

Mentor United Methodist Church Bi-Centennial Moment May 13, 2018

Our current sanctuary was dedicated in 1963. While this gave the church the space to continue to grow, one piece was lacking. A sanctuary of this size needed a new organ to project the strong rich sounds of God's music. However, it was decided to delay the purchase of a new organ until the sanctuary was paid off. That occurred in 1974 when the congregation celebrated the "burning of the mortgage". A committee was set up to look into what organ to buy and to establish a fund raiser to pay for it. That committee was headed by church member, John D. Ahlman, under the pastorship of the Rev. Robert Immelt. After research of various manufacturers, it was decided to purchase the new organ from the Schantz Organ Company of Orrville, Ohio. The new organ cost \$100,000. It had 2,654 pipes. The longest was sixteen feet and the shortest was one quarter of an inch. Three pipe chambers were built in front of the chancel. The organ was controlled by a three manual english style console. The console was installed on casters with an extra long cord to provide mobility for the console should the need exist. Many church members volunteered their time and talents to help with the construction, thus saving the church thousands of dollars.

The new organ was dedicated at the 11:00 o'clock service on October 31, 1976. Rev. Immelt and Rev. Charles Graham, associate pastor, officiated. The new organ was ceremoniously "handed over" to John Ahlman by John Schantz.

After the organ was installed, another project began to raise funds for chimes for the church. The funds were raised and Schantz fabricated the new chimes. They were dedicated on Palm Sunday, March 27, in 1983.

The church now had its new sanctuary and a wonderful new organ to conduct worship services. The question of what to do with the old sanctuary and the need for additional space would be answered later. But that is a story for a future bi-centennial moment.