

GRATITUDE

This new organ is a gift, not of a single donor, but from the members of First United Church who have generously given of their resources to both the church and the community of which it is a part. The donations, large and small, of these church members have enabled the erection of an instrument which will enrich the lives of generations to come.

In addition to this financial support, many members of First United Church have given most freely of their time and energies to this project. Special thanks go to each of the following:

the many people who shared weekends of work in the removal of the old organ and the physical preparation for the installation of the new—especially Henry J. Bode and Herbert W. Zobel, whose leadership and skills guided this part of the work;

Howard and Linda Hutchinson, who accepted the challenge of fund-raising for this installation;

Rev. Edward W. Bergstraesser for his constant support of a rich and varied music program for the church;

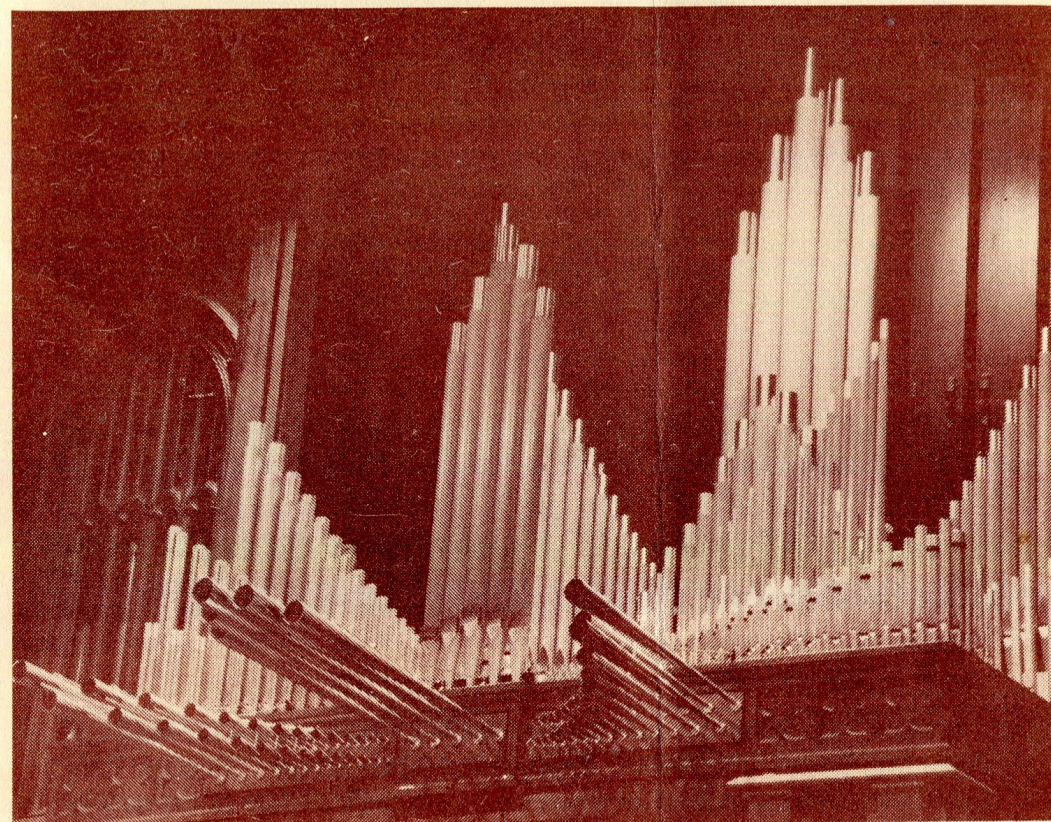
Sara Bode, who chaired the Organ Committee, and the members of that committee—Carol Ferguson, Angeline Gebhard, Thomas Hall, Raleigh Hegwood, John Ralph, and H. Kris Ronnow.

Finally, the Organ Committee wishes especially to thank G. Nicholas Bullat, Minister of Music and organ consultant. Dr. Bullat aided the committee in exploring many difficult questions, investigating alternatives, and encouraging open dialogue. His tireless overseeing of this installation and his concern for even the smallest detail assure the committee that First United Church has been rewarded with an instrument of superior worth.

