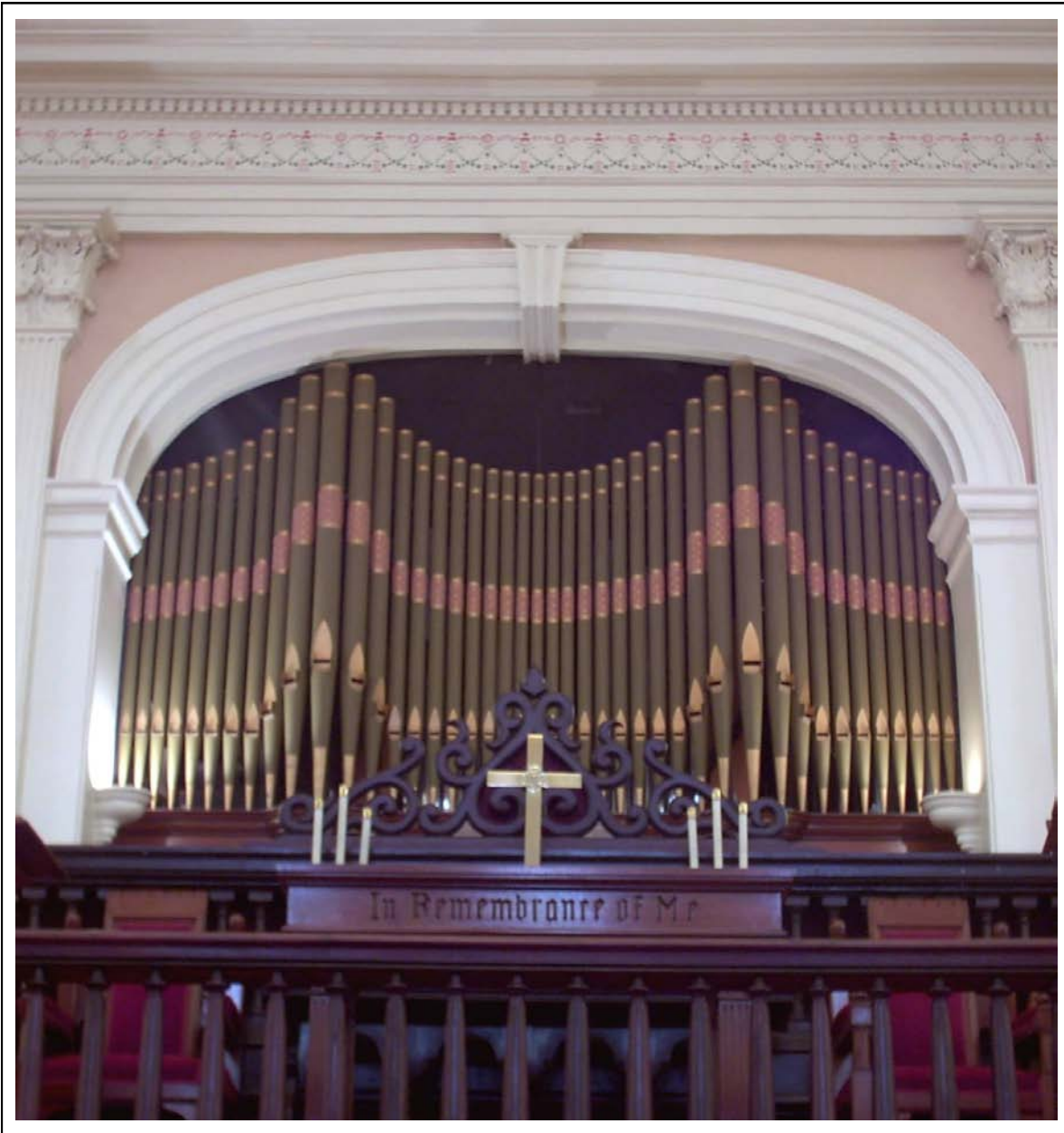


# THE DIAPASON

AUGUST, 2005



Bethel United Methodist Church, Charleston, South Carolina  
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## Cover Feature

