

About St. John's Organ

St. John's Wicks pipe organ's beautiful range of sounds has supported countless worship services, weddings, funerals, and concerts since its installation in 1970. With the sanctuary's lively acoustics, the organ supports congregational singing with warmth and power, plus has the ability to support the choir, soloists, and instrumentalists in a wide variety of music, and displays its versatility in organ literature from the 17th century to the present day. The Wicks organ is a joy to hear as it enriches worship at St. John's.

The Organ

Wicks Organ Company, Inc., Highland, IL, Opus 5061 - 1970

Hagerstown Organ Company, Inc., Hagerstown, MD - 2012

Steiner-Murphy Organ Company, Inc., Cumberland, MD - 2012

The organ's 36 ranks of pipes (1,964 pipes in all) and 31 digital ranks are divided among four divisions: Pedal, Great, Swell, and Chancel. The organ is played from the console's three 61-note manual keyboards and a 32-note pedalboard. The console includes drawknobs for pulling on the stops and buttons (both thumb pistons and toes studs) for controlling combinations of stops. Couplers provide the means to combine the stops of one or more divisions to be played together on one or more keyboards at unison, octave, and sub-octave pitches. This adds to the variety of possible sounds.

The organ's stops fall into four categories of sound: Principal, Flute, String, and Reed. The principals or diapasons provide the organ's unique sound and cannot be duplicated by any orchestral instrument; these are the backbone of the entire ensemble. The organ has principal choruses on the Great, Swell, and Chancel Divisions beginning at 8' pitch, and at 16' pitch in the Pedal Division. The flutes of the organ range from the powerful 8' Flûte Harmonique to the delicate Dolce both on the Great. The Swell 8' Gedeckt is a wooden stop with crisp articulation. The flutes of the Swell form a cornet ensemble of lighter and gentler quality and contrast that of the powerful principal scaled cornet of the Great Division. The flutes, strings, and reeds more or less imitate their orchestral counterparts and contribute their variety of tonal colors to the ensemble.

Pedal Division

Played by the feet, these notes provide the rich bass which is often felt rather than heard. The largest pipes in the organ are found in the Pedal Division. In addition, there are several stops that provide clear solo lines in the upper registers as required by some music. Each of the four families of sound is heard in the Pedal Division. This division, along with the Great Division, is located on either side of the balcony. The Pedal Division also provides the soft

rumbling effects of the 32' stops of both flute (Bourdon) and string (Violone) tone, along with the full-bodied 32' Contra Fagotto, both felt and heard under Full Organ.

Great Division

The stops on the inside right of the console belong to the Great Division. "Great" means most important or principal, the foundation organ. The sounds on the Great Division serve well for the accompaniment of hymns, liturgy, and other "big sounds" found in the organ repertoire. The Great and Pedal Divisions together provide the fundamental sound of the entire instrument. The Great Division is played on the middle manual. This division has flute stops of major importance, a sparkling mixture to crown the principal chorus which adds bright higher pitches to the basic organ sound, an English Trumpet, Clarinet, and the beautiful Hautbois (French oboe).

Swell Division

The Swell Division is played on the upper manual. "Swell," meaning to enlarge or grow, does just that by means of shutters that enclose the division. (*Although the organ as an instrument dates back to ca. 265 B.C., the Swell Division did not come into existence until around 1712.*) The organist opens and closes the shutters at will, achieving varied degree of volume. The sound of the Swell Division is secondary to that of the Great Division. Its reeds and diapasons are rich and full, providing great drama when the organist opens and closes the shutters. Also, the broad sounds of the strings and flutes are found in the Swell. The strings are rich but not edgy, and the 8' Geigen Diapason, while its scale was generated in relation to the Great 8' Principal, blends well with the 8' Viole de Gambe and 8' Viole Celeste. The 8' Trompette is a fiery French reed that speaks with authority. This stop is extended down into the 16' range in the Pedal Division to provide the 'snarl and growl' under fuller registrations.

Chancel Division

The pipes of the Chancel Division of our organ are the exposed pipework on display at the front of the nave, however, this division also contains stops that are under expression. The Chancel Division provides light, clear sounds that are ideal for accompanying. This division assists in drawing the sound of the gallery divisions down into the front of the nave. The softer, smoother reed solo stop, the English Horn, is also found in this division, along with some of the softest, gentlest sounds of the entire organ – the Dulciana and Unda Maris. This division also includes the fiery and stunning Harmonic Trumpet and the organ's crowning stops, the noble English Tuba and the brilliant Festival Trumpet - a solo stop which can be used for weddings, trumpet fanfares, soloing out the melody of hymns, and other ceremonial occasions. Having half the stops of this division under expression with the other half exposed provides more versatility for the organist. This division, while providing

support for the choir, assists in leading the congregation in the great hymns and liturgy of the church. The Chancel Division is played on the bottom manual, but may be coupled to any manual or the pedalboard.

Percussion Sounds Percussion sounds on the organ include chimes and orchestral harp.

The organ is controlled by a Peterson ICS-4000 Control System with 100 memory levels (currently expandable up to 256). This system allows for multiple organists with varied memory levels, multiple crescendo settings, and tuttis or Sforzando (full organ).

This wonderful instrument helps us to sing with greater joy, to pray with deeper awareness, to listen to and feel the movement of the Holy Spirit in our hearts as together we worship God.

Soli Deo Gloria