CONCERT CALENDAR

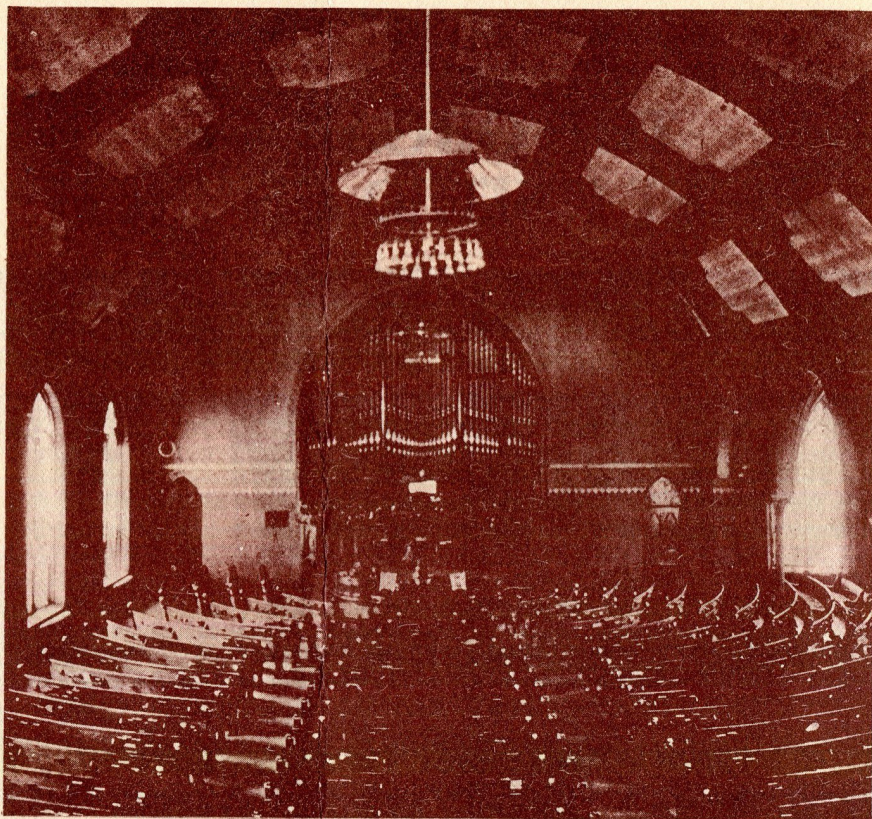
- | | |
|---------------|--|
| January 23 | Inaugural Concert
G. Nicholas Bullat, Organist |
| February 20 | Gabriel Fauré, Requiem |
| March 20 | Dedication Concert
G. Nicholas Bullat, Organist |
| April 15 | Organ Concert
Gillian Weir, Organist |
| May 14 and 16 | Civic Symphony of Oak Park-River Forest |