**A.E. Schlueter Pipe Organ Company, Lithonia, Georgia**  
**Bethel United Methodist Church, Charleston, South Carolina**

The history of Bethel United Methodist Church, like so many Southern coastal churches, is unique and storied. Founded in 1797, it is the oldest United Methodist Church in Charleston on its original building site and was the only Methodist church to remain open during the Civil War. The current sanctuary, built in 1853, remains largely as it was originally built, with the exception of the side balconies that were removed in 1886 after the Charleston earthquake. Bethel United Methodist Church took to heart John Wesley's instructions to his followers "to sing lustily, modestly, in time, and above all, to sing spiritually," and has made music a major part of worship. This understanding of worship and music led the Board of Stewards in 1874 to write: "after given the subject full consideration, we are of the opinion that an improvement in our singing is desired by a large number of our congregation and that this can be obtained by the use of an instrument of some kind."

The first keyboard instrument used at Bethel was a melodeon that served the church from 1874 to 1887. In 1887 the church undertook a major renovation to enlarge the chancel area with a choir loft and the installation of a pipe organ. A chamber was built on the front of the church to house the instrument. The new pipe organ was built by the Felgemaker firm of Erie, Pennsylvania: 12 ranks over two manuals and pedal, mechanical action, with hand-pumped bellows. The organ wind continued to be raised by human hands until 1921 when an electric motor was installed.



In 1934 the church donated the Felgemaker instrument to Spring Street United Methodist Church and contracted with Austin Organs of Hartford, Connecticut for a new instrument of 14 ranks on three manuals and pedal. It served the church well over the next 70 years albeit with a limited stoplist, and was damaged by Hurricane Hugo in 1989. The organ was repaired but consideration was underway to replace it with a larger instrument to meet the choral and congregational accompaniment needs. The study for a new organ was led by Greg Jones, organist/choir-master of Bethel Church.

A. E. Schlueter Pipe Organ Company was called in to consult on the possibilities for a new instrument. Our firm is well acquainted with Charleston through previous projects, and we were excited to again be working in this city. Working with Greg Jones and the organ committee of Bethel United Methodist Church, our firm found kindred spirits that were resolute in the need for an instrument that could fully support the music program of this dynamic ministry. A strong desire was to design an organ that harkened to

the church's previous instruments.

While not working toward a specific style of organbuilding, the specification was to incorporate the romantic orchestral nature of the early-1900s American organs in conjunction with the chorus structure found in instruments built in the later 1900s. In a sense we found an instrument patterning itself loosely around the formative designs of early American Classicism, which itself was influenced by many nationalistic organbuilding styles. In keeping with this style, the English influence of American Classicism was allowed to flourish in this specification in concert with the romanticism of early twentieth-century American tonal design. The church desired an organ that could pay homage to the genius of Skinner and Harrison in a collective whole that would please both.

A fundamental consideration for a new instrument was placement. The organ chamber that was added in the late 1800s had no room for additional pipe-work. The interior of the church did not allow any additional encroachment by the organ. While we have enjoyed the challenge of designing and

building custom organ cases—indeed these often become an instrument's signature—our firm recognized and was sensitive to the church's desire that the front of the chancel remain visually unchanged. The non-speaking façade pipes and case-work had been built in the 1930s and were both of sound construction. Therefore, the only possible solution was to increase the size of the present organ chamber and utilize the old façade and case. This presented the unique challenge of an exterior change to the sanctuary. The rich history of this city and its architecture have been protected by strict zoning and a board of architectural review. The redesign of the church exterior would have to be minimal and follow the precept of the 1887 architecture. Detailed plans were drawn up, and the City of Charleston approved the request for a change to the church's structure.

This new instrument comprises three manuals—Great, Swell, Choir/Solo—and Pedal. The eclectic stoplist pays homage to American and English tonal concepts with a purposeful regard for the room acoustic and worship style.

Space considerations led us to design the third manual as a combined Choir/Solo division. Careful stop choice, pipework design, and scaling were considered, particularly at the 4' pitch. The division duality also governed the choice of strings and reeds.

