



250 Years of Organs

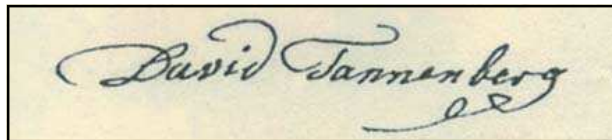
at First Reformed Church

**"Venite Exultimus Domino
Te Deum Laudamus"**

from the 1933 dedicatory inscription on
The Susan E. Hull Memorial Organ

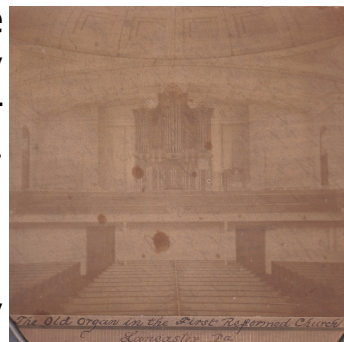
Possibly the first record of an organ at the German Reformed Church was written by a visitor in 1744, "In this log church was situated a small organ, good for little and worse played on by the organist." Much has changed!

On February 27, 1769, the congregation of the German Reformed Church of Lancaster (First Reformed Church) signed a contract with colonial organ builder David Tannenberg for an organ consisting of 15 stops, two manuals and pedals for 250 pounds (\$53,062.14 in 2019 dol-

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Tannenberg".

lars). A German Moravian who had moved to Lititz in 1765, Tannenberg

is widely considered one of America's greatest organ builders. During his lifetime, he built 42 organs for Moravian, Lutheran and Reformed congregations. Nine have survived in playable condition. The case for the organ was made by George Burkhardt, noted Lancaster cabinetmaker. The organ was completed by July 1, 1770, and installed in the 1758 stone church structure.



It was later moved into the gallery of the church's new brick Romanesque Revival building in 1854,

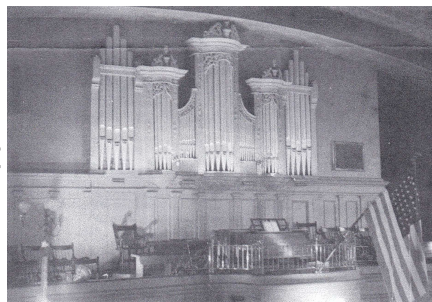
The Tannenberg Organ between 1854—1885.

where it continued to serve the congregation until 1885, when the organ was replaced with a new pipe organ built by Charles Durner. The Durner organ retained and expanded the Burkhardt case which had been originally designed for the Tannenberg instrument. The Durner organ was used until 1905 when it was rebuilt and expanded by J.W. Steere & Son, who repaired and re-voiced the organ and added tubular pneumatic action. The number of stops now numbered 24.



The Durner Organ c. 1905

Just before the arrival of talking pictures, a movie-house in Columbia, Pennsylvania bought an Alto theater organ to accompany silent films. With the arrival of talkies, the theater owner, J.J. Hardy, was anxious to salvage what he could of his investment. It was an opportunity too good to miss. Fortunately, Susan Hull had left a bequest to the church for the replacement of the organ. The theater instrument was rebuilt and installed by W.S.



The Susan Hull Memorial Organ

Merrit, under the direction of Dr. Harry Sykes, Professor of Church Music at Lancaster Seminary. On December 17, 1933 The Susan E. Hull Memorial Organ, a three manual Moeller instrument, was dedicated. Dr. Sykes played the dedicatory recital in January, 1934.



In 1958, the Moeller organ was replaced with our analog Allen organ, again retaining the Tannenberg case in the



The Allen Organ, c. 1958

gallery as a screen for the Allen's massive tone-generators. The vintage analog Allen organ was purchased from the Allen Organ Company, Macungie, Pennsylvania, and was only the second organ of its type to be built. It has been used to lead worship at First

Reformed Church every week since Sunday, July 20, 1958. The original purchase price was \$34,665, which adjusted for inflation would be \$306,654 today. Now

over 60 years old, it is believed that this is the last analog Allen organ of this era to still be in regular use.

A Dedicatory Recital was played by organ virtuoso, Virgil Fox, on Wednesday evening, April 1, 1959. At the time Fox was organist at Riverside Church in New York City, and performed over 80 concerts annually. He frequently appeared on TV, and later popularized classical organ music with his series of "Heavy Organ" concerts and albums. The program that evening included masterpieces of Bach, Grovlez, Durufle, Bossi, Williams and Mulet. Among those attending the recital that evening were



Mr. Virgil Fox

church member Bill Sloyer, and our Pastor Harry Royer, then a student at Franklin & Marshall. "It was a real treat for a young college student to be in the sanctuary that evening to hear Virgil Fox. It's a wonderful memory that I've always cherished," Pastor Harry remembers. Sloyer, now marking 72 years of singing in the church choir, recalls the entire congregation joining to sing the hymn



The Allen Organ as it is today.