THE ORGAN OF FIRST UNITED CHURCH



OAK PARK, ILLINOIS

1983



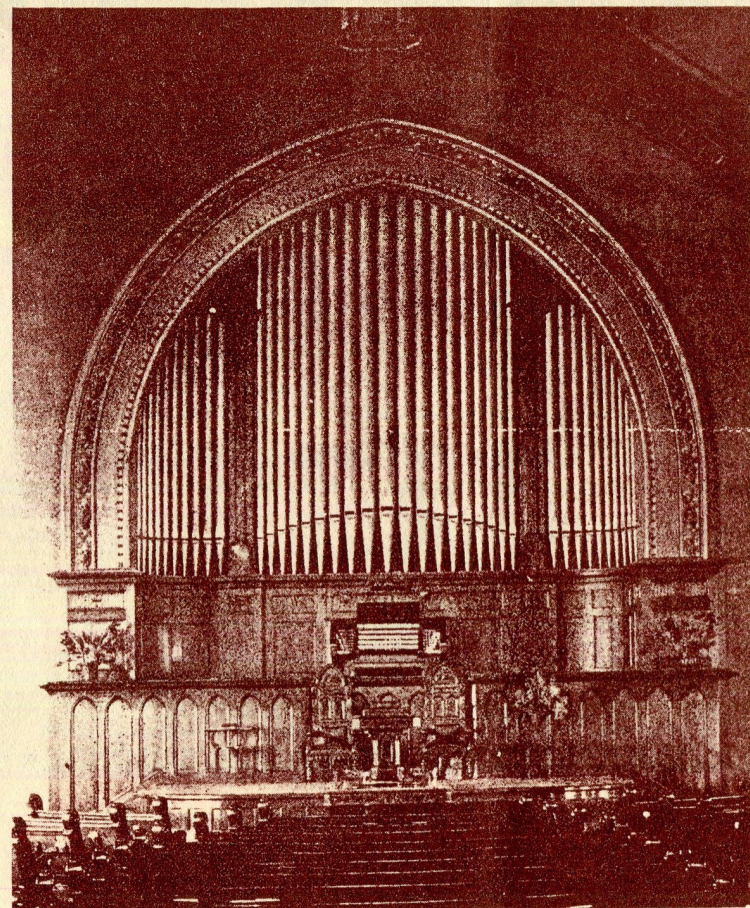
HISTORY

In 1881 Mrs. James Scoville donated the first organ housed in First Congregational Church of Oak Park. Built by the Johnson Organ Company, then one of the country's better-known builders, it was dedicated on 11 September of that year. A small instrument with mechanical action, this organ formed the basis for a second organ about twenty years later.

In 1901 the J. W. Steere & Son company of Springfield, Massachusetts, was commissioned to provide an organ of three manuals for the First Presbyterian Church of Oak Park. Dedicated on 25 April 1902, this organ served its congregation for just over twenty-five years before the Hall Organ Company enlarged the original organ to a four-manual design, including an echo organ of some size in the back of the sanctuary. This organ in turn underwent substantial alteration in the 1960's, at which time the antiphonal organ was removed, several ranks of the main organ were replaced, and other tonal changes were made in an attempt to update the instrument. Subsequent to the merger of the churches which formed First United Church, this organ has been further rebuilt and a new console provided, with substantial further work to be completed at a future date.

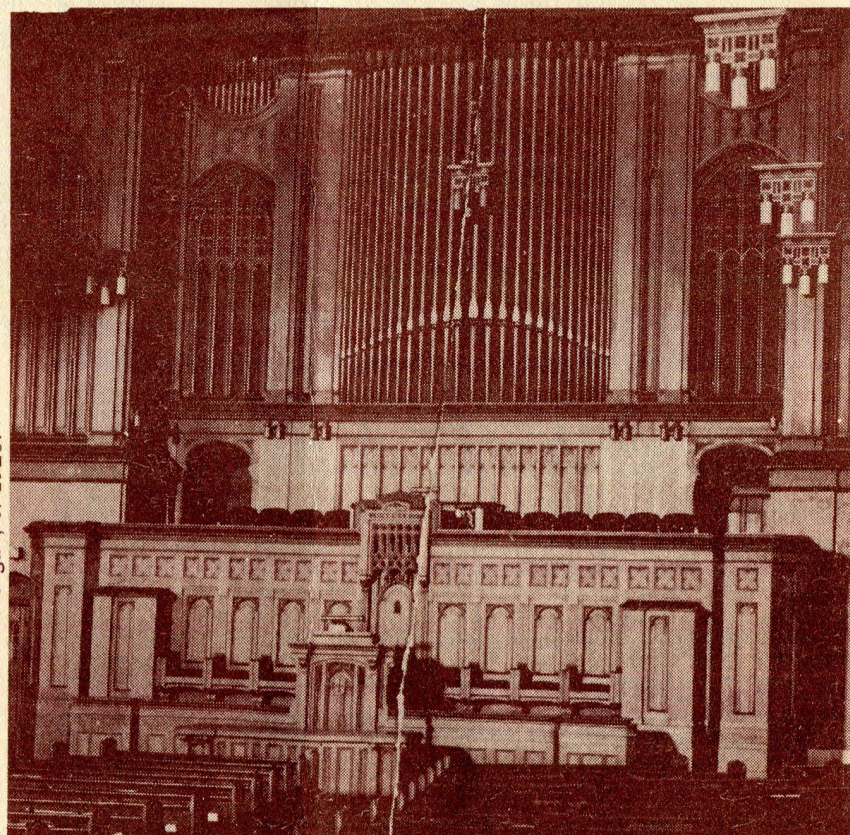
Meanwhile, by the end of 1900 the original Johnson organ at First Congregational Church was beginning to experience severe mechanical difficulties which, together with its relatively small size, led the congregation in May of 1903 to contract with the W. W. Kimball Company of Chicago for complete rebuilding and enlargement. The entire cost of this project was underwritten by the end of the congregational meeting which agreed to undertake this work! Kimball also added pneumatic action to the Johnson tracker system but the "attempt to make a new organ out of an old one did not prove satisfactory," and the decision was made to install a totally new instrument more suited to the size and style of the sanctuary in 1913.

