

The Story of the St. Ann Organ



Written by Jessamine Guislain,

Our old Allen electronic organ had bit the dust. Without any preliminary consultation or contract, an electronic organ supplier had the nerve to call the Church asking what color to stain the console of the new electronic organ. I panicked! God forbid that the church would buy another inferior instrument without even discussing other options. I contacted Msgr. Tom Culhane(then Fr. Tom) and asked if I could form an organ search committee, with the hope of obtaining a pipe organ. We (the parish organists) went to several churches in the Kansas City area as well as the Quimby organ factory. After hearing several Moller organs, we suggested to Fr. Tom that the M. P. Moller company would be the best. Father Tom knew Dick Gayhart, the Moller representative, as Dick had been the long-time organist at First Presbyterian Church in Topeka. Father Tom had worked with Dick many times when Most Pure Heart of Mary Church had collaborated with First Presbyterian ,and he trusted his expertise. Then, an anonymous donor gave the money for the down payment needed to begin the building of the organ. That down payment, along with the initial donation from Rose Teicher, and gifts from hundreds of parishioners made possible the installation of the organ in 1988. I was privileged to play the dedicatory recital on November 6, 1988.



Our medium- sized organ consists of 21 ranks (a row of pipes with one pipe for each note on the keyboard), a Great organ, a Swell organ, and a Pedal organ. In 1988, the cost of the organ was \$110,000. That would be \$500,000 in 2010. Its location in the former choir loft is ideal for the acoustics of the sanctuary. The instrument was especially designed for

St. Ann Church. There is no duplicate anywhere. Keith Gottschall, the organ installer, was very generous in giving us a Pedal rank from another church, at no cost.. That leaves two stops that are prepared for, but have not yet been purchased. It would be wonderful to have the organ finished after all these years!



Monsignor Tom wrote in the program for the dedication the following words:

"Just as we have been thankful to those who built the church, so other generations will remember us for our generosity."

St. Ann Pipe Organ: Twenty-five Years to Completion and a Dream Realized!

The current pipe organ was dedicated on November 6, 1988. After an extensive quest by the Organ Search Committee at the time, a medium-sized organ was chosen and designed especially for St. Ann by The Moller Company. The organ consists of 21 ranks (a row of pipes with one pipe for each note on the keyboard), a Great organ, Swell organ, and Pedal organ. Unfortunately, at the time of the purchase there was not enough funding to purchase two additional stops to make the organ complete. The two missing stops were a cromorne and a festival trumpet.

Fast forward to 2014! Jessamine Guislain, our St. Ann organist, learned from pipe organ technician, Doug Funston, that Village Presbyterian Church was purchasing a new organ. Village Presbyterian's organ was also produced by The Moller Company. Jess set up a meeting with Village Presbyterian Director of Music, Mark Ball, to find out the plans for their old organ. Much to Jess' surprise, Village Presbyterian had decided to give St. Ann the two stops needed to make our amazing organ complete!

On January 28, 2014, the 122 pipes were delivered to the church and the installation began. Jess had searched for these missing stops for years with no luck. God had another plan for us! As Mark Ball wrote: *We send our best wishes to the St. Ann community: may the completed instrument bring joy, comfort, challenge, and peace to decades of worshippers to come.*

On behalf of the entire St. Ann Parish family, we send our gratitude for our Village Presbyterian neighbors for their most gracious gift!