

Johnson & Son Pipe Organ, Opus 814, 1894

Johnson & Son Pipe Organ Company, Westfield, Massachusetts

Three manuals, 4 divisions, 36 registers, 28 ranks, 1,705 pipes

2010 renewal and enlargement by

Muller Pipe Organ Company

Croton, Ohio

<u>GREAT</u> (<i>expressive</i>)	<u>SWELL</u> (<i>expressive</i>)	<u>ANTIPHONAL</u> *	<u>PEDAL</u> (<i>expressive</i>)
Open Diapason 8	Open Diapason 8	Gedeckt 8	Resultant 32 *
Melodia 8	Stopped Diapason 8	Principal 4	Open Diapason 16
Dulciana 8	Viola 8	Flute 4	Bourdon 16
Octave 4	Viola Celeste 8 †	Octave 2	Gedeckt 16 (<i>Antiphonal</i>)
Flute d'amour 4	Principal 4 *	Tuba 8	Octave 8 *
Twelfth 2 $\frac{2}{3}$	Harmonic Flute 4	Clarion 4	Bourdon 8
Fifteenth 2	Flautina 2	Tremolo	Gedeckt 8 (<i>Antiphonal</i>)
Tierce 1 $\frac{3}{5}$ *	Quint 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ **		Choral Bass 4 *
Mixture IV †	Bassoon-Oboe 8		Trombone 16 *
Trumpet 8	Oboe 4 *		Trumpet 8 *
Tuba 8 (<i>Antiphonal</i>)	Tremolo		Chimes †
Chimes †			
Zimbelstern *			
Tremolo			

* - 2010

† - 1988

** From an original Johnson & Son Fugara

Peterson ICS 4000 Control System
5hp Spencer Orgoblo, main organ
3hp Meidinger, Antiphonal division

A HISTORY OF THE JOHNSON & SON OPUS 814/MULLER PIPE ORGAN

The First United Methodist Church, London, Ohio

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

FROM THE LONDON TIMES, NOVEMBER 19, 1894 "The building of a church marks an epoch in the religious life of any community" were the opening words of Bishop Joyce at the first public service in the new Methodist Episcopal church of London last Sunday morning. "Truly it is a beautiful temple of worship which has been erected in this city. The completion and dedication of the handsome structure, free from all indebtedness, is a source of gratification and joy to every public spirited citizen of London and Madison county. Those who have contributed and aided in the construction of this magnificent church have built not for their generation alone, but have completed an edifice from which shall go forth good and wholesome influences for years to come."

CLARENCE EDDY RECITAL AND CONCERT 1894 On last Thursday evening the doors of the new church were for the first time opened for a public entertainment. The occasion was a pipe organ recital by Mr. Clarence Eddy, of Chicago, and concert in which the following persons, all of whom are well known in London, took part: Mrs. G.W. Spahr, Columbus; Miss Fannie Cartzdainer, Miss Ollie Bridgman and Mr. G.A. Dodds of this city; W.S. Putnam, Springfield; and Mr. George Brown, of Yellow Springs. A splendid audience, representative of London, assembled to greet this exceptionally fine array of talent. The novelty and beauty of the interior of the building, with the wonderful strains of harmony and melody, combined to render the place one of complete enchantment. Mr. Eddy is a pipe organ player of national reputation and deservedly so. He rendered six numbers according to the program announced last week. Mr. Eddy pronounced the instrument which is run by a water motor to be a very fine one and all that could be desired for the requirement of the church. His playing was a rare musical treat. (Excerpt from the London Times, November 19, 1894)

INSTRUMENT SUMMARY The Johnson & Son (Westfield, Massachusetts) pipe organ at First United Methodist Church, London, Ohio is original to the church's 1894 structure. Today, the instrument is a remarkable example of how thorough, long-term maintenance, sympathetic restoration, and respectful augmentation work closely together to uphold the integrity of an historical instrument. At its heart, the instrument retains its original 17 ranks of largely unaltered pipework. Among several significant alterations, it has been electrified and slightly enlarged to 28 ranks, its console has been twice replaced, and most recently (2010), a 5-rank Antiphonal division has been added. The tonal design handsomely serves its environment by fully supporting congregational singing and providing the organist with a broad palette of stops from which to effectively register music from across the ages. The congregation is very proud of it and welcomes any organist or enthusiast to call the church office for an appointment to see and hear the instrument.