This third organ, a truly notable instrument for its time, was designed and built by the Casavant firm of Quebec and South Haven, Michigan. Work began on this organ in 1913, and although it was dedicated on 25 March 1914, its tonal completion took almost another year. This organ contains five manual divisions, including an Echo organ in the ceiling, and a substantial pedal section for its time; the organ had a warm, romantic tonal character.



The Casavant Organ, 1915.

This instrument was short-lived, however, for it was totally destroyed in the fire of 5 September 1916. When the church was rebuilt, the Ernest M. Skinner Company of Boston was entrusted with the contract for the fourth organ. At this time Skinner was rapidly becoming one of American's best-known and most prominent builders, and when installed, this organ was significantly larger than its predecessor and was the largest church organ in Chicago. In addition to the four main manual divisions and generous pedal section (including two 32' stops), an Echo division was installed in the tower, followed shortly after the original installation by a supplemental "Tower" organ with its own pedal, designed specifically to "greatly support congregational singing." The inaugural recital was presented by organist William E. Zeuch on 20 September 1918.



The Ernest M. Skinner Organ, c. 1920.

While it served the church well for many years, this organ (as is the case with every instrument of this period) eventually developed severe mechanical problems. This, together with the desire for an attempt at tonal redesign, led in the early 1970's to the replacement of several ranks of the 1918 organ, many other tonal changes, and some mechanical work as well. Unfortunately, as with the earlier Johnson organ, "the attempt . . . did not prove satisfactory," particularly since mechanical problems increased dramatically in the next few years. The instrument finally became unusable in 1979.

After completing a much-needed renovation of the sanctuary, the members of First United Church turned their attention to the acquisition of a new, fifth instrument to take its place in the church building. After listening to many organs by a number of builders and after considering the proposals of both these and European builders, the Organ Committee recommended to the congregation the acceptance of a proposal by Casavant Frères, Liège, for a new organ to be installed by Christmas of 1982. This instrument was designed by G. Nicholas Bullat (consultant to the Organ Committee and Minister of Music at First United Church) together with Jean-Louis Coignet (tonal director of Casavant Frères) and reflects both old and new currents in organ-building.

The organ contains three manual divisions with a large pedal division, together with a fourth manual which controls the copper Trompette-en-chamade and the future antiphonal organ. The pipework visible in the central portion of the instrument, immediately behind and above the horizontal Trompette-en-chamade, is that of the Positif organ. Behind these pipes may be seen the principals of the Grand Orgue and the large wooden pipes of the 32' Contrebasse. To the left, in the west chamber, are the flutes and reeds of the Grand Orgue (lower chest) and the pipework of the Pedale (upper and rear chests). On the east side are the enclosed Recit (Swell) division, which speaks both directly into the sanctuary through the decorative grillwork and also toward the central portion of the room. Between the Grand Orgue and Recit are the lowest pipes of the 32' Contrebombarde, retained from the 1918 Skinner.

The console is movable and may be brought to the center of the sanctuary for concert purposes or to virtually any position in the east transept for normal service use. Natural keys are of ebony, with manual sharps of rosewood capped with ivory; all stops, couplers, and thumb pistons are also of rosewood, while all other sections of the console are of oak.

Tonally, the new organ is designed in a style that relies on the French Classic tradition of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and also partakes of the Romantic full-bodied character of the great nineteenth-century organs of Aristide Cavallé-Coll. (Many reeds contain elements derived directly from original Cavallé-Coll pipework.) While obviously French in orientation, this organ maintains the ability to render well the works of the great German masters and can also present most effectively the extensive literature of our own day.



