



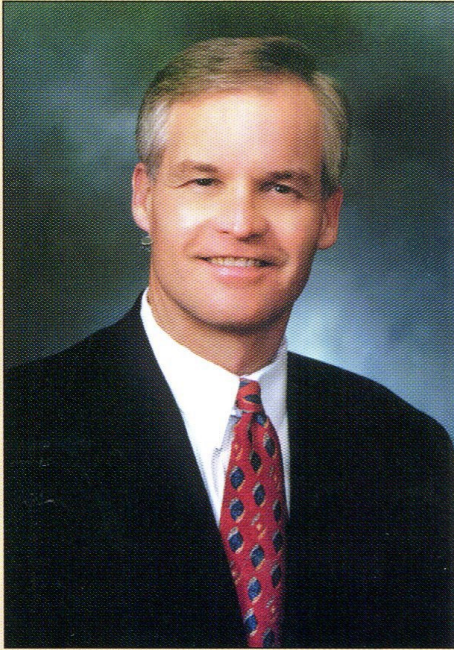
Casavant Frères Opus 3828

First United Methodist Church

1928 Ross Avenue

Dallas, Texas 75201

From the Senior Minister



Dr. John F. Fiedler
Senior Minister

With the dedication of the new pipe organ before us, we would do well to reflect on the significance of this milestone in our church's history. The assembly of this new instrument in our midst is something akin to a person getting a heart transplant. After all, the organ provides the heartbeat of our worship experience. We will feel renewed vitality pumped into the gathered Body of Christ. Under the skilled hands of organist Tim Effler, the organ prelude will consecrate yet again time and space and call us all from the distractions and busyness of our lives to focus on the task of faith. The sounds driven through the myriad ranks of pipes will call us to worship God. The strains of high notes will waft down from the sanctuary ceiling like manna from heaven. The driving bass notes will shake us out of our apathy and preoccupation with self like a great earthquake. The hymns that we sing together will be more powerful in their proclamation of God's word. Clarity. Power. Beauty. The new organ will give to us these things and we will feed off of this new energy. Now ensconced in the organ chamber of our historic sanctuary, this pipe organ will bless First Church congregations for decades to come. This is truly an instrument for the ages.

I want to thank our Director of Music Dana Effler and church organist Tim Effler for their powerful leadership and unwavering commitment for our sacred music programs in general and the securing of our new pipe organ in particular. Together, they work tirelessly to further our great tradition of excellence in sacred music. Also, I want to thank the Board of Trustees for their enlightened financial leveraging that allowed us to place the order with Casavant Frères and get our instrument built in a timely manner. My appreciation also goes to the organ selection committee (chaired by Dr. Hodgie Henderson) for choosing the master craftsmanship of Casavant. Finally, thanks to all of you who made the new organ possible with your donations. By voting with your ballots and your dollars, you have made clear the importance of this musical juggernaut to our general ministry. Remember, even after the dedication, it is still appropriate and helpful for gifts and memorials to be made to the organ fund as we move to close out this campaign.

And now let us prepare to praise God through glorious music...

*Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.
Serve the LORD with gladness:
come before his presence with singing.*



From the Director of Music and Arts



Dana Effler
Director of Music and Arts

As we dedicate our new pipe organ, I am filled with a sense of awe and gratitude for the hundreds of individuals who contributed their financial support to this project. At last, we will hear this incredible instrument with its vast array of sounds and timbres. From the delicate chiming of the cymbelstern to the hair-raising festival trumpets, it will exhilarate our senses and infuse our worship with new energy, beauty and meaning.

Looking back at the long road we traveled to finally arrive at this joyous occasion, I have decided that it is fitting to call this our "miracle organ," because it's something many thought we would never see or hear at First Church in the foreseeable future. You see, a few years before Tim and I arrived, a very dedicated organ committee researched and studied with great intensity and had numerous meetings regarding the purchase of a new organ, but eventually tabled the project because funding seemed hopelessly out of reach. However, after Tim and I had been here for three years and had read all the reports and research documents of the previous committee, we decided to revive the organ committee and

asked Dr. Hodgie Henderson to chair it once again. Since then, we have been working diligently with the complete support and advocacy of our Senior Minister, Dr. John Fiedler, to make this new organ a reality. With the blessing of the Trustees, we presented our proposal to purchase a new pipe organ to the general membership at an All-Church Conference on March 11, 2001, and with an overwhelmingly positive vote, the membership of First Church agreed to take the leap of faith with us to make this collective dream come true.