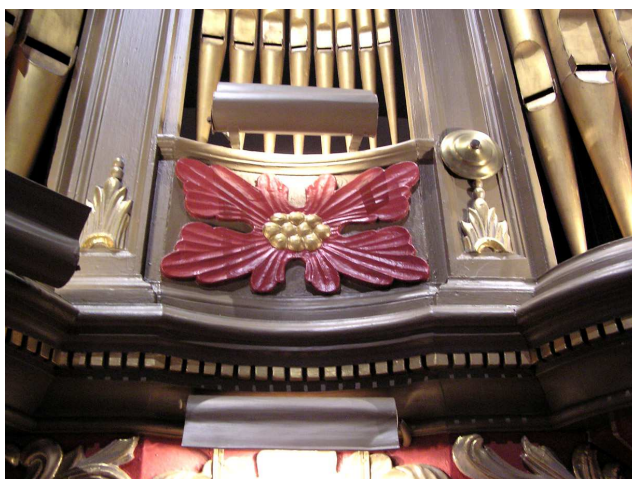
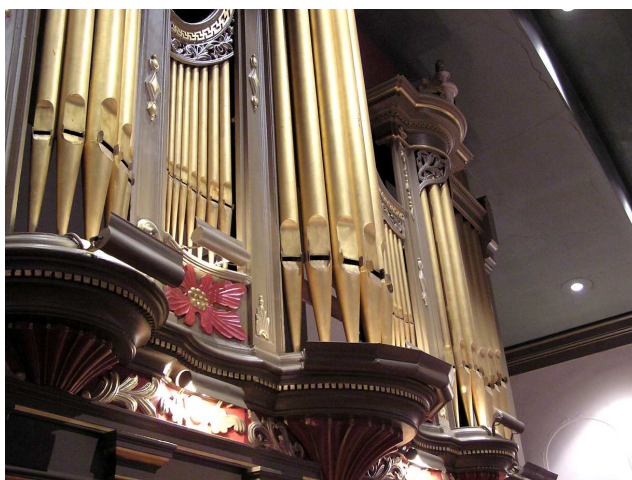
"Now Thank We All Our God" after which Fox played one of his trademark improvisations.

Larry Hershey has been organist and choirmaster at First Reformed Church of Lancaster for the past 30 years. "The most important stop on this organ", according to Mr. Hershey, "can be found in the acoustics of our beautiful sanctuary." Professionals and amateurs alike marvel at the beauty of the tone, the range of textures, and the raw power of the vintage analog Allen organ.



Larry Hershey

As a gift to the community, First Reformed Church is celebrating the 60th year of the Allen organ with "Organic Reflections", a free 30 minute concert every First Friday at 8 PM featuring Larry Hershey.



The 1770 Tannenberg/Burkhardt case has been the face of all the organs of First Reformed Church.

A Brief History of the Organs of First Reformed Church

David Tannenberg 1770—1885

Haupt Manual:

Principal 8
Grob gedackt 8
Viol de gambe 8
Quinta 6
Octave 4
Klein gedackt 4
Supper Octave 2
Mixtur 4

Hinterwerk:

Flauto Traversa 8
Quinta tona 8
Principal 4
Flot Duo 4
Hautboy 8

Pedal:

Supbass 16
Violon 8

Charles Durner 1885-1905

J.W. Steere 1905—1933

(J.W. Steere Opus 542, rebuilt 1885 Durner)

M.P. Moeller 1933-1958
(M.P. Moeller Opus 3696,
rebuilt 1923 Alto theater organ)

Allen Organ 1958— present

1958 Allen Organ Specifications

Great Organ	Swell Organ	Choir Organ	Pedal Organ
Principal, 8'	Geigen Diapason, 8'	Viola, 8'	Contra Basse, 16'
Bourdon, 8'	Viole de Gamba, 8'	Hohlflote, 8'	Bourdon, 16'
Gemshorn, 8'	Rohrflote, 8'	Gedackt, 8'	Violone, 16'
Dulciana, 8'	Echo Viole, 8'	Lieblichflote, 8'	Lieblich Gedackt, 16'
Octave, 4'	Flute Dolce, 8'	Aeoline, 8'	Octave, 8'
Rohrflote, 4'	Viole Celeste, 8'	Viola Celeste, 8'	Gedackt Pommer, 8'
Spitzlote, 4;	Echo Viole Celeste, 8'	Unda Maris, 8'	Violoncello, 8'
Quint, 2-2/3'	Flute Celeste, 8'	Principal, 4'	Still Gedackt, 8'
Super Octave 2'	Octave Geigen, 4'	Koppelflote, 4'	Choral Bass, 4'
Blockflote 2'	Gemshorn, 4'	Nazard, 2-2/3'	Flute Ouverte, 4'
Grave Mixture II	Nachthorn, 4'	Waldflote, 2'	Flute Dolce, 4'
Great, 4'	Doublette, 2'	Krummhorn, 8'	Bombarde, 16'
Chimes	Spillflote, 2'	Tremulant	Fagott, 16'
	Larigot, 1-1/3'	Choir, 16'	Contra Bass 32'
	Plein Jeu III	Unison Off	Contra Violin 32'
	Trompette, 8'	Choir, 4'	
	Hautbois, 8'	Carillon	
	Vox Humana, 8'	Harp	
	Tremulant	Harp-Celeste	
	Swell, 16'		
	Unison Off		
	Swell, 4'		

