

The American Guild of Organists fosters the appreciation and enjoyment of organ and choral music through recitals and workshops.

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CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH was organized in 1852, and has been on the corner of Seventh and Francis Streets since 1857. The original frame church was destroyed in a disastrous fire on Christmas Eve, 1876. The present Gothic revival building, attributed to Francis Boettner of the local architectural firm of Stigers, Boettner and Eckel, was built on the same site in 1877, and is now the oldest Protestant house of worship in continuous use in the city. It also contains the city's oldest pipe organ.

Originally, the chancel and altar of Christ Church was located in an alcove on the north wall. In 1894, the room was reconfigured and an elevated choir/chancel was constructed at the east end. In the mid 1890's, Mrs. John S. Lemon and members of the Christ Church Choir staged several Gilbert and Sullivan operas and one ladies' minstrel show to help raise money for a pipe organ. In 1896, the church purchased and installed a used 35 rank, three manual tracker pipe organ built in 1867 by William A. Johnson and originally installed in the Congregational Church in New Britain, Connecticut.

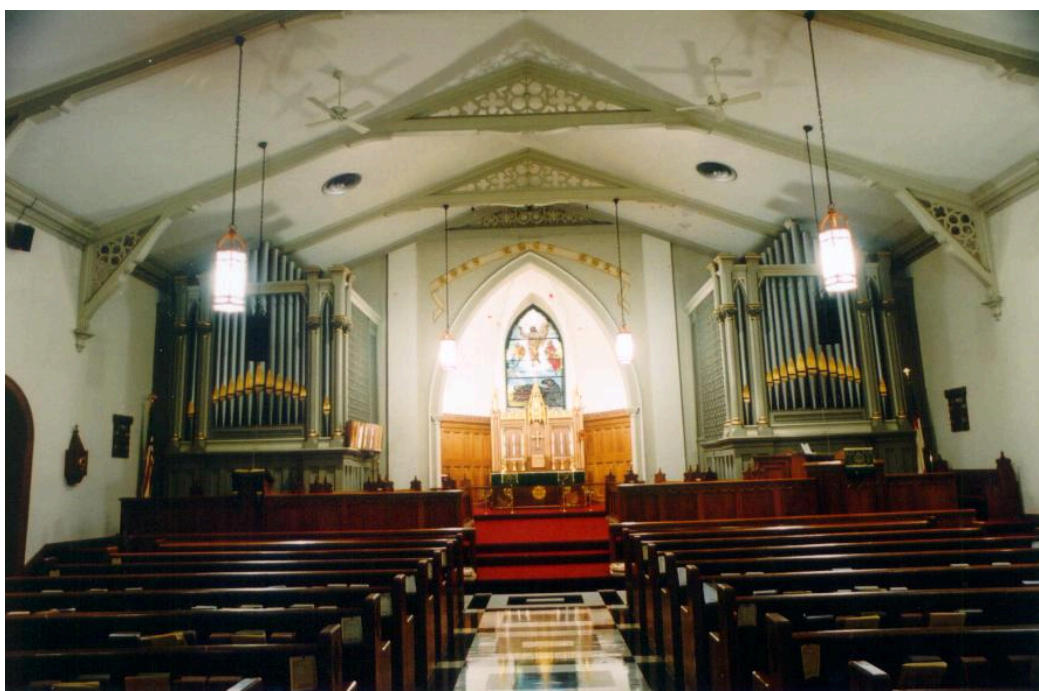
The church secured Dr. Clarence Eddy of Chicago, who, in the same year was a founding member of the American Guild of Organists, to play the dedicatory recital. Afterwards, he complained that the stiff tracker action left him too exhausted to sleep that night.

Perhaps because of the stiff action, the Bennett Organ Company of Rock Island, Illinois was hired in 1910 to redesign the organ. They replaced the original console, tracker action and Johnson chests with an early version of their double stage electro-pneumatic chests and added a new console, and shifted ranks within the organ, reducing its size to 26 ranks.

The Bennett console was replaced shortly after World War II with the present Austin console. In 1970, Charles McManis re-leathered the Bennett chests. In 1986, Temple Organ Co. of Saint Joseph replaced the Bennett chests and added four new ranks, including a mixture stop originally specified, and shifted other ranks within the organ. A Festival Trumpet created by the Reuter Organ Co. of Lawrence, Kansas, was added in 1996. The organ now has 31 ranks.

Although the organ case has been altered by the removal of the column finials as well as the original trefoil arches above the center pipe flats, it is a good example of the Gothic revival style used by many American organbuilders during the mid to late nineteenth century.

Please note several photos below.



