

A Brief History of the St. Paul's Organ



By Amy Mangram

A vibrant music program has been central St. Paul's worship for more than two centuries. From the parish's earliest days, leaders recognized that the organ is not just an instrument but a liturgical voice. A voice capable of lifting prayers, supporting congregational singing, and adding grandeur to worship.

In 1830, only two years after the first church was built, St. Paul's installed its first organ. It was likely a simple reed instrument. A new flue toned organ accompanied the second church, funded by Amos Granger and Horace White, it was later expanded and moved into the current building in 1885. It served the parish for more than twenty-five years until a Beeman organ replaced it in 1912.



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The organ we know today arrived in September 1967. Purchased from M.P. Moller & Co. for \$115,000 (about \$1.1 million today), it reaffirmed St. Paul's role as a regional center of liturgical music. With 4,330 pipes, the instrument was custom built with design input from Kenneth Sargent and guidance from Dean Hutton and George Decker. The dedication of the organ featured a procession of more than twenty representatives from local churches and representatives from the Diocese. The ceremony also included a recital by Dr. Harry Willis, organist of Ely Cathedral in England.

In 2001, Quimby Pipe Organs rebuilt the instrument, adding 21 ranks of new pipework, restoring six historic stops, and revoicing all retained ranks. Overseen by Jim Potts, St. Paul's organist and choirmaster, the major project ensured that the instrument would continue to inspire worship and support the parish's rich musical tradition for generations to come.

