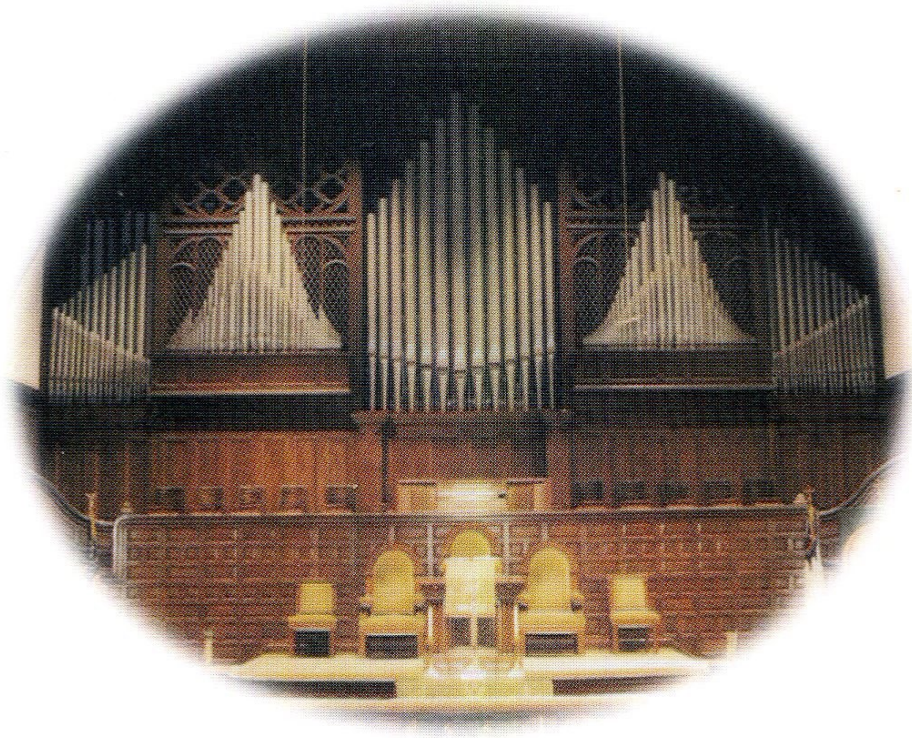


First United Methodist Church



Birmingham
Alabama

Let all that is old
be new again.

February 11, 2001

ORDER OF WORSHIP
10:55 AM

THE CHIMING OF THE HOUR AND BEGINNING OF WORSHIP

THE OPENING VOLUNTARY: Chorale No. 3 in A Minor

César Franck

***THE CALL TO WORSHIP**

Dearly Beloved, we learn from the Holy Scriptures that the devout set apart temples for the worship of God, and used musical instruments therein for His praise and adoration. We therefore assemble here for the purpose of celebrating God's work among us, and to consecrate this building and this organ anew for service in the worship of Almighty God.

Surely the Lord is in the Place.

This is none other than the house of the Lord: this is the Gate of heaven.

Enter into His gates with Thanksgiving and into His courts with praise.

O magnify the Lord with me; let us exalt His name together.

***THE CHORAL INTROIT:** Arise, Shine!

James H. Cook

***THE PROCESSIONAL HYMN**

LOBE DEN HERREN

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear, now to his temple draw near;
Join me in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigning,
Bears thee on eagle's wings, e'er in his keeping maintaining.
God's care enfolds all, whose true good he upholds.
hast thou not known his sustaining?

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and derend thee;
Surely his goodness and mercy here daily attend thee.
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
Who with his love doth befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that hath life and greath, come now with praises before him!
Let the amen sound from his people again;
Gladly forever adore him.

***THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH - APOSTLES' CREED**

I Believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

***THE GLORIA PATRI**

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

THE ANTHEM: I Was Glad When They Said unto Me

Sir C. Hubert H. Parry

*This anthem is sung in celebration of the completion
of the restoration of the choir loft, narthex, and tower bell,
of the cleaning of the walls of the church,
and of the rebuilding of the organ.*

I was Glad when they said unto me, We will go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is at unity in itself. O pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness within thy palaces. (Psalm 122:1-3,6,7)

THE CONGREGATIONAL GREETING

***THE CONSECRATION OF THE ORGAN**

*This liturgy was used at the dedication of the Raleigh W. Greene Memorial Organ
August 28, 1960. In repeating it today, we reaffirm the work of the past
and renew our purpose in using this instrument for the praise and worship of Almighty God.*

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we consecrate this Organ to the praise of Almighty God.

Praise God in His Sanctuary; praise Him in the firmament of His Power. Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with psaltery and harp.

