presented an organ design to us based on the types of pipes and sounds we had indicated we desired in an instrument for Faith Church. At that time the committee selected the Schlicker Organ Company to build our pipe organ based on the comparison of various brands we had heard. After much committee discussion about Scott's organ design, we accepted the final design which was presented to the Schlicker Organ Company for a cost evaluation on which to base the construction contract.

Following all this intense study, the committee recommended to the congregation, in a special meeting on April 22, 1986, that Faith Church purchase a 19 stop, 28 rank Pipe Organ built by the Schlicker Organ Company of Tonawanda, New York, which would provide outstanding musical support for hymn singing, liturgy response, and choir accompaniment, as well as a variety of solo sounds for solo playing.

The congregation voted to accept the committee's recommendation and entered into a contract with the Schlicker Company for a \$148,150 instrument including a down payment of \$22,000. The down payment was quickly raised through members' donations and the contract was entered into forthwith.

As it turned out, the Schlicker Organ Company was in the process of changing ownership in the 1980's and 1990's and the construction of our pipe organ was delayed because of the turmoil in company leadership. The developer of the company was a third generation organ builder from Germany named Herman L. Schlicker who brought his training and skills in pipe organ design to the United States. In 1932 he established the company in his name and earned a national reputation for excellence during his fifty years in the business. Upon his death in the early 1980's his daughters attempted to keep the company operating by continuing to employ the highly trained artisans in organ design and construction. By the mid-1980s the daughters determined to sell the company, and it was purchased by a man with a dream, poor business skills, and no history of managing a pipe organ company. In the middle of our organ project he left the business to be run by an organ technician and designer from Milwaukee who continued to meet the backlog of orders through the 1990's. The Schlicker Company finally ended a fifty-year history by going out of business at the end of the decade.

The construction of our pipe organ took five years: an unusually long time. During this period, Tom and Joyce Christie made several trips to the Tonawanda, New York organ factory to examine the progress of our instrument and to inspect the factory itself to determine the viability of the company. They met with organ designers, artisans, and executives to determine that our pipe organ would indeed be finally built.

Our pipe organ was delivered in April of 1991. During the next six weeks the instrument was constructed in place and voiced to fit our acoustical environment. The Service of Dedication took place on Sunday, May 26, 1991 with Scott Riedel serving as dedicatory organist.

The months during 1991 and 1992 were proclaimed as the "Organ Dedication Year" for Faith Church and featured three organ concerts. On September 8, 1991 Bruce Bengtson from Luther Memorial Lutheran Church in Madison, Wisconsin performed a concert of organ solos to demonstrate the tonal possibilities of our organ. On October 4th, Jurgen Sonenschmidt, the Church Music Director and organist from the district of Pirmasens, Germany included Faith Church in his concert tour of the United States performing a concert of German organ music. The highlight of the year was a hymn sing by the nationally famous organist and composer, Paul Manz, performed on January 12, 1992. That evening, Professor Manz performed improvisations and free accompaniments on the many hymns for which he is known throughout the country.

In August of 1992 the fund raising for the new Schlicker Pipe Organ was completed and the instrument was completely paid for. Much gratitude and thanks are owed to the many members of Faith Lutheran Church who contributed so generously to pay for the organ! Thanks also to the congregation and the selection committee for supporting the organ project from beginning to end through many anxious days from 1979 to 1992. Special thanks to Myron Thompson, Faith member, for providing ongoing engineering consultation and advice, and to Tom Christie for chairing the selection committee and leading the fund-raising effort.

Our pipe organ continues to be a joy to hear in worship and provides leadership in hymn singing as well as inspirational music with preludes, offertories, and postludes.

HISTORY OF ORGANISTS AT FAITH CHURCH

Our first organist was Lois Scherbert who played her pump organ until the congregation received a Baldwin electronic organ donated in 1958 by the Weidman family in memory of their son. Lois continued until 1968. Audrey Pingolt was the longest serving organist from 1968 until 1993. She was followed by Ruth Mixdorf 1993-1995, David Beyer 1995-1998, Kathy Johnson 1998-1999, Cal Shearer 1999-2003, and finally, Steve Hibbard from 2003 to the present.

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH PIPE ORGAN SPECIFICATIONS

The Organ has slider wind chests with a separate console connected to the pipes by means of a cable. The console has two manuals of 61 keys each, and a pedal keyboard of 32 keys. The console, and all wood casework, is made from red oak and the pipes are of cherry, poplar, oak, and other hardwoods as well as various metal alloys.

LIST OF PIPE STOPS

GREAT DIVISION

8' Principal	61 pipes
8' Gedeckt	61 pipes
4' Octave	61 pipes
4' Koppel-Flöte	61 pipes
2' Wald Flöte	61 pipes
II Sesquialtera	122 pipes
IV – V Mixture	287 pipes
8' Trompette	66 pipes
Tremulant	
Great to Great 4'	
Swell to Great 16'	
Swell to Great 8'	
Swell to Great 4'	

Total Great Pipes: 780

SWELL DIVISION

8' Rohr Flute	61 pipes
8' Salicional	61 pipes
8' Celeste	49 pipes
4' Spitz Flöte	61 pipes
2' Italian Principal	61 pipes
1 1/3 ' Quint	61 pipes
IV Scharf	244 pipes
16' Dulzian	61 pipes
Tremulant	
Swell to Swell 16'	
Swell Unison Off	
Swell to Swell 4'	

Total Swell Pipes: 659

PEDAL DIVISION

16' Sub-bass	32 pipes
8' Principal	20 pipes
8' Gedeckt	12 pipes
4' Choral Bass	12 pipes
2' Octave	12 pipes
II Rauschbass	64 pipes
16' Fagott	32 pipes
8' Trompete	borrowed
4' Trompette	borrowed
Great to Pedal 8'	
Swell to Pedal 8'	
Swell to Pedal 4'	

Total Additional Pedal Pipes: 184

TOTAL PIPES IN THE ORGAN: 1,623

Additional Special Effect: Zymbelstern Rotary Bells