The most inspiring part of this process for me has been watching the "grass roots" effort grow. Pondering that, I was reminded of the Gospel story of Christ's feeding the five thousand, and the question came to mind, "Did the miracle of Christ's feeding the five thousand happen as a result of his divine power to create more food where there was very little, or did Christ's amazing act of caring for basic human need, affect the crowd in such a way that it inspired them to take what little they had and share it with those around them?" At First Church there was no one individual, one family or foundation that made this miracle happen. It happened one person at a time working shoulder to shoulder. That's the First Church way. We work together, we share the dream together, and we make the miracle happen together.

This new organ represents a special part of us, and when its majestic sounds fill the sanctuary, the beauty and vitality we hear will be a reflection of us, the body of Christ, that cared enough to share what we have for the worship of Almighty God at First United Methodist Church in downtown Dallas. Thanks be to God for our miracle organ!

From the Organist

What a thrill it is finally to write about this marvelous instrument and this incredible journey over the past six years. Early in the process Keith Schafer, a fellow SMU grad from Augusta, Georgia, shared with me that his church's new organ project had taken six years from the time a committee was formed until the completion of the instrument, and that he had needed every minute of it! Was he ever right - so many questions, so many details. And the result is this fabulous instrument that we have today. Throughout the entire process the wonderful people of Casavant Frères, especially Vice President Stan Scheer, have listened, advised, encouraged, hand held, and celebrated with us over the creation of Opus 3828.

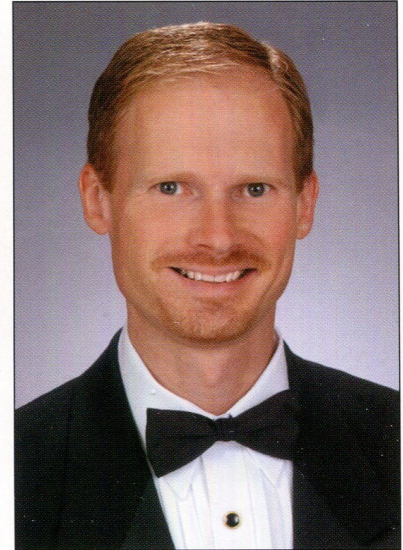
From the start we knew we wanted a traditional and eclectic "Anglo/American" organ - the kind of instrument that might have been built for this new sanctuary by the E. M. Skinner company back in 1926. So, we looked at several "American" builders. I began this process wondering how we would ever make a decision. Our consultant, Gary Loper, reassured me that one builder would emerge as the right choice. Who would have thought that our "Anglo" organ would end up being built by French Canadians? But build it they did! When I first heard our new organ at the Casavant factory back in June, it not only met my

expectations but surpassed them in so many ways. I spent the first thirty minutes of my visit to the factory playing on nothing but the First Open Diapason from the Great division - such a beautiful stop and a rich foundational sound for which we at First United Methodist Church had been longing.

The character and personality of this instrument have continued to amaze me throughout the installation and voicing process. As Stan Scheer has said, the sound of this organ is very warm and rich while maintaining an exquisite clarity and brilliance. It is truly a work of art. Whether leading congregational hymns, accompanying choral anthems or playing solo organ repertoire of the great masters from Bach to Dupré, Opus 3828 is truly an original and will bring great glory to Almighty God who has blessed us so richly.

So many people have contributed their time, talents, financial resources, and support to this project that their names are too numerous to list here. I do wish to express a personal sense of gratitude to three individuals. First to Senior Minister, Dr. John Fiedler without whose encouragement and support this new pipe organ would have never become a reality. We are greatly indebted to his vision and sense of purpose. Secondly, I am very grateful to this project's head "cheerleader," Dr. Hodgie Henderson, chair of the organ committee. His support for a new instrument for First United Methodist Church dates back many years. His encouragement along with his well-schooled knowledge and great appreciation for all things musical has continued to inspire me and many others. And, finally, I wish to thank Dana Effler for her unfailing support, encouragement, prodding, questioning, marketing and unsurpassed attention to detail that have contributed to the success of this project. As always, she remains for me and countless others, an inspiration to give and expect only the best in our offerings to and praise of our Creator.