THE INSTRUMENT'S EARLY LIFE The original opus 814 instrument was of mechanical action with 17 ranks of pipes over two manuals. With power from the city water system, a Spencer water motor operated the bellows, but once electricity was installed in the building, an electric Spencer Orgoblo replaced the water motor. The organ faithfully served the church for 65 years until 1959, when the mechanical action components had begun to fail. The church had to make a choice: replace it or rebuild it. An electronic substitute was considered, but the decision was made to rebuild the existing instrument with the stipulation that all the original Johnson & Son pipework was to be reused without any tonal changes. Durthaler Organ Company, Columbus, Ohio (Henry J. Durthaler) rebuilt the instrument with new electro-pneumatic wind chests, reservoirs, and console, all supplied by Organ Supply Industries of Erie, Pennsylvania.

The organ was originally installed in one large chamber in the center of the sanctuary (see 1894 picture). In 1959, the façade was removed, except for the 7 pipes to the left of the main façade, which are the bottom 7 notes of the 8' Open Diapason in the Great division. The large arch to the left of the organ was enclosed, and the Swell division was installed behind brown screens in that space (see

later pictures). The Great division was installed in the original chamber behind brown grille screens, and a large fluorescent back-lit cross, stylish for the day, was installed over the screen (see picture).

From 1959 to 1988, the organ required only regular maintenance and tuning by the Durthaler Company and later by the A.W. Brandt Company, both from Columbus, Ohio.

In 1976, the sanctuary was redecorated in a style befitting the era. The brown grille screens were removed from both the Great and Swell chambers and in their place, large floor-to-ceiling draperies were placed over them. Wall-to-wall piled carpeting was installed. Both the new draperies and the carpeting worked in tandem to make the acoustics of the sanctuary quite unremarkable. The sanctuary took on the feel and sound of any residential living room of the 1970's era.

In 1988, the 1959 console was replaced with a new draw knob mechanical one by the Schantz Organ Company, Orrville, Ohio. At that time, a 4-rank mixture and set of Maas-Rowe chimes (in memory of a former pastor given by his family) were added to the Great division, a Viole Celeste to the Swell, and a small scale unit 16'-8' Trumpet to the Pedal division. The Johnson & Son pipework was untouched. A new Spencer Orgoblo was installed to compensate for the additional pipework.

THE 1995 PROJECT In 1995-1996, the congregation launched a capital campaign to install central air conditioning in the entire building and to restore the sanctuary, as close as possible, to its 1894 appearance, which included restoring the organ façade.

At that time, Muller Pipe Organ Company, Croton, Ohio, was contracted as the organ technicians; the firm has served in that capacity ever since. Muller was engaged to re-create the pipe façade in place of the drapes from 1976 and the cross from 1959.

The new main organ case was completely handcrafted of solid oak to match the existing original panels on the lower portion. The façade pipes were manufactured by A.R. Schopps & Sons, Alliance, Ohio, and were made of polished zinc with Romanesque style mouths and bay leaves. Two on-lays grace the lower portion of the case and hand carved oak pipe shades are located at the top of each of the five pipe towers.

A new ornate plaster grill, which features a clover pattern similar to that found in the upper support beams of the building's Akron Plan architecture, was installed over the Swell division, replacing the floor-to-ceiling draperies of the 1976 sanctuary redecoration. It was manufactured in four 3- by 5-foot sections by the Fischer & Jirouch Company, Cleveland, Ohio.

By 2001, the instrument was in need of significant service. At that time, the board of trustees approved expending funds to replace all leather components of the organ, and the work was completed by the Muller firm.

