

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

150th ANNIVERSARY – 2020

HISTORY OF MUSIC AT ST. PAUL'S

Music has always played an integral part in the worship and life of St. Paul Lutheran's congregation. The church has been known to have some very talented musicians and musical groups within the congregation.

History on music in the early years of the church is very limited. It is known that there was a reed pump organ in the balcony of the second church building. There was a "pumper" who pumped air into the organ as the organist played. In those days, the teachers at St. Paul's Parochial School served as the organists and the choir directors. Two of those teachers were a Professor Scharmann and Mr. F.C.A. Remmert. After St. Paul's School closed in 1929, Mr. Remmert continued to be the organist, serving the congregation in that capacity for over 50 years.

The church's grand instrument, the pipe organ, was built by the M.P. Moller Company of Hagerstown, Maryland, in 1923 for the brand new and present church building. It was donated in memory of Wilhelm Sandmann, a member of the congregation, and cost \$4,500. The organ console sat under the pipes in the choir loft with the organist's back to the congregation. It was moved down to the present location in the late 1950's.

In the mid 1970's, the pipe organ began to have major problems and after repeated repairs, the Church Council realized something needed to be done about it. Should they keep fixing the problems or purchase a brand new organ? In contacting the original organ builder, it was discovered that they still had all the files on St. Paul's organ after 50 years. The Moller Company did an evaluation and rebuilt and updated the organ for \$30,000 which was paid for by congregation members. A service of rededication and a recital featuring Dr. Larry Gully was held on December 1, 1974. (see attached newspaper article). During the rebuilding period, a reed pump organ, donated by Loren Schmidt, was used for worship services. It was pumped with a vacuum cleaner contraption and piped into the sound system and sat under the pulpit in the sanctuary. Dr. Gully returned to St. Paul's for a Pentecost Music Festival on May 18, 1975.

Organists that have served St. Paul's over the years include Professor Scharmann, F.C.A. Remmert, Marie (Remmert) Birkemeyer, Dr. R.M. Tessien, Tom von Fischer, James Coates, Darlene Wilstermann, Gladys Pilgrim, Betsy Rogotzke, LeAnn (Kettner) Ravenberg, Susan Schmidt, Jo (Krueger) Schwartz, Diane Rogotzke, Margaret Wellner, Rose Wall, Edith Schmidt and Jeff Krueger.

The original organ was equipped with chimes that could be played in the sanctuary and also in the bell tower. The chimes are a very enjoyable feature for many in the congregation. In the 1960's and 70's, high school students played the chimes for a half hour on Saturday evenings that rang throughout the community. The chimes still are played in the sanctuary but the bell tower chimes were replaced with a carillon given by the von Fischer family in the 1980's.

The grand piano that sits in the choir loft was a gift given in memory of Leroy Wendt, a member of the congregation. He passed away April 7, 1980. The plaque on the piano reads:

St. Paul's Music Memories



SENIOR CHOIR - 1945
Dr. R.M. Tessien, Director



JUNIOR CHOIR - 1945
Marie Birkemeyer, Director; F.C.A. Remmert, Accompanist



SENIOR CHOIR - 1970
James Coates, Director



JUNIOR CHOIR - 1970
Muriel Renner, Director



SENIOR CHOIR - 1995
Dr. R.M. Tessien
Director
Betsy Rogotzke
Accompanist

SINGING SAINTS - 1995
Dee Ryan
Director
Edith Schmidt
Accompanist



BELL CHOIR - 1995
Rose Wall
Director

Springfield Mn
May 1995

ABOUT OUR CHOIR AND THESE RECORDINGS:

I opened my office, above what is now City Hall, Nov 3 1935. We immediately joined St Paul Lutheran Church and I joined the choir

There were about 15 members in the choir. Mr Remmert had been the parochial school teacher, when St Paul had a parochial school, but when I came, the school was no longer. But Mr Remmber played the organ for our church services and for the choir.