We consecrate this Organ to the cultivation of a high art; to the interpretation of the message of the masters of music, to an appreciation of the great doxologies of the Church, and to the development of the language of praise which belongs both to earth and to heaven.

Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.

We consecrate this Organ to the wedding march, to thanksgiving on festal occasions, and to such inspiration in the service of song that all people may praise the Lord.

O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord all the earth, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart unto the Lord.

We consecrate this Organ to the healing of life's discords, and the revealing of the hidden soul of harmony; to the lifting of the depressed and the comforting of the sorrowing; to the humbling of the heart before the eternal mysteries and the lifting of the soul to abiding beauty and joy by the gospel of infinite love and good will.

That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Let us pray:

Our God and Father whom the generations have worshipped with concord of sweet sound, be pleased to accept this Organ as a song of praise unto Thee. **Amen.**

Grant that its music, with accompanying song, may come as a blessed benediction upon all who worship here. **Amen.**

May this Organ become undying music in the world as its notes of cheer, comfort, communion, and courage are modulated into human lives for daily task and noble service.
Amen.

To all organists who shall sound its notes, and to all worshippers who shall be lifted Godward by its voice, may there come at times the sweep of hallelujahs from the throne of the Redeemed until earth below shall be attuned to heaven above, singing hallelujah to Him who reigneth, Lord of lords, the King of kings. **Hallelujah! Amen.**

THE CHILDREN PRAISE GOD

THE ANTHEM:

O How Amiable Are Thy Dwellings

Ralph Vaughan Williams

*This anthem was sung at the dedication of the
Raleigh W. Greene Memorial Organ,
August 28, 1960.*

O how amiable are thy dwellings, thou Lord of Hosts! My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord: My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young: even thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: They will be alway praising thee. The glorious Majesty of the Lord our God be upon us: prosper thou the work of our hands upon us. O prosper thou our handywork. (Adapted from Psalm 84)

At the conclusion of the anthem, the congregation is invited to stand and join the choir in singing one stanza of "O God, Our Help in Ages Past."

O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home!

THE PASTORAL PRAYER

THE OFFERTORY: Inflammatus (from *Stabat Mater*)

Giacomo Rossini

*This anthem was performed in the first service held in this building,
November 22, 1891.*

(Sung in Latin) When thou comest to the judgement and remember Thou thy servants, none else can deliver us. Save, and bring us to thy kingdom, there to worship with the faithful, and forever dwell with thee.

Virginia Goodall, guest soprano

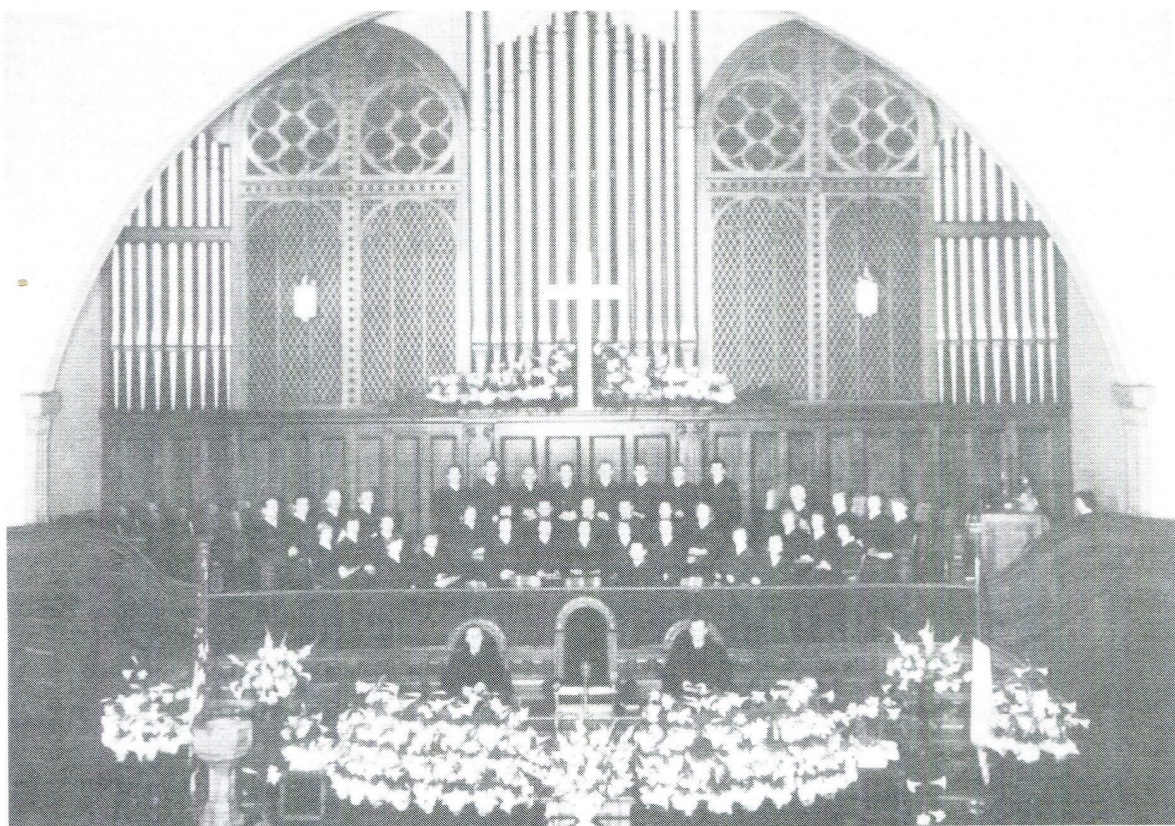
*THE DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen

