

Evansville Chapter of the American Guild of Organists
Newsletter: July 2016



Bicentennial Program in Mount Vernon, IN

A big thank you goes to our chapter members who participated in the bicentennial celebration of the founding of the town of Mount Vernon, Indiana on June 11th. They provided a music program at First Presbyterian Church in Mount Vernon featuring music from around the time the town was founded as well as from more recent times, played on organ and piano.



Season Kickoff Social: Friday September 23

Mark your calendars for our potluck/social, which will again be at St. Margaret's Chapel in Henderson on Friday evening September 23rd. More details will be forthcoming later this summer.

**Evansville Chapter Purchases
Giesecke Organ!**

The Evansville AGO Chapter is purchasing a seven-stop one-manual/pedal organ built around 1900 by Edmund Giesecke, a pipe organ builder active in Evansville from 1872 until his death in 1928. The Maumee, Ohio church which previously owned the organ, has closed and the organ needs to be removed from the building by early July.

Part of the 19th century German migration to Indiana, Edmund Giesecke

came from Göttingen, a university town in Saxony, where his family's business, Giesecke Orgelbau, flourished from 1844 to 2012. Edmund married Louise Minch at Zion Evangelische Kirche (now Zion United Church of Christ) in downtown Evansville on May 11, 1886 and their



daughter Elsie was baptized at St. Lucas Evangelische Kirche (U.C.C.) in 1892. Edmund, Louise and Elsie are buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Evansville.



The organ is one of only five Edmund Giesecke instruments known to still exist. In addition to existing instruments for churches in Poseyville and Fulda, Giesecke built organs for many Evansville churches, including St. Lucas U.C.C. (the facade pipes of the current Aeolian-Skinner are from the facade of the 1893 Giesecke), Emmanuel Lutheran, St. Joseph Catholic Church, St. Paul's Lutheran, Trinity Lutheran, Darmstadt, and others.

At its June 13 meeting, the Evansville Chapter's Executive Committee approved purchase of this historic organ and appointed the following sub-committee to handle arrangements: Neal Biggers, Kristin Jones, David Motz, Robert Nicholls, Douglas Reed, Helen Reed, and James Wells.



Arrangements have been made with David Kazimir, Curator of Organs at Oberlin College and Patrick Fischer, Curator of Organs at Indiana University, to disassemble the organ and move it out of the church. The disassembling began on July 4 and the organ will arrive in Evansville on July 7. According to Kazimir, the Giesecke organ is in remarkably good condition. "It is remarkable how well it plays now with the weakened wind system. It would be sublime with a quiet blower and restored bellows."

There have been a number of ideas about where to house the organ when it returns to Evansville. It is small enough that it may be practical to move it occasionally so that more than one church or institution can enjoy its quality musical resources and visual beauty.

Since the Executive Committee needed a commitment right away in order to proceed with the project, First Presbyterian Church has offered to house the instrument initially and to help with fund-raising for the organ's restoration.

This project offers a great opportunity for our Chapter to contribute to the cultural and educational life of the Evansville region. The Executive Committee's vision is to preserve this important part of the rich musical history of the Tri-state area while making it possible for the instrument to once again lend its musical voice in worship and concert settings.



Your help is needed! The Executive Committee approved the use of seed money from our "Convention '97 Fund" for purchasing and moving the Giesecke organ. Additional funds will be needed for cleaning, regulation, and restoration of the organ's wind system, key action, pipe work, and stenciled front pipes. The Executive Committee is developing plans for fund-raising to support the restoration project. If you have suggestions for fund-raising or would like to contribute, please contact the executive committee at evansvilleago@yahoo.com or you may contact one of the Giesecke organ sub-committee members listed above.