



# Tradition & Innovation: A Brief History of Covenant's Music Program



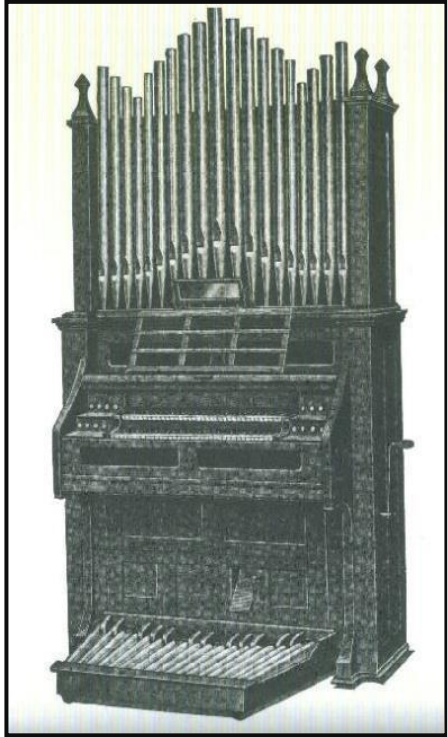
## Music came before the church building

*Stella Sheetz organized  
and directed the 12-  
member choir*

*A generous member  
paid for all the sheet  
music*



## The 1920's



Representation of an Estey Organ similar to the one from the 1924 church.

Estey Reed organ was played at the Sanctuary dedication in 1924. Given in memory of Mary Nelson Carter.

Men's Quartet and Junior Choir added.

Music and Song Service held January 1929.

Monthly choir socials held at the home of the Beitzel's (Nancy Hall's parents).

## The 1930's



Thomas Kraemer (1936-1960)

Cantatas presented at Easter and Christmas.

The Music and Dramatic Club offered an “Evening of Song” to benefit the church. Guest tickets 50 cents each.

Thomas Kraemer became choir director in 1936, a post he held until 1960. Mr. Kraemer founded the Springfield Choral Society and was a member of Curtis Publishing’s 125-member vocal group.

## The 1940's



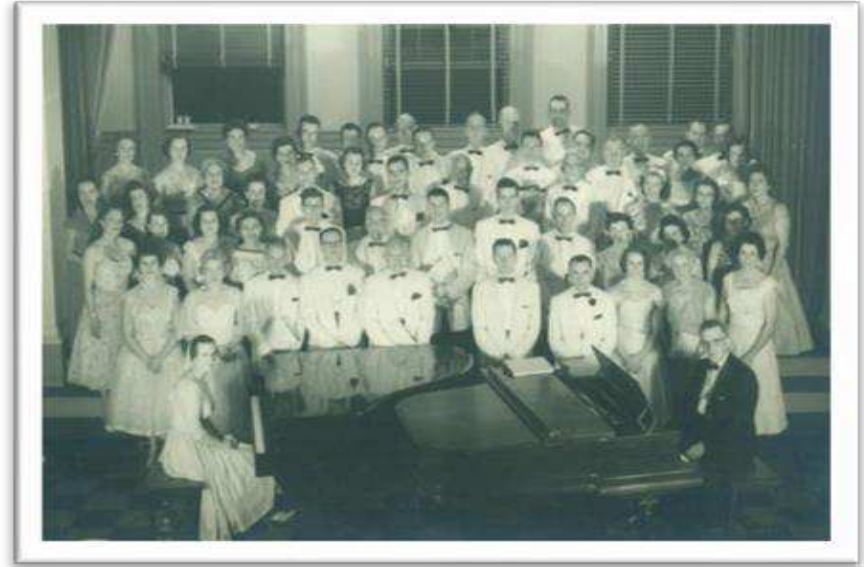
Adult, Youth and Children's choirs totaled 125 voices.

Christmas Eve 1947 was a choral service by candlelight, approximating a Medieval Christmas Service.

(L:R – Miriam Freeman, Jean Rosenberger, Alice Crawford, Gladys Reeps, Walter Richards, Reg Jonas, Don Harrison, Bob Suezbach with George Dix at the piano)



# The 1950's



- New church dedicated. Choir loft built to hold 52.
- Pipe chambers built in anticipation of the purchase of a pipe organ.
- Charles Wesley Hymn Festival in 1957 celebrated 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Charles' birth.
- Spring Song Festivals at Springfield High School, other churches and the Ocean City Music Pier. Programs included spirituals, current popular and light classical music.

## The 1960's

In 1964, the post of choir director became vacant, and it proved difficult to fill as a part-time position.

In 1965, Kenneth Fansler, certified Minister of Music and Christian Education, joined the staff full-time.

Responsible for total music program of the church and for children and youth education.

Rev. Kenneth Fansler (1964-1972)



# Handbells Added for Christmas 1965



Dianne Raymond, Ann Chrostowski, Carol Weldy, Leslie Keys, Steve Stettler, Sam Stettler, Allen Owen, Cheryl Myers, Marcia Yost, Donna Petre, Connie Cook, Kathy Poulson, Lynn McConnell, Patty Blue, Diane Marcussen, Diana Stevenson, Patty Hunt, Jan Lippman, Kathy Hall, Vicki Walp, Cheryl Richardson, Carol Polinsky, Joyce Chrostowski, Barbara Stettler, and Sally Mount.