*THE GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 6: 17-26

THE SERMON: Setting the Standard

Rev. David S. Wallace



The completion of the 1931 project gave the front of the church a new look, one that it was to retain through the 1950s, when this photograph was taken. We will never know to what extent the changes made to the original organ shortened its life span, but by the end of the second World War, the First Methodist organ was in poor mechanical condition. Even though its sound was considered more beautiful than the sound of some newer instruments in Birmingham, it was no longer reliable, and the church began to consider improving its organ once again. Money was raised in memory of Raleigh W. Greene, who had been a much-loved member of the clergy, and in 1957 the church hired Robert Baker, of New York's Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, to evaluate the organ. After examining the instrument, he recommended that it be replaced, and in due course the church signed a contract for a new organ to be built by the Schantz Organ Company of Orville, Ohio.

Representatives of the Schantz company received a proposed stoplist from Dr. Baker and modified it to conform with the available space and their concept of the American Classic organ – a concept of organ specification that was meant to allow a single instrument to play many different styles of music. Their revised stoplist was reported on the front page of *The Diapason*, the leading pipe organ publication of the era, and details of this new instrument were soon known throughout the nation. One of its features that marked it as unique in Birmingham for several years was the presence of an exposed neo-Baroque *Positiv* division in addition to a more traditional enclosed *Choir* division. While other post-WWII instruments were to have one or the other, only First Church and Canterbury Methodist – closely copied from our organ a few years later – had both.

This instrument, dedicated as the Raleigh W. Greene Memorial Organ on August 28, 1960, utilized the same chamber space and screens that had been built by Möller in 1931, but it added two cantilevered chests that held the pipes of the Great division and the Positiv suspended over the choir members. The console, which had been on the side of the choir loft since 1931, was returned to the center, this time in a special sunken pit, below the floor level of the choir loft. Once again, the appearance of the church was changed, and another generation grew up in First Methodist with a new organ providing accompaniments for its hymns and anthems. As the music program of the church grew and flourished under the direction of Hugh Thomas, Joseph Schreiber and Sam Batt Owens, many Birmingham-Southern College students were welcomed to the church as they took organ lessons and played recitals in the sanctuary of First Church.

The photograph below was used in the dedication program in August of 1960, when the organ was completed. The brass rail and curtain, which had served as a modesty screen for the choir since 1891, were removed for this official "portrait" of the organ, making it easier to see the unbalanced seating in the choir loft that had been required by the side position of the 1931 console placement.



In 1972 another major modification to the appearance of the building resulted in new lighting and a revised color scheme for the church. At the same time, the rail and curtain were removed for a final time, and a skillful extension of the rail was added as a permanent screen for the choir. In recognition of the important role the organ played in the musical life of both First Church and Birmingham-Southern College, the center panel of the extended rail was made removable, so that the organist could be seen clearly during recitals. This rail remains in place today, and the center panel is still removed when the organ plays a particularly important role in a service or concert.

The Schantz organ served the church for forty years, but as is the case with all machines, it too began to show signs of wear. The mechanical "memory" that had been placed in the basement had become unreliable by the early 1980's, and even some pipes had been replaced because of damage from excess humidity. By the late 1990's, the church embarked on a major rebuild and revision of the Raleigh W. Greene Memorial Organ. The Canadian firm Casavant Frères was selected to do the work, and the Schantz was used for the last time in worship in January of 2000.

Parts of the organ were shipped to Canada to be reworked in the factory, and parts remained in place. Once again, the musical traditions of First Church had grown, and several modifications were made to the choir loft to give us the flexibility to accommodate the variety of music that we have in our services today. The curved risers of 1931 were removed, and a basic set of straight risers were put in place, nearly duplicating the original layout of the choir loft. The new risers, however, are designed to permit not only the Chancel Choir, but also our Bell Choirs to use the choir loft during services. The new console was made movable, so that it can be placed in the center of the choir loft for recitals and services, or be moved to the side when a broader floor space is needed in the center. As Wayne Hester studied the proposals for removing the curved risers, he drew a series of curved steps leading from the choir loft to the balcony. When the risers were removed, the original steps were revealed – with the same curved shape of Wayne's proposed new ones. After seventy years, we're using them once again.

