

A Pipe Dream

In 1961 we brought a Baldwin electronic organ which serviced our congregation well for nearly 20 years. It was around 1978 when our choir grew until it filled the loft and there was nowhere to expand. The organ was really not adequate for the growing choir and congregation. It became evident that the choir should be moved to the front of the church and the church needed a new organ.

A committee of ten was formed to study the needs and cost of a new organ. Members visited organists and other churches to listen to organs. Blackinton and Associates of El Cajon had recently rebuilt the Spreckels organ in San Diego's Balboa Park. They were selected to build our organ in hopes of having it installed by our 100th Anniversary celebration in May of 1983. However, before the project could start, we would need to remodel the chancel area of the church to accommodate the organ and improve the acoustic properties of the building. A fund-raising committee was busy at work drumming up donations for our organ dream. Many people liked the idea of donating to the largest pipe organ east of La Mesa. They could be seen wearing campaign buttons which read "It's No Pipe Dream".

Our hope of introducing the organ during our 100th celebration did not take place. The organ-building continued and by January of 1985 it was finished. The second Sunday of February 1985 was a special Sunday in our sanctuary. Music from our brand new pipe organ filled the sanctuary. Later in the spring the organ was formally dedicated at a recital presented by Bob Plimpton, San Diego's civic organist and organist at the First Presbyterian Church of San Diego. The organ was then dedicated to the Glory of God. Our Pipe Dream had come true!

The organ has been used in worship services as an accompanying instrument for flute, French horn, violin, trumpet and voice. There have been weddings, memorial services and special choir programs including the performance of Handel's Messiah by the Grossmont College Chorale in 1985. The organ was used in an educational presentation to classes from Grossmont and Cuyamaca Colleges and annually to our very own Circle Preschool children. In 1990 a concert was performed by a guest artist for the American Guild of Organists, who pronounced ours to be a very fine instrument. In 2006 our organ was used as a practice instrument for the American Guild of Organist' Pipe Organ Encounter. This was an education program held in the San Diego area which was designed to introduce teenagers to the wonders of playing the organ.

What a great asset to our church!!