# The 1970's



Contemporary music added with a compilation by Rev. Fansler and a performance of *Joseph & His Technicolor Dream Coat*.



Multiple special music events (sacred & secular) continued.

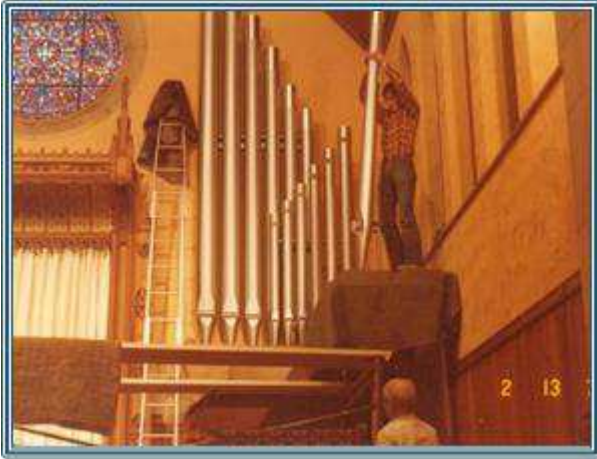
Special events such as a Messiah "Sing-In" and a 48-hour marathon hymn sing (beat the Guinness record but not certified).



Youth and adult choirs toured and recorded.

Joint concerts with other local churches.

# March 1979

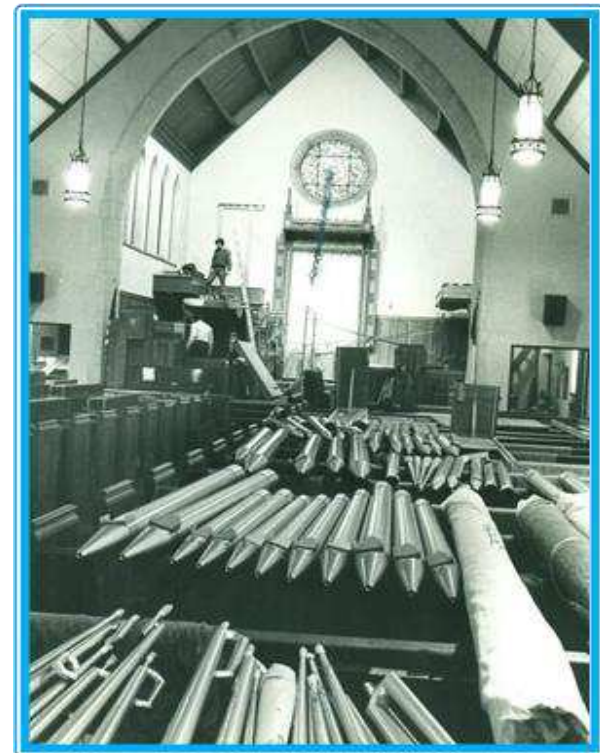


Schantz Pipe Organ dedicated

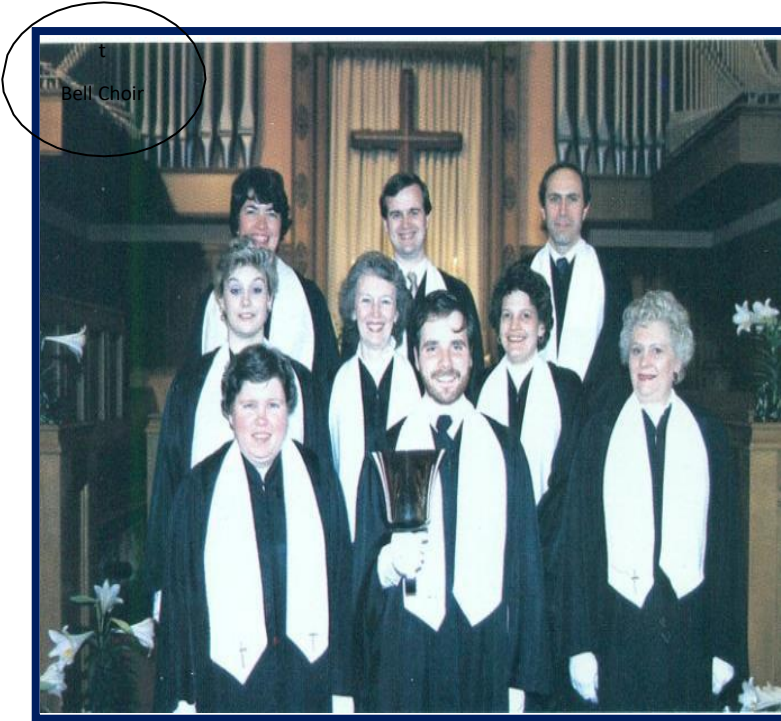
Concert series introduced by Director/Organist Paul Danilewski



Paul Danilewski (1977-1983)



# The 1980's



5<sup>th</sup> Octave of bells was added.

