

QUEEN ANNE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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PIPE ORGAN INSTALLED AT QUEEN ANNE LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Queen Anne Lutheran Church congregation celebrates the arrival of a new world class pipe organ to strengthen and enrich the church's 90-year history of excellence in worship and music. A singing congregation is one of the strong hallmarks of Lutheran worship and QALC has invested in the future by providing a quality instrument to lead and support the congregational song.

The organ was built to specifications for this church sanctuary located atop Queen Anne Hill by noted Organ Builder, Robert Wech, President of Orgelbau Wech of Buchloe, Germany, near Munich. Wech is currently in Seattle completing the assembly and the voicing of the new instrument which is contained in twin pipe towers that flank the Holy Spirit floor-to-ceiling window in the rear of the church's worship space.

The new instrument is a "tracker" or mechanical action instrument, meaning that slender, strong, and sometimes long pieces of wood (trackers) connect the keyboards of the organ directly to the valves that open beneath pipes chosen to "speak." This is the oldest and most sensitive key-action system used, allowing the organist to have maximum control over how the organ will play. The sound is produced by wind (air under pressure) generated by a bellow.

The organ consists of 25 stops and more than 1500 pipes. The two towers of pipes and mechanism are constructed of beautiful German maple wood acquired from high in the Alps. The north tower houses the Great and Swell divisions, and the Pedal division is housed in the south tower. A reversed console of German white oak sits in front of the Swell/Great division tower and has electric stop action.

In early 2007 the Church Council appointed a Pipe Organ Committee and engaged David Dahl, organ professor emeritus from Pacific Lutheran University, to be the church's consultant for this project. The group studied the instrument needs for the congregation's worship, visited other churches, studied the principles of pipe organ building and sound, interviewed several builders and recommended to the Council that Wech be the builder. A contract was signed in the summer of 2008. The new pipe organ replaces a 4-rank Moeller Artiste pipe organ purchased in the late 1950s for the original and much smaller church building of Queen Anne Lutheran.

The new pipe organ was assembled in the Orgelbau Wech shop in Germany. It was pre-voiced, and disassembled before being shipped through the Panama Canal to Oakland, then on rail to Seattle, by truck to Queen Anne Lutheran Church arriving September 1, 2010. Volunteers from the church assisted Wech and his crew in unloading the shipping container.

Robert Wech was raised in Augsburg, Germany and began his education as an organ designer and builder in 1984 with the firm of Hubert Sandtner in Dillingen/Donau and in the Technical School for Musical Instrument Design and Production in Ludwigsburg. After many years of schooling and on-the-job experience in all aspects of organ craftsmanship, Wech opened his own firm in 2001. Wech's most recently completed instruments are located at the Cathedral of the Epiphany in Sioux City, Iowa (2006) and at the Pontifical North American College in Vatican City, Italy (2009). www.orgelbau-wech.com

Wayne E. Bacus is Pastor at Queen Anne Lutheran Church; Arletta Anderson is organist and directs the music program, which includes four choirs. A dedicatory concert for this new addition to Seattle's great pipe organ tradition will take place within the next few months and will be announced on the church's website, http://www.queenannelutheran.org/new_organ.html.