When the organ returned to the church in the middle of October, we moved our services to the Dining Room – and started watching progress of the reinstallation from the narthex and the balcony. We couldn't see everything that happened, but new wind chests were installed, new framework was added, some of our old pipes were placed where they had been before, others were removed, and still others replaced. After five weeks we returned to the sanctuary, but it would be five more weeks – on December 24 — before the tedious process of voicing each pipe was completed and the organ was once again heard in our worship services.

The screens that Möller installed in 1931 are still there, but the pipes both in front of them and directly behind them are new. The pipes that once stood in front of them are now standing on new chests in the Choir division or on old chests in the Swell division. In keeping with principles of good stewardship, we've recycled parts of the organ and reinstalled others exactly as they were. Where changes in our musical practices have demanded it, or where damage had occurred, we've replaced some pipes. Two ranks of pipes from 1891 are still being used, the echo division of 1931 is still in place, and most of the 1960 Schantz organ is still with us.

It's difficult to compare one instrument to another, because just as we have had different needs over the last 110 years, so do other churches have needs that differ from ours. This year we celebrate a new organ in our church – the best organ for our church in this, the twenty-first century.

Dr. James H. Cook

The Renovation of our Building

Standing on the corner of 6th Avenue and 19th Street North, the Sanctuary of First United Methodist Church has been a majestic fixture of downtown Birmingham for one hundred and ten years. The building has seen baptisms, weddings, and fond farewells by the hundreds at its altar. In the words of Senior Minister David Wallace, it is “a place where God is loved and that love is made known”. However, a threat to the beloved Sanctuary building existed almost from the beginning. Soon after the edifice was completed, the coal dust and soot that permeated the young city’s air began to accumulate on the stone blocks of the building. Within a very short time, the original color of the stones lost the beautiful nuances their of color and became a grimy black. The dark coloration became accepted as normal, and it was not very many years before there was no one left who could remember the original beauty of the building.

Last year the Long Range Planning Committee discovered the alarming fact that the soot and coal dust were trapping water inside the porous stone. The deterioration would inevitably destroy the structural integrity of the building itself if left untreated. It was essential that the exterior of the building be treated with a sealant that would keep water out while allowing the existing buildup to dissipate.

To do the work properly, the existing grime would have to be removed in such a way as to do no further damage to the stones. Any abrasive technique was out of the question. The church considered two companies before selecting Masonry Arts of Bessemer to perform the work. The stones would be treated with a chemical that would effectively dissolve the grime while protecting the limestone itself. A Church Conference was held on August 20, 2000 where a unanimous vote approved the cleaning and sealing of the building.

Masonry Arts soon began treating the building and the results were startling. The cleaning revealed stones with many beautiful shades of color as well as remarkable textures that had been hidden behind the soot and coal dust. Removing the threat to the Sanctuary had allowed the building’s original beauty to be revealed in all its glory. In the words of Masonry Arts President, Roy Swindall, the Family of Faith was gaining a “brand-new, one hundred year old church”.

At the same time, another need concerning the Sanctuary was addressed. The carpeting in the Narthex had become worn out and the pad below it was so deteriorated that walking across the uneven surface had become a safety hazard. While waiting for some construction issues to be resolved, a beautiful new carpet was selected by the church’s House Committee. Installation of the maroon and gold carpeting was performed during January of 2001.

The new carpet was only the latest in a series of renovations to the area that is now the Narthex. As the building was originally designed, the main entrance into the Sanctuary was from the steps coming up from 19th Street and the area behind the Sanctuary was the Education Wing for Sunday School classes. The twenty classrooms were on two levels at the rear of a semi-circular auditorium. Later, the auditorium was converted to Wesley Chapel, which replaced straight-back chairs with theater seats. In 1972, this area was dramatically altered into a welcoming foyer and became the primary entrance into the Sanctuary. The stained glass window that had provided light for the auditorium was covered with a drop-in ceiling and fluorescent lights. Only time will tell what other changes await in the future.

Awash in its re-discovered grandeur, the Sanctuary of First United Methodist stands as a beacon to all of God’s children. As a safe harbor for the weary and a watchtower in the Lord’s vineyard; this building, this congregation, and this church shall stand ready in the years to come “to seek, ...to strengthen, ...to share, ... and to send.”

Dr. Paul E. McCracken
Director of Christian Education