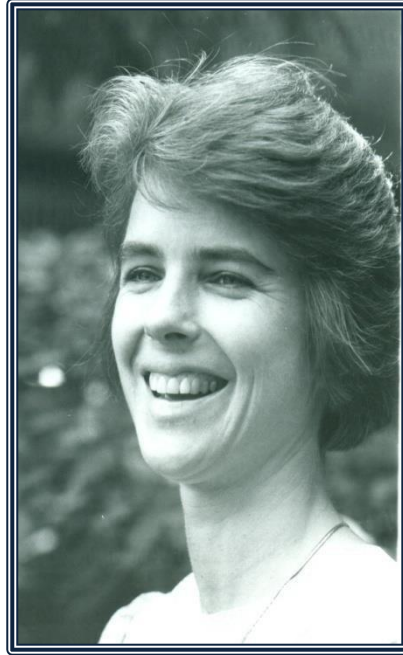
Bell director, Marty Hyde, composed an anthem for handbells and choir.

Orff rhythm instruments (tambourine, claves, glockenspiel, etc.) were purchased for the Wesley Choir.

L:R 1st Row: Janet Evans,  
Marty Hyde, Kay Fielding;  
2nd Row: Doris Sinclair, Jane  
Swan, Ruth vonMinden; 3rd  
Row: Peg Brower (Hofberg),  
Don Cadge, Ken Prager.



## The 1990's



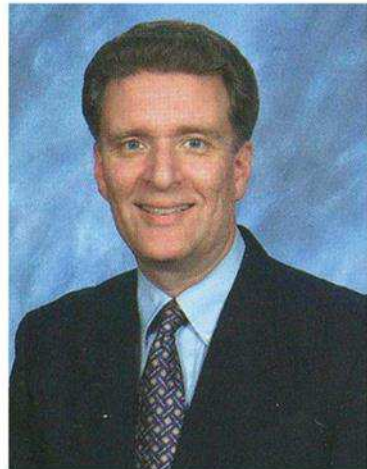
Sarah Batchelor became Director of Music/Organist in 1988.

Kirk Schneider became Handbell Director in 1991.

“Great Days of (Hymn) Singing” held annually.

Handbells played for special events in the community, at Old St. George’s Church, and for charities.

Introduced “Festivals of Lessons & Carols” as the Advent special music.





# The New Millenium



Covenant's Praise Band "RISEN" debuted at THE DEN at Clifton UMC in 2000.

They went on to appear at venues in the Philadelphia area, and to record 3 CDs.

Members "graduated" over the years.

Members, Laura Scott (McManus) and Nick Pacitti, wrote compositions for the group.

# 2010-2020

Covenant welcomed celebrated composers and choir directors:  
L to R: Craig Courtney, Molly Ijames, and Howard Helvey.  
Two anthems were commissioned.



## Meeting the composer

On Wednesday, August 10, I attended a choral music reading session sponsored by J. W. Pepper. The leader for this event was Molly Ijames. Some of you may remember her as the composer who wrote the anthem Covenant commissioned in 2014 to celebrate my 25 years of ministry with you. Amazingly enough, our piece (*Let the Peace of Christ*) was one of the ones in the packet for the group to sing. So, I had the awesome experience of singing the anthem you commissioned with the composer right there conducting! It was truly a moment I will never forget. Thank you again for the generous gift of this beautiful anthem. I will try to fit it into the schedule here at Covenant in the near future so you can enjoy it again.

~ Sarah Batchelor



SUNDAY – MAY 21, 2017  
10:45 A.M.



## HOWARD HELVEY,

internationally renowned choral composer and arranger, will lead us through a musical journey of faith during the 10:45 a.m. service on Sunday, May 21 at Covenant United Methodist Church.

The Chancel Choir will present ten of his anthems, interspersed with scripture readings, hymns and comments by the composer.

Music Director, Sarah Batchelor and Mr. Helvey will share the piano accompaniments.

Howard Helvey serves as the organist and chokmaster of historic Calvary Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. He has written hundreds of compositions and arrangements and is in constant demand as a composer, conductor and speaker. We are delighted he will be here to share in worship. A reception will follow with an opportunity to meet the composer. We hope you will join us!

COVENANT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
212 W. Springfield Road • Springfield, PA 19064  
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# COVID Brings Tradition & Innovation

In November 2020, our resourceful Music and Bell Choir Directors, procured software to enable the choir to make a virtual anthem for Christmas Eve.

Each choir member traveled to the church at scheduled times to be video taped and recorded. Wearing headsets, choir members sang a “solo” to the music. Kirk Schneider then had the arduous job of putting it all together with violin and piano accompaniment. The final product was extraordinary, and it was shown on Christmas Eve in the virtual services and is available on YouTube.





# The Choir for May 8<sup>th</sup> Special Music





# Coming Later in May: the Next 25 Years of Covenant History



Visit the Anniversary Page at [www.covumc.com/100](http://www.covumc.com/100)