THE 2010 PROJECT By decade's end, the church structure was in need of considerable repair and maintenance. A capital improvements campaign was launched to provide for complete roof replacement, masonry work, and various other repairs. Included in the project were plans to perform similarly necessary repairs, rebuilding, and replacements to the organ, along with the addition of an

Antiphonal division. After only twelve years, the 1988 Schantz mechanical console was in bad shape. Its mechanical combination action had become unreliable and the stop and coupler contacts were failing to a point that the organist had to use creativity to keep them playing. While other significant work was needed, it seemed timely to replace the console with one that had up-to-date electronic capability at the same time. Electronics were in their infancy in 1988 when the 1959 console was replaced. Many pipes were not speaking because the cloth insulation over the wiring in the organ chamber, dating to 1959, was deteriorating. Wind lines from 1987-88 additions were failing because they were made of inferior flexible material. With faithful stewardship in mind, the board of trustees worked closely with Muller Pipe Organ Company to devise a plan to repair and upgrade the instrument.

The 2009-2010 plan included: 1) replacing the 1988 two-manual Schantz mechanical console with one of three-manuals; 2) rewiring the entire organ; 3) installing a Peterson ICS 4000 solid state computer switching system; 4) replacing all flexible wind lines with rigid, metal lines; 5) expanding the organ's versatility by adding an Antiphonal division at the rear of the sanctuary; 6) making minor additions to the main organ; and 7) locating as many vintage ranks of pipes as possible for the Antiphonal division to match the quality and speech of the original Johnson & Son Pipes.

After exhausting many possibilities for replacing the console, the decision was made to replace it with one that would be rehabilitated. An ideal console was found, one that would appear at home in the church, accommodate the needs of the new Antiphonal division, and have historical integrity. The three-manual console, dating from 1962, was originally located in a church that was discarding its instrument to make way for a new one. Other than some cosmetic issues, it was in very good condition, was constructed of solid mahogany, and had wood carvings closely matched the church's existing altar furnishings. Muller completely disassembled it and all old mechanisms were replaced with new, Peterson solid state, computer controlled systems. Muller also stripped and refinished the cabinet and supplied several needed all-new, custom made wooden parts, including the bench. Its original ivory keyboards and pedals, which offer an historical flavor, important to the project, were retained (see pictures).

The small unit scaled trumpet stop in the Pedal division was replaced with a more appropriately scaled and effective 16'-8' Trombone, which beautifully underpins the original Johnson & Son pipework. The original open diapason 16' (open wood) was fitted with tuners while its upper one and a half octaves were replaced with tonally matched open metal pipes, providing more fundamental pitch in the upper register than wooden pipes of that era. Two ranks in the Swell division, the open diapason and bassoon-oboe, received 4' extensions, and the Great division received an independent tierce rank. While not typically found as an independent rank in American organs of this period, it should be kept in mind that many Johnson organs did include the 1' pitch in their mixture stops.

THE FIVE-RANK ANTIPHONAL DIVISION, consisting of vintage pipes from the same era as the Johnson & Son pipes, was added at the rear of the sanctuary, where a small balcony once existed. It was closed off from the sanctuary in the 1950's and most recently, the space housed sound

equipment. The new Antiphonal division offers increased versatility and blends perfectly with the main instrument.

Through generous support of an ongoing trust originally endowed by Donald VanHorn and careful supervision from our church's board of trustees, the Johnson & Son/Muller pipe organ at First United Methodist Church has been maintained in first class condition by Muller Pipe Organ Company. The Muller family traces its organ building lineage back five generations, to turn of the 20th century Boston. Joseph Muller was a cabinet maker who worked with Ernest Skinner from his company's earliest days. Joseph's son Henry followed in his father's footsteps with Skinner, and rose to the position of Principal Installation Foreman. Henry Muller worked on several notable installations, including the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and St. Thomas Church in New York City.

In 1919, Henry Muller established his own firm in Toledo, Ohio, primarily performing service and maintenance. During the tenure of Henry's sons, Robert and William, Muller Pipe Organ Company expanded into restorations and rebuilding of existing organs and became a charter member of the American Institute of Organbuilders. Under the direction of Robert Muller's sons Mark and John, the company continues to service and craft instruments with the integrity and knowledge accumulated and applied for over four generations.