Mr Remmert did not really direct the choir, but played the organ as we sang through the anthems. We sang out of those old books which had both German and English words. As I recall there was Elizabeth von Fischer, Mrs Kamolz and perhaps Marie and Lindy, Art Birkemeyer, Bill Kuehl, Gotleib Wenzel and still with us George Renner, Herbie Krueger, myself and our departed Eddie Krueger-perhaps others.

There were generally 8 or 9 at rehearsal. Then on Sunday 3 to 5 of those went somewhere else and 3 to 5 of those who had not practiced came to sing.

I beleive it was that next summer, the summer of 1936, probably in August or September that Art Boettger and Helke Dahmer came to see me, on behalf of the Church Council. They asked if I would take over directing the choir. I was surprized as I had made no mention of this and, to this day, do not know what prompted them to ask me. I never did ask but assumed Pastor Max had learned that I had had some experience and may have told them.

We had a two hour visit and I agreed to give it a try. Next day I went to see Pastor Max and he authorized me to order some music and we set a date for the first rehearsal. I ordered perhaps 30 copies of the ST OLAF choir series. We also set the date for the first rehearsal and I don't remember when that was but probably the first Wednesday in October.

This was announced several times in church and on that first rehearsal night I went to the church, having no idea how many people would be there. Imagine my surprise, and indeed that of all of us - there were 82 people there. Imagine, a choir of about 25 sopranos, 20 Altos, 15 tenors and 22 Bass

It was a good and pleasing choir. We practiced every Wednesday evening and practiced for 2 hours and NO ONE SAID "OK lets get this over with". I am not certain but I think we sang every Sunday.

The choir was too large for the choir loft so we sang from the front steps AND we always sang a capells, or most of the time, meaning without accompaniment - though some anthems did require accompaniment. The choir did so well that we soon began to present a concert, in the spring during which the choir sang 16 anthems. The church was always packed full.

MARANZ had a good reputation and, since the PMD 200 had been so good I finally located a Maranz dealer and found that they had a successor called the PMD 201. Since the 200 had been so good I assumed that Maranz now made an even better one so I sent a check and in a month they sent me the 201. It turned out that Maranz had been sold to investors who cheapened their product and the 201 was not as good as Radio Shack's \$68.00. I returned it and it took 3 months to get 60% of the money back.

Then I contacted Jerry MILLER, chief engineer for WCCO radio and they were using a Sony TCM 5000 EV. So that should be good enough for us.

Took me two months to find a Sony dealer and he referred me to Chicago. They said they would make one but I would have to send full payment before they make it and I would have to keep it whether I liked it or not.

Then I contacted WCAL northfield and yse they were using one and referred me to the Sony dealer in Rochester. Yes, they would get one for me. But they kept telling me it was coming, for 6 months and finally wrote to me saying Sony no longer makes that model. WCCO and Sony are going to a digital wherein the records cost \$18.00 and record only a few anthems. They are smaller. They are CDs.

So I called the Music Mart in Lambertton and they referred me to Sony in Massachusetts. I called there and the lady said they only make these on special order and there were two stores in New York that were licensed to sell the TCM 5000 and finally one in North Dakota. So I called North Dakota and they said yes they could order one. They did and maybe 4 months later I received it. That is what we have been using since the fall of 1994 and you will hear the improvement in the recording. Each of the 5 recorders we have been using has been better than the one before.

I have over 20 400 foot reels from 35 and 40 years ago and 202 cassettes recorded all the following years. In approaching our 125th anniversary, I began to select the best recordings and re-record them on some high-priced Master tapes (cassettes). It took about 500 hours of listening to the old tapes and the 202 cassettes and selecting the anthems and re-recording them and this has been worked on for a year and a half.

