History of the St. Andrew's Organ



After searching high and low our former rector, Dr. Andrew Anderson came upon St. Andrew’s current organ. It was originally designed for the magnificent 1939 World’s Fair in New York, themed the World of Tomorrow. Solely to prevent the installation of an electronic (horrors!) instrument being built for the Temple of Religion at the Fair, an organ aficionado, Dr. John Haussermann, a musicology professor at University of Cincinnati, invited to dinner the two top organ builders in America. He wined and dined them and convinced them to sign a contract for a single instrument to be constructed by both companies in six months’ time. Both called the next morning to ask what they’d done!

The result was a one of a kind instrument, a standard for the day and copied many times over.

During the fair the instrument was played by famous organists of the day at thrice daily recitals. After the fair it was removed to Dr. Haussermann’s Mt. Kisco, NY. estate in his ‘studio’ which he’d built to seat 200 guests at recitals just for this organ. After his wife asked him to leave and take his ‘box of whistles’ with him it was stored in a barn for some years until Bob Crone, St. Andrews’ organist/ choirmaster, who’d heard of this instrument through his teacher, Parvin Titus at CCM , and suggested they consider this unique instrument. Bob and Sylvester Kohler brought the instrument here, adapted and installed it in 3 months’ time and Mr. Kohler stayed with it for 50 years, maintaining and tuning it regularly.

Last year, Pete and Diane Webber, local organ builders enhanced the organ with couplers that make it easier to access the different organ sounds and installed a device that will play the instrument back by the touch of a button, allowing Marci to get to the balcony to conduct the bell choirs. Yes, someone is sitting there, but the organ is playing itself! In addition, we now have a device that transposes at the push of a button! This is a great investment for all the singers in our church!

Constructed of 3000 metal and wood pipes and loads of lumber and leather in the base, our unique instrument has been maintained wisely for many years. An endowment was initially set up for such needs, but more will need to be done as the years add up.

E. Power Biggs was the ‘biggest’ name among organists in the mid-century. He played this organ at all three of its locations including a huge recital he gave here. The church was so full that many in the crowd had to sit on the stairs outside the sanctuary!