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ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH—Missouri Synod

Although regular Lutheran worship services in St. Joseph originated around 1852, a permanent church was not organized until 1881. The congregation's original name was "First Zion German Evangelical Church of the U.A.C. (Unaltered Augsburg Confession) of St. Joseph, Missouri", and was changed early on to "St. Paul". In the same year the congregation built a building at 1019 South Tenth. By January 1882, the congregation had opened a Christian Day School, and in the following year joined the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

This location, however, deterred attendance for adherents living in north St. Joseph, who had to travel on foot or by horse or buggy over dirt streets to reach the church. A group of German Lutherans began meeting in Heckel's Benevolent Home at Second & Michel, and in 1891, were organized into a congregation, known as St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church, with the assistance of St. Paul's pastor, Rev. Moritz Grosse. A vacant lot and adjoining house on the corner of 4th & Dolman was donated by a founding member on which a frame church was constructed. The house served as a parsonage. The original church was almost completely destroyed by a fire caused by a lightning strike in 1922, and was quickly rebuilt on the same site.

In the early 1940's, the congregation decided to replace their reed organ with a small pipe organ. After soliciting several companies, they eventually selected a stock model, three rank "Harmonic Ensemble" made by the Kilgen Organ Company, and similar to the "Petite Ensemble" series of the company's predecessor, George Kilgen & Son (a family feud among four brothers led to a split, resulting in two Kilgen companies by 1939). These instruments featured a self-contained cabinet with a choice of an attached or detached console, or could be installed in a chamber, as St. Peter's elected. An unusual feature on the detached console was spinet-type legs extending below the jambs.

A contract was signed on May 22, 1942, for a purchase price of \$1785, net of a \$75 trade-in allowance for the reed organ, with the following payment terms: a 10% deposit, 10% due on a bill of lading, \$446.25, due upon completion of the installation, and the \$1,160.25 balance due in 24 monthly payments. An undated addendum called for the addition of a partial "Salicional" rank, at a cost of \$625, one third of the cost of the entire organ.

Shortly after the outbreak of World War II, however, the War Production Board issued a "cease & desist" to all American organbuilders on the manufacture, assembly and shipping of new pipe organs, under penalties of fines and imprisonment, as most of the materials used in organbuilding were considered critical to the war effort. According to a company bulletin dated September 4, 1945, the Kilgen Company in the previous four years manufactured war goods, including hundreds of Army combat gliders, as well as wood parts for B-29 Super Bombers, B-24 Liberators and C-46 transport planes, employing more than 300 people on average and sometimes functioning on three shifts.

The company was forced to cancel nine large organ contracts at the start of the war. During the course of the war, it accumulated 50 orders for new organs, including St. Peter's. The church apparently continued to raise funds for the organ during the war delay, and the company continued to correspond with church officials. By December 1945, the company had still not resumed organ production due to shortages of tin, needed for pipework, and imported leather for pneumatics, but assured the congregation that it "was just as eager to deliver the organ as you are to receive it". Installation occurred in 1946.

By the late 1950's, the congregation had outgrown the original location, and in 1958, purchased lots on the corner of St. Joseph Avenue and Magnolia on which a new parsonage was built, with the intention of building a new church within ten years. When the St. Joseph School District learned of these plans, it approached the congregation with a proposal to purchase the existing site to facilitate the expansion of Lafayette High School. An agreement was reached and the last service in the old building was held in

September 1961. The congregation worshipped in the school auditorium until the present building was completed in December 1962. The organ was brought over to the new building and installed in a chamber behind the gallery choir loft. It was subsequently enlarged by Cliff Bennett, who installed an exposed 4 rank Great division.



SPECIFICATION

ST. PETER LUTHERAN CHURCH, Missouri Synod

GEORGE KILGEN & SON, St. Louis, Missouri,

Opus 7049, 1942 (installed 1946)

Rebuilt by the Bennett Organ Co. (Cliff Bennett), Kansas City, Missouri (*additions)

II/8 Unit chests with electro-pneumatic action

For full information on what these stops mean, click [HERE](#)

GREAT ORGAN	SWELL ORGAN	PEDAL ORGAN (Borrowed)
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8' Open Diapason (sw)	16' Bourdon TC	16' Bourdon
8' Rohr Flote*	8' Diapason	8' Flute
8' Salicional (sw)	8' Stopped Flute (ext)	8' Dolce
8' Dolce	8' Salicional TC	4' Principal
4' Principal*	8' Dolce (gt)	4' Flute
4' Flute (ext)	8' Quintade (syn)	2' Principal
4' Quintaden (synthetic)	4' Principal (gt)	
2 2/3' Quint *	4' Flute d'amour (ext)	
2' Principal (ext)	4' Dulcet (ext)	
1 3/5 Tierce*	2 2/3' Nazard (ext)	
Sesquialtera II (double draw)	2' Flautino (ext)	
Chimes	8' Oboe (syn)	
	Tremelo	

Information provided by David Lewis

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