Plus normal complement of intermanual couplers, pedal couplers, combination pistons, and console accessories. Equipment for tone generation is contained in the Organ Chamber. Containing 62 equivalent ranks, 58 stops, and controlled from the three-manual console located in the gallery, the organ is designed in accordance with classic traditions of today. It is best described as traditional in sound and modern in concept.

The Organists of First Reformed Church

1773-1778	Eberhard Michael
1795-1799	Casper Schaffner, III
1806-1819	Conrad Doll
1819-1822	John Edward Jungmann
1822-1825	Constantin Deininger
1825-1831	Anthony Zulch
1831-1837	Mr. Fetter
1838	John Weaver
1839-1841	Jacob M. Westhaeffer
1841-1842	J.L. Hoffmeier
1842-1844	A. Fairer
1844-1846	Samuel R. Beck
1846-1850	J.L. Hoffmeier
1850-1860	J.M. Westhaeffer
1861	Brainerd Kremer
1862-1878	Miss Alice Nevin
1881	Addison H. Fritchey
1882	C. Moyer
1886-1899	David Stamm
1899	Paul Bridenbaugh
1900	H.H. Moore
1901	Paul Rupp
1902	Edgar Levan
1902-1910	Richard Appel
1910-1911	Mrs. Lee Schulenberger
1911	Herbert Murr
1912	Homer Rebert
1912-1921	Karl H. Wager
1922	J. Frank Frysinger
1922-1924	Charles E. LeFevre
1925-1927	Karl H. Wager
1928-1963	Helen E. Hall
1963-1966	Donald Nixdorf
1967-1974	Rev. Robert Masenheimer
1974-1988	Luke K. Grubb
1989-	Larry H. Hershey

Larry Hershey, a Lancaster County native, has been organist and choirmaster at First Reformed United Church of Christ in downtown Lancaster for 30 years.

A graduate of Pequea Valley High School and an honors graduate of Millersville University, he studied under Luke Grubb, Reginald Lunt, Dorothy Beam, and Dr. Mary Vyner. Active with the Lancaster Chapter, American Guild of Organists, Larry has performed often with the guild and The Summer Arts Concert Series.

Retired from a second career in restaurant management, Larry was the General Manager of The Pressroom Restaurant, Lancaster, Inn-keeper and Restaurant Manager of the Cameron Estates Inn, Mt. Joy, and Dining Manager of the Continental Inn, Lancaster. In addition to his duties, he organizes and performs in numerous concerts as a soloist and accompanist.

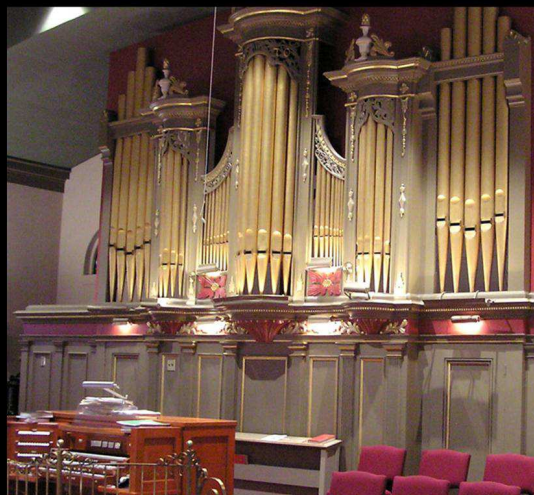


In January, 2019, the congregation of First Reformed Church of Lancaster honored him by naming the "Larry Hershey Choir Loft" in honor of his dedication, leadership, and faithfulness.

President Bill Groff presents Larry Hershey with the "Larry Hershey Choir Loft" plaque.

Compiled by Rick Weinhold. Special thanks to Larry Hershey and William Clark, II for photographs and historical documents. Special appreciation to William Sloyer for his valuable historical insight.

CONCERT



30 minutes of majestic organ music played on the mighty vintage 1958 analog Allen Organ in historic 1854 First Reformed Church.

FIRST FRIDAYS

8:00 - 8:30 PM

**FIRST REFORMED CHURCH
40 EAST ORANGE ST
LANCASTER, PA**

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