In the sets that are available there are 9, ninety minute cassettes with about 227 recordings. Most are choir anthems recorded in church. But there are some messages from Pastor Hagen, Pastor Martenson and Pastor Bob Olson as well as some solos, a few Scripture readings and some recordings of summer special music.

As far as the anthems go, a few are recorded several times. For example Beautiful Saviour has been recorded maybe 5 times because of different years, different choir members, different recording machine. AND a few other anthems are recorded more than once because of different soloists and different recording machines. BUT I MUST CONFESS that some were done more than once, accidentally. Imagine you are spending a year and a half, often full afternoons reviewing old reel type tapes and 202 cassettes, listening to them and selecting what to record and you can see that it was a project which might result in some errors.

And there is something else I cannot explain. We could record the anthem this Sunday and it would be good and loud and clear. Then 2 weeks later, using the same cassette, the same machine, the same settings and the recording was not as good.

Over all remember that these were recorded in Church and not in a professional studio but if you love choir music these should be interesting.



James Coates being honored on his retirement after serving St. Paul Lutheran as Organist and Choir Director for 18 years. This picture was in the Advance-Press in 1972. Harold Wendt, Jr., Chairman of the Congregation, presented Coates with a plaque in appreciation for his services along with a reception following the Sunday morning worship service.

St. Paul Lutheran dedicates new pipe organ Sunday morning

St. Paul Lutheran Church will dedicate their new pipe organ Sunday, Dec. 1, at their 9 a.m. worship services followed that night with a recital by world renown organist Dr. Larry Gully. The organ, recently installed by the Moller Organ Company of Hagerstown, Maryland, will be played for the first time at that service.

Use of the organ at the regular worship service was postponed for this special event. A prelude will be played on the old reed organ the congregation has been using for the past three months, owned and donated by congregation member Loren Schmidt. The congregation will then join in the Order for Dedication. That will be followed by the Senior and Junior Choirs proceeding in as the congregation sings the first hymn led by the new organ.

At 7:30 p.m. that night a recital on the new organ, open to the public, will

feature Doctor Gully of Paynesville. Doctor Gully will be explaining and demonstrating some features of the 15-rank pipe organ which the lay person should appreciate. He will also play specially selected musical numbers and hymns. A model of the working parts of the organ will be on display, borrowed from Moller Organ Co.

Dr. Gully is an accomplished and internationally renowned organist. He holds a P.H.D. from both the University of Minnesota and the University of Munich, Germany. This past summer he received the Helmut Schmitt Award following his recital in Munich Cathedral in Munich. Dr. Gully is currently working as choir director and music co-ordinator at St. Mary's Parish in Little Falls.

Movement toward purchasing the organ began at the annual meeting of St. Paul's congregation last January. The previous organ, purchased with monies given to the congregation by the William Sandmanns, was obtained for the price of \$4,500.00 over 50 years ago. After leading many worship services, choirs in practice and anthem, being played by many organists and repaired several times--repeated difficulties were experienced. This led to several consultations with organ builders, salesmen, and company representatives. Eventually the proposition suggested by Moller Organ Company, through its representative, Clarence Gould of St. Paul, was accepted. This was to take the basic structure, pipes, and other parts and completely rejuvenate and redesign the organ. Every part was dismantled, loaded on Moller's own trucks, and hauled to the Moller factory. There, all pipes and parts were dismantled further, all mechanical parts replaced, all pipes refinished. New pipes and stops and variations of sound were added. A totally new console was built to a selected design. The end product is a fully new organ, including the old pipes, thereby preserving the history of an organ which has served St. Paul's well.

Following the recital by Dr. Gully coffee will be served in the church basement. Public is invited.

Article in the Springfield Advance-Press inviting the public to the dedication or the newly refurbished pipe organ on Sunday, December 1, 1974. There was also a dedication recital by Dr. Larry Gully on Sunday evening. Dr. Gully explained the organ along with playing some wonderful organ music with instrumental accompaniments, congregational singing and anthems by St. Paul's Choirs.