

OUR HISTORY AT ST. STEPHEN'S

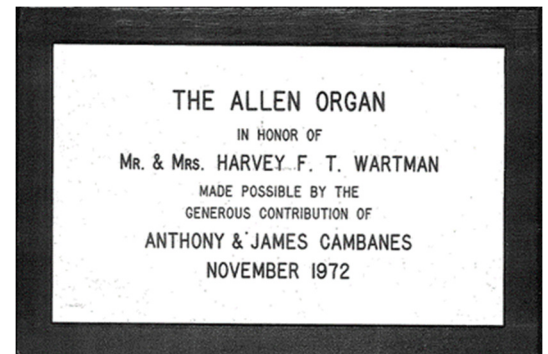
By Nevin Yeakel, St. Stephen's Archivist

The Church Organs

In 1899, St. Stephen's purchased its first of three church organs and Ida Rischel became the first organist. The organ was purchased for \$79.00 and used extensively over the years. From day one, music at St. Stephen's was a very important part of the Lutheran foundation.

In 1922, they purchased a fan for the interior of the organ, thus eliminating the need to pump the organ for music. It wasn't until 1945 when St. Stephen's purchased organ #2—a Hammond organ and chimes. I haven't run across the cost, but did find a note saying a new organ fund was started in the 1930's. This organ served us well, even when moved to our new church when it was constructed in 1963.

By 1970 discussion began about the need for a new organ. The purchase of organ #3 evolved in a fascinating way. One of our church members' sister was working for two gentlemen (non-church members). In conversation with the two brothers, she imparts that St. Stephen's Church was interested in purchasing a new organ. Soon after, the two brothers appeared at Rev. Longacre's door with a donation of \$10,000 toward the purchase of the new organ. With their donation, \$500 in the new organ fund, and donations from church members, St. Stephen's purchased a new Allen organ for \$14,000, dedicated in 1972. All was well until 1999 when the church was struck by lightning and the organ had to be upgraded.



Although that organ had served us well for many years, because of ongoing maintenance issues with the organ, in 2016 the congregation approved the purchase of a new Allen organ that will hopefully last us another 40 years!