

ELIAS J. HALLING MEMORIAL ORGAN

Hendrickson - Opus 3 (1967); Opus 86 (1992)

In December 1937, the congregation installed a new pipe organ in front of its Victorian-Gothic style church building, with front doors facing Main Street. Under the direction and encouragement of Professor E.J. Halling, a contract was signed with the M.P. Möller Organ Company of Hagerstown, Maryland, for a nine-rank instrument containing 628 pipes. This organ was installed in 1938 and served the congregation until 1966.

In February of 1965 the decision was made by the congregation to build a new church on the same site, with main doors facing Fourth Street. Our church was designed by Wick, Standsfield and Kargermeier and includes a mosaic made by the Scuola Mosaicisti del Friuli (Friuli School of Mosaic) located in Splimbergo, Italy; from a painting by Mr. Donald Gregory, Professor of Art at Gustavus Adolphus College from 1946-1979. The mosaic was installed in 1967 by the Mankato Tile and Terrazzo Company.

During the planning, Professor Elias J. Halling, Director of Music at Grace and longtime Professor of Music at Mankato State College, worked diligently to secure adequate space for the organ and choir as well as proper musical acoustics. In 1967, Charles Hendrickson of St. Peter, MN, was consulted about the use of the existing organ in the new building. It was decided to use as much of the 1938 instrument as possible with some additions and revisions. The console, blower, 7 ranks of pipes, chimes, electrical wiring and a few chests were saved. Mr. Hendrickson worked with a acoustical consultant to ensure that materials used in the rear of the balcony were compatible with sound acoustical principles; and with Professors E.J. Halling and Paul Karvonen to utilize pieces from the Moller organ. In 1967 the organ was installed in the new church building and in 1969 the restoration was completed. Through generous gifts during construction of the building, the congregation enlarged the organ to contain 24 ranks and 1,386 pipes.

On March 7, 1969 the organ was dedicated as the Elias J. Halling Memorial Organ, with a recital given by Dr. Kim Kasling of Mankato State College. His program included 'Toccato XII' by Muffat; 'Adaigo, Allegro' by Mozart; 'Concerto in A Minor' by Bach; 'Toccatà', 'Benedictus', and 'Fantasy and Fuge in D Minor' by Reger. Mr. Halling's patience and determination in choral direction produced some of the finest choirs at the college and in our congregation; and he was later honored by Minnesota State University - Mankato by the naming of the recital hall in the Earley Performance Arts Center the E.J. Halling Recital Hall.

In the 1970s, the congregation decided to enlarge and revise the organ. A console (keyboard) was purchased from Lyceum Theatre to replace 1937 console. The organ now had a three-manual console, 30 ranks of pipes, and 1,677 pipes.

In 1984, the congregation began discussion with Mr. Halling who became an instrumental part of developing a plan with Mr. Charles Hendrickson for the future. In July 1989, new Great division with horizontal trumpet, plus other necessary revisions of electrical equipment were made. The seven ranks of pipes from 1937 were saved as were the blower, chimes, and some of the chests. Additions to the Pedal division and some revoicing of the old pipes were also carried out. This new/old organ was used for the first time in January 1993.

In 1993, a New great division, horizontal trumpets added, additions to pedal division, revoicing of old pipes, revisions of electrical equipment, all manuals operational, 41 ranks and 2411 pipes, with all three keyboards and pedal board operational.

The materials from the 1938 organ that are still retained in the organ today are that the original 1938 blower, about 7 ranks (nearly 400 pipes) that are both metal and wood, wind reservoirs, static reservoir, offset wind chests, 21 note chimes and action. This instrument is truly an asset to worship services and numerous events at Grace Lutheran Church. With great pride we care for it and see to its needs with the Hendrickson Organ Company.

To be good stewards for the organ, we have developed a special fund specifically for donations that will ensure the organ is properly cared for in the future. If you would like to give a memorial, please use a pew pocket during worship, contact the church office (345-4248), or visit during office hours.