BUILDER

Casavant has been building organs for over 100 years and, in fact, designed an earlier organ for the congregation of First Congregational Church. A group of craftsmen whose trade is passed on from one generation to another, Casavant has distinguished itself by utilizing technical innovations while preserving the best of classical organ building methods. The result has been world-wide recognition of the excellence of Casavant's instruments. Currently, instruments are being built for delivery to Japan, Australia, Mexico, and Korea, as well as the United States and Canada. Jean-Louis Coignet, who is responsible for the tonal qualities of the Casavant instruments, has been named "organ consultant for the City of Paris," a position created by the French government. M. Coignet brings to Casavant a knowledge of the classical traditions of French organ building and the romantic musical ideals of the last century exemplified by the great organs at Notre Dame de Paris, Ste. Clothilde, and La Madeleine.

The Organ Committee wishes to express its thanks to members of the staff of Casavant Freres, for without their expertise and craftsmanship this instrument could not look and sound as it does:

Donald Corbett and Eugene LaPlante
Gaston Bonin and Jean-Claude Gauthier
Roland Bonneau and Mario Corriveau

administration
drawings and layout
installation

Particular commendation is due to the men who accomplished the tonal design and finishing, for their love of sound, particularly beautiful organ sound, has created this work:

Jean-Louis Coignet
Yves Champagne and Ken Wolfe
Gaetan Robert and Michael Perrault

tonal director
flue voicers
reed voicers

SPECIFICATIONS (Four manuals, 88 ranks)

Grand Orgue		Recit		Solo	
Violon	16'	Bourdon (bois)	16'	Trompette en Chamade 8'	
Flûte à cheminée	16'	Principal étroit	8'	Antiphonal (Eight preparations)	
Montre	8'	Cor de nuit	8'		
Flûte harmonique	8'	Viole de gambe	8'	Pedale	
Flûte à cheminée	8'	Voix céleste (GG)	8'		
Prestant	4'	Octave	4'	Flûte	32'
Flûte	4'	Flûte octaviante	4'	Contrebasse	16'
Grosse tierce	3 1/5'	Octavin	2'	Soubasse	16'
Doublette	2'	Sesquialtera	II	Violon (G.O.)	16'
Cornet	III	Plein jeu	VI	Bourdon (R.)	16'
Grande fourniture	II-IV	Cymbale	II	Quintaton (P.)	16'
Fourniture	VI	Basson	16'	Octavebasse	8'
Bombarde	16'	Trompette	8'	Flûte bouchée	8'
Trompette	8'	Hautbois	8'	Cor de nuit (R.)	8'
Clairon	4'	Voix humaine	8'	Octave	4'
Tremblant		Clairon	4'	Flûte	4'
		Tremblant		Flûte	2'
Positif		Couplers		Grand cornet	III
Quintaton	16'	Recit/Grand Orgue		Mixture	VI
Montre	8'	Recit/Grand Orgue 16'		Contrebombarde	32'
Bourdon (bois)	8'	Positif/Grand Orgue		Bombarde	16'
Flûte douce	8'	Solo-Antiphonal/		Bombarde (G.O.)	16'
Flûte céleste (TC)	8'	Grand Orgue		Basson (R.)	16'
Prestant	4'			Douçaine (P.)	16'
Flûte à fuseau	4'			Trompette	8'
Nasard	2 2/3'	Recit/Positif		Douçaine (P.)	8'
Doublette	2'	Solo-Antiphonal/Positif		Clairon	4'
Quarte de nasard	2'			Douçaine (P.)	4'
Tierce	1 1/5'	Grand Orgue/Pedale		Antiphonal Pedale (Two preparations)	
Larigot	1 1/3'	Recit/Pedale			
Fourniture	II	Positif/Pedale			
Cymbale	IV	Solo-Antiphonal/Pedale			
Douçaine	16'				
Trompette	8'	Grand Orgue and			
Cromorne	8'	Positif Reverse			
Chalumeau	4'				
Tremblant					

Manual naturals are of ebony; sharps are of rosewood capped with ivory; pedal naturals are of maple; pedal sharps are of rosewood. All drawknobs, couplers, and thumb pistons are of rosewood, while all other parts of the console case and interior are of oak.