The tonal design and scaling of the organ began with attending worship at the church and study of the current and previous organ stoplists. We were resolute in the need for a complete-chorus in each division, strings, flutes of differing weights and textures, and orchestral and chorus reeds. Located in the

Choir/Solo is an expressive high-pressure reed battery consisting of a hooded English Tuba, hooded Tromba Heroique, Clarinet, and French Horn. These stops are duplexed between the Great and Choir/Solo divisions.

In keeping with the congregational accompanimental nature of the organ, each division has been designed around an independent 8' weighted principal chorus. The divisional choruses, while differing in color, are designed to complement one to another as a unified whole. The mixtures are lower pitched than what might be found in many contemporary instruments, and were scaled and voiced to serve as a foil to the divisional chorus without stridency.

The strings and companion flutes in the expressive divisions are designed to build weightless accompaniment for choral work. The strings, when taken as a whole, allow the organ to feature a divided string organ division located between the Swell and Choir/Solo division, linked by means of couplers. The usually diminutive Flauto Dolce and its companion Celeste were designed to maintain a slight string edge evocative of an Erzähler as part of the massed expressive string chorus.

Our experience serving organs in this area taught us the need for stability in the materials and action choices for a region that has extremes of temperature and constant humidity. The chest action is electro-pneumatic slider with all reeds on electro-pneumatic unit action. In this manner flue and reed pipes are on an action that maximizes the speech characteristics and quality for each type of pipe. It also permits the flues and reeds to be placed on differing wind pressures and tremulants. The wind is regulated with dual curtain valve spring and weighted reservoirs,

providing wind that is stable but without being stiff and unyielding.

An organ of this type, with its wind pressures and scales, can build a very powerful ensemble, and it is very important that the organ be under effective expressive control. This is accomplished with extra thick expression shades that interlock. Expression motors provide over 40 stages of travel for complete dynamic control. With effective expression, the solo reeds are useful with the Great chorus—even the Solo English Tuba on 14" of wind can be tamed for use as a Great chorus reed.

The organ is controlled from a three-manual drawknob console built of American walnut and ebony. It includes features such as multiple level memory, transposer, Great/Choir manual transfer, programmable vent cutouts, programmable crescendo and sforzando, record/playback capability, and MIDI.

The organ was tonally finished in our customary manner

with initial tonal work followed by several planned returns. In this manner it is possible to be much more objective in tonal finishing and allows the organ to be used in a service role to properly judge its weight, color and balance. The organ was tonally finished under the direction of Arthur Schlueter III and Daniel Angerstein with the assistance of Lee Hendricks, John Tanner, and Marc Conley.