May this new pipe organ continue to offer beautiful strains of prayer and praise for generations to come. *Soli Deo Gloria.*



Tim Effler
Organist/Associate Director of
Music and Arts

From the Builder

Unlike other musical instruments, each pipe organ is a unique creation. In the history of Casavant Frères no other organ has been built with the same list of stops, with the same visual design or in the same physical and acoustical setting as this instrument. In recognition of an organ's individuality, builders give each a numerical designation similar to that used by composers. The Casavant brothers organized their workshop in 1879 and installed Opus 1 in Montréal in 1880. In the 123 years since that time, over three thousand eight hundred instruments have been installed all over the world. This one, Opus 3828, is the forty-sixth Casavant installation in Texas since the first arrived in the state more than fifty years ago.

The design of a pipe organ begins with listening, listening to the resident church musicians and consultant describe their requirements and aspirations for an instrument, and listening to the space in which the organ will find its home. Imagining how it will sound based upon what will be played and how it will be used for worship and the other musical activities anticipated by the church becomes the basis for what stops are selected and how they fit into the ensemble of the organ. Trying to communicate the sound of any musical instrument using words is difficult, however in this case we had the benefit of the musicians having played and heard a Casavant organ in Augusta, Georgia that they found particularly to their liking. The tonal inspiration for both instruments comes from English organ building of the last century. These instruments, which in the mind of many are eminently suited for use in worship, provide a warm, rich ensemble that encourages and supports choral and congregational singing.

Although the basic tonal orientation is English, the instrument's specification is based upon historical practice that allows the performance of a wide range of literature from all schools and periods. Tonally the instrument has been planned to address the multifaceted requirements of an active music ministry encompassing congregational singing, choral and instrumental accompaniment and the performance of its indigenous literature for worship and in concert.

The organ includes a large number of foundational stops in all divisions; particularly noteworthy is the presence of principal choruses in the Great, Swell and Choir divisions. Indeed, there are twenty-two principal stops in the instrument, including the two principal stops planned for the Solo division. The Swell and Choir are built on an eight-foot chorus, while the Great is based upon a sixteen-foot Diapason and includes the necessary elements (2-2/3' and 1-3/5') of a Sesquialtera II in addition to two chorus mixtures.

The pipe scaling and voicing techniques have been selected to maximize the breadth and warmth of the organ's ensemble while maintaining clarity and transparency of the combinations needed for polyphony. Individual stops were selected to provide variety of tone at various dynamic and pitch levels, and the approach to voicing has been to provide maximum color from individual stops. The inclusion of the expressive Swell, Choir and Solo divisions, with appropriate and well-developed choruses, provides flexibility not only for playing organ solo literature, but also for the accompaniment of solo voices, choral ensembles and the congregation. Not forgetting their use in producing the dramatic crescendo-diminuendo effects so characteristic of English liturgical organ performance.

All of the pipework and mechanism of Opus 3828 is new with the exception of thirty-two pipes of the very large-scale Open Flute 16' stop in the pedal division. The pipes of this impressive stop date to the church's 1928 Pilcher organ and have been retained for their robust bass sounds that provide a sturdy foundation for the full ensemble of the organ.

Knowing that the realization of this instrument represents the combined aspirations and efforts of many people has made this an especially rewarding project. Our relationship with First United Methodist Church was enhanced this summer when the choir came to visit our workshop during their tour in Quebec. Seeing the expressions on the choristers' faces when they first saw and heard the organ gave us great satisfaction, however the greatest joy came when they sang an anthem with the organ, which probably was the first time in the history of Casavant Frères that a choral group sang with an instrument soon to be delivered to their church. We take special pride in the results that have been achieved through careful coordination with everyone associated with this project. It has been a privilege to be associated with the staff and members of First United Methodist Church and we trust that the organ's voice will inspire, lead and comfort those who hear it for generations.

Stanley R. Scheer
Vice President
Casavant Frères

Casavant Frères Limitée

Casavant is the oldest continuing name in North American organ building. In 1991 the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada installed an historical plaque on the ancestral home of the Casavant family, which presently serves as the office of Casavant Frères, in honor of Joseph Casavant and in recognition of the "international reputation as builders of fine instruments" achieved by his two sons. According to the Encyclopedia of Music in Canada, Joseph Casavant is the first Canadian-born organ builder of note. At the age of twenty-seven he left his job as a blacksmith to return to college. While there he was asked to restore an old organ to working condition and his love for the instrument was formed. Joseph Casavant received his first contract for a new organ in 1840 and by the time of his retirement he had built some seventeen organs including instruments for the cathedrals in Ottawa and Kingston, Ontario.