Current view of Interior of Christ Episcopal Church showing Organ



Christ Episcopal Church, sometime after 1896

SPECIFICATION

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

WILLIAM A JOHNSON ORGAN CO., Westfield, MA

Opus 240, 1867

Rebuilt by the Bennett Organ Co., Rock Island, IL, 1910

McManis Organ Co., Kansas City, KS, 1970

Temple Organ Co., Saint Joseph, MO, 1986

now with Austin Console

III/31 Pitman chests with electro-pneumatic action

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

GREAT ORGAN	SWELL ORGAN	CHOIR ORGAN	PEDAL ORGAN
16' Sub Principal	16' Bourdon	8' Geigen Principal	16' Principal (Gt)
8' Principal	8' Holzgedeckt	8' Rohrgedeckt	16' Subbass
8' Waldflote	8' Salicional	8' Dolce	16' Violone
8' Bell Gamba	8' Voix Celeste TC	8' Dolce Celeste TC	10 2/3' Quint
4' Octave	4' Principal	4' Traverse Flute	8' Octave
4' Rohrflote	4' Harmonic Flute	2' Piccolo	8' Bourdon
2' Fifteenth	2 2/3' Nazard	8' Clarinet	8' Violoncello
1 1/3' Mixture III	2' Flautino	8' Festival Trumpet	4' Super Octave
	16' Trumpet	Tremelo	16' Fagotta (Sw)
	8' Trumpet		8' Trumpet (Sw)
	4' Hautbois		



Original "sidewall" chancel, Christ Episcopal Church, prior to 1894



Stereo-optical picture (1/2) of the Christ Episcopal Church organ in its original home, South Congregational Church, New Britain, CT



Clarinet" pipe from one of the original Choir division stops

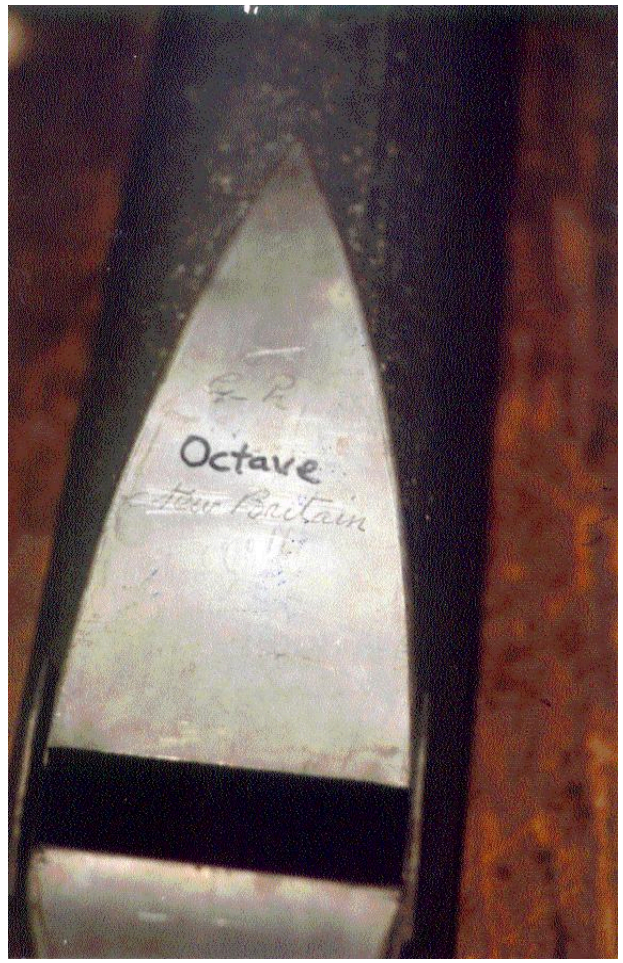


"Bell Gamba" pipe from one of the original Great division stops, so named because it tapers toward the top and then flares out at the end, called a "bell", like the flared end of some horn instruments. This is an unusual stop, with tonal characteristics

between flute and string tone. This pipe was originally tuned by adjusting the oversized “donkey ears” on each side of the mouth to cover part of the mouth, reducing the power and pitch of the pipe. Later, a “tuning scroll” was cut into the top of the pipe to vary the length of the pipe, and thus, the pitch.



“Rohrflute” pipe from one of the original Great division stops, originally called a “Stopped Flute”, because it is capped at the top. Also called a “Rohrflute” because of the small, narrow extension, called a “chimney” (“rohr” translates to “chimney” in German). This pipe was originally tuned by adjusting the oversized “donkey ears” on each side of the mouth to cover part of the mouth, reducing the power and pitch of the pipe. Later, an adjustable slide tuner was added to the chimney to change the length of the pipe, and thus, the pitch. This pipe is unusual because it is made as one piece. Most Rohrflute pipes feature an adjustable cap across the entire top of the pipe.



Original “Diapason” or “Principal” pipe from the Great division on which the pipemaker in 1867 scribed the pitch “C”, the name of the rank, “Gr Pr”, or Great Principal and the organ for which it was created, the South Congregational Church of “New Britain”, Connecticut. This rank subsequently became the 8’ Principal rank of the Pedal division.

Information provided by David Lewis

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