



THE BIRMINGHAM CHIFF ...off the old blockflute

The Birmingham Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

October 2017

A Word from the Dean

Dear friends,

It was good to see many of you at the opening meeting/program a few weeks ago. Although Irma did her best to keep folks from attending, we had a good crowd for the Service of Remembrance. Patrick Scott put together a well-balanced, meaningful service that encouraged us to reflect on both the tragedy of that event and on what a privilege it is to live in a country where we are allowed to express ourselves even if we are in opposition to our leadership. This is not true in many countries. I fear we often take this for granted. Many thanks to Bruce Ludwick who did all the “behind the scenes” work to make the evening a success. Also, a big thank you to Highland United Methodist and Richard Phillips, our very gracious hosts, and to Nathan Smock who always does a great job of arranging caterers and getting the meal ready.

We look forward to our October 16 meeting. We will begin at St. Paul’s Cathedral with a demonstration of change ringing. To my knowledge, St. Paul’s is one of the few churches that has such a program. The evening will conclude at First Presbyterian with a carillon demonstration. Again, there are not many churches in town that have an active carillon program, especially one that is played from a mechanical clavier..

I will be contacting some of you soon to serve on a nominating committee for next year. All officers rotate off, and we will have three new Executive Committee seats to fill.

Hope to see you soon,
Dan

OCTOBER 16 CHAPTER EVENT: CHANGE RINGING AND CARILLON

On Monday, October 16, we will gather at the Cathedral of Saint Paul and First Presbyterian Church (both downtown between 21st and 22nd Streets North) to hear explanations and demonstrations of the change ringing and carillon arts on the instruments at both churches. The Cathedral’s eight bells were cast and installed by Whitechapel in 2006, while First’s 37-bell Rushton Memorial Carillon was installed by Taylor in 1924 (the oldest carillon in Birmingham and only the third in the country at that time) and expanded by van Bergen in 1961. We will begin at 6 PM with dinner in Saint Paul’s Cathedral Life Center, followed by a brief business meeting. At 7 PM Ted Clark, the Cathedral’s tower captain, will give a brief explanation of the basics of change ringing, after which we will enjoy a demonstration by members of the Cathedral’s ringing band. We will then walk just across 4th Avenue to First Presbyterian where we will enjoy a similar explanation and demonstration of their fine carillon. Don’t miss this great meeting that will help us learn about and understand these “downtown treasures.”

Items of Note

We offer our condolences to **Debby Holmes** on the recent passing of her father. Please remember Debby and her family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

From treasurer **Mike Burt**: *For most of you, we are in AGO dues renewal season. If you receive a renewal invoice from the national office, either by email or regular mail printed copy, please be prompt in attending to it. You membership dues make a difference!*

Mystery Photos

Can you identify these churches?

The answers are at the end of this newsletter. Many thanks to **Bill McElwee** for sending these snippets from the past and providing historical info for them!



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

Organ Recital

by special guest

Wilma Jensen



October 15, 2017

2:00 p.m.

The Sanctuary

First United Methodist Church

Montgomery, Alabama 36106

◇◇◇◇◇ *Works By* ◇◇◇◇◇

Vierne, McCabe, Franck, James, Tournemire, and Briggs

Reception to follow

You are invited to this free recital!

**Contact Dr. Josh Coble at JCoble@fumcmontgomery.org or (334) 834.8990
for info.**

Mystery Photos ID

Photos one and four are of Vine Street Presbyterian Church on Cotton Avenue in West End. The organ was a 19-rank two manual Möller, op. 3069, from 1921. After the Presbyterian church was dissolved in 1984, the building was sold to another congregation which now has it for sale.

The second photo shows the exterior of the former 21st Avenue ME Church, South, located in North Birmingham. It is unknown if this building had a pipe organ.

The third photo is Elyton-Walker Memorial ME Church, South, located near Arlington Antebellum Home in the western section of Birmingham (Old Elyton). Jane Hardenbergh, Jim Dorroh, et. al, played at this church.

The fifth photo is of the interior of Highlands Methodist Church at Five Points South. It shows the altar and the original Odell organ before the Nave was reconfigured in 1952, adding the chancel along with the present Möller pipe organ. Aleta Brassel was the last organist to play the Odell at Highlands. She was hired in 1948. Amos Hudson was hired as Choirmaster in 1950. Interestingly, Southside Baptist and 11th Avenue Methodist (now demolished; was across the side street from St. Andrew's on Southside) also had Odell pipe organs from the early 1900's. That's three Odells within blocks of each other.

Photos and descriptions provided by Bill McElwee