Joseph's two sons, Claver and Samuel grew up observing their father's love of the craft of organ building. After their father's retirement they worked in the shop of his successor, however it soon became apparent that if they wanted to perfect their art they would need to acquire wider knowledge and experience. Therefore in 1878 Claver left for France where he worked for John Abbey in Versailles. Later, after Samuel joined him, they spent time with Cavallé-Coll in Paris and traveled extensively in Europe, visiting builders and significant organs in France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium and England. On their return to Saint-Hyacinthe, in 1879 they established themselves as Casavant Frères on the site where the present workshops stand.

The first organ, a two-manual with thirteen stops was completed in 1880. Their first three manual instrument was installed in the Saint-Hyacinthe Cathedral in 1885 and featured the first successful adjustable capture combination action mechanism installed in an organ. This organ was featured in recital during the 1999 Organ Historical Society Convention at which time it was officially added to the OHS list of historically important instruments. Another organ heard at the convention, and the instrument that firmly established the Casavant's international reputation, was completed in 1891 for Notre-Dame Basilica in Montréal. During their career the brothers received much recognition for their work including being awarded the Grand Prix at the 1930 International Exhibition held in Antwerp. In addition to the numerous fine organs on the North American continent, they installed others in France, the West Indies, South and Central America, South Africa and Japan. Voluminous company archives abound in letters and testimonials from famous organists, including Guilman, Vierne, Widor, Bonnet, Dupré, Lemare, Courboin and others who inaugurated and played Casavant organs. Today there are Casavant organs on every inhabited continent of the world including instruments in all of the provinces in Canada and all fifty of the United States.

Unlike other firms that rely on the direction of only one individual, Samuel and Claver were partners who worked together with their individual interests and talents complementing one another. As their reputation and business grew they sought to add other dedicated individuals who would function as a part of a strong team. In this way they could assure continuity in the event of illness and enable the company to continue long after them. During the last decade of their work they brought a young Englishman, Stephen Stoot into the firm. He was not only a well-trained craftsman with an intense interest in all aspects of organ building, but also an accomplished organist who first finished instruments during the tenure of the Casavant brothers, later succeeding Claver Casavant.

The leadership at Casavant always has taken keen interest in keeping abreast of new developments, rejecting those of little merit while adopting and improving those that are important and worthy. The interest in historical instruments, principally those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was embraced in the mid 1950's. Lawrence Phelps joined the company, first as an advisor and later becoming Tonal Director, and worked to establish an approach to organ building based upon classical design principals. Many present-day organists learned to play on Casavant organs of this era which, because they were on the cutting edge of design concepts, were installed in the leading colleges, universities and conservatories throughout North America.

The year 1960 marks a significant date in the history of the company with a return to the building of mechanical action organs. Since that time over two hundred tracker instruments have been built. In 1972 Gerhard Brunzema joined Casavant. His training, background and extensive experience with historically important European organs allowed Casavant to hone its already well-established mechanical action capabilities resulting in the extraordinarily reliable and sensitive key actions built to this day.

During the early 1980's the musical world witnessed an awakening of interest in organ design of a broader perspective than what had been practiced for some twenty years. Realizing the importance of this movement, Casavant brought Jean-Louis Coignet to the firm as Tonal Director. His life-long interest of the organ, European training and position as the organ expert for the city of Paris has brought a new perspective and vitality to the company and to the instruments built under his leadership. His practical approach to tonal design based on a synthesis of classical, symphonic and modern principles has won admiration from musicians around the world. In 1984 Jacquelin Rochette joined the firm, first as assistant to Mr. Coignet and recently becoming Associate Tonal Director. In addition to his work at Casavant supervising the daily tonal work, he continues to be active by performing recitals and recording for radio broadcasts on CBC. Together they have developed a tonal pallet of great variety where the color of individual stops is developed to the fullest extent while working to blend them in such a way that the ensemble becomes more and more cohesive as stops are added to the texture resulting in versatile and eminently musical instruments regardless of their size.

During their lifetime, the brothers Casavant established the finest traditions of craftsmanship among their artisans and a strong organization to carry on those traditions after them. This organization continues today to stand for the artistic integrity and painstaking care which the Casavant brothers cherished and fostered.