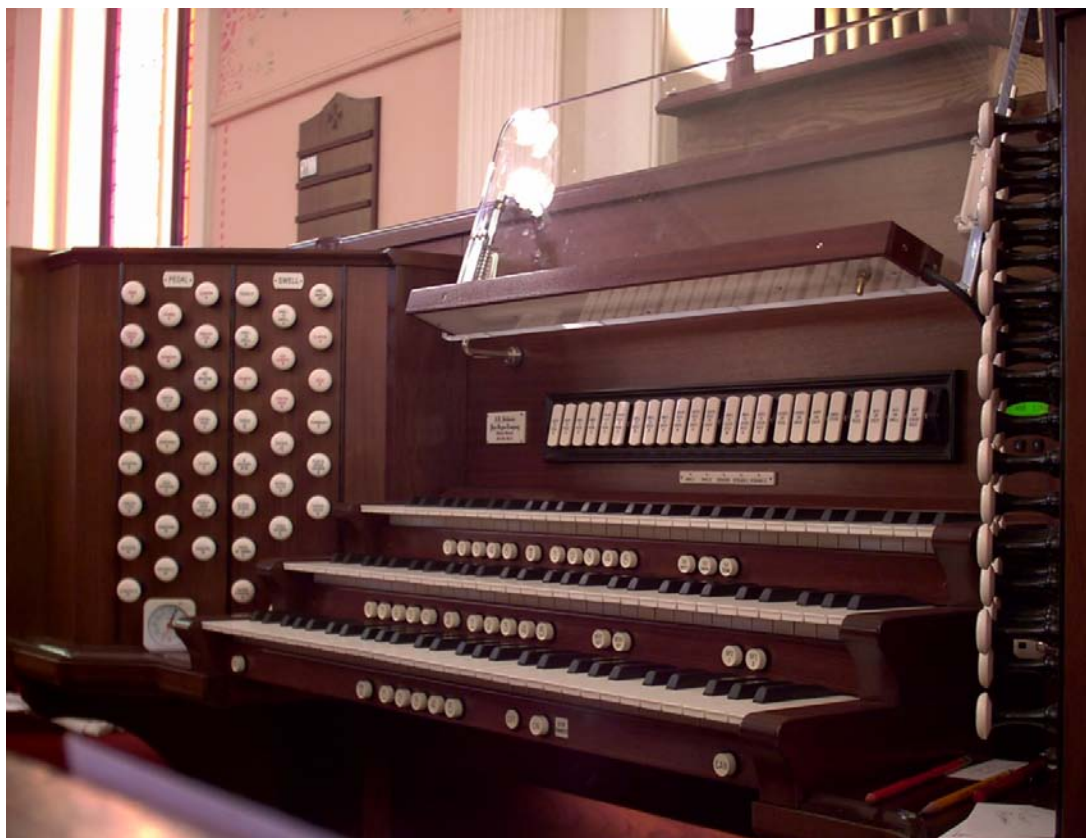
Since its installation, the organ has been used in a number of community concerts and has served for performances in the Spoleto Music Festival.

Quality organ building is never the result of one individual but is the result of a team effort. A. E. Schlueter Pipe Organ Company wishes to thank its staff including:

- Art Schlueter Jr.-president
- Arthur Schlueter III-vice president/tonal and artistic direction
- John Tanner-vice president of production/tonal finisher
- Howard Weaver-senior design engineer
- Bob Parris-executive assistant

- Marc Conley-shop foreman/tonal finisher
- Rob Black-master cabinet-maker/CAD organ design
- Michael DeSimone-leather and small parts
- Shan Dalton-office manager/administrative assistant
- Katrina Thornton-financial secretary
- Joe Sedlacek, Sr.-console wiring
- Joe Sedlacek, Jr.-organ assembly
- Mark Montour-CNC operator/woodwright
- Dustin Carlisle-organ assembly
- Jeffery Chilcutt-organ assembly
- Kelvin Cheatham-organ assembly
- Kevin Cartwright-tuning & service
- Bob Weaver-tuning & service
- Othel Liles-electrical engineer
- Patty Conley-relay wiring & organ assembly
- Herb Ridgely, Jr.-sales & support
- Don Land-sales & support
- David Stills-sales & support

—Arthur E. Schlueter, III



**Bethel United Methodist Church, Charleston, South Carolina,  
Three manuals, 51 ranks**

All manual stops 61 pipes, pedal stops 32 pipes, unless otherwise indicated.

**GREAT** (4½" wind pressure)

- 16' Double Open Diapason (12 pipes)
- 8' Open Diapason
- 8' Principal
- 8' Violone (49 pipes)
- 8' Bourdon
- 8' Harmonic Flute (44 pipes)
- 4' Octave
- 4' Spire Flute
- 2 2/3' Twelfth (prepared for)
- 2' Fifteenth
- V Cornet (prepared for)
- IV-V Mixture 1 1/3' (281 pipes)
- 8' Clarinet (Choir/Solo, prep. for Gt. Trumpet)
- 16' Trombone (Choir/Solo non-coupling)
- 8' Tromba Heroique (Choir/Solo non-coupling)
- 4' Tromba (Choir/Solo non-coupling)
- 8' English Tuba (Choir/Solo non-coupling)
- Chimes
- Choir/Solo (on tablet rail)
- Great to Great 4'
- Tremolo

**SWELL** (flues 6", reeds 6¼" wind pressure)

- 16' Lieblich Flute (12 pipes)
- 8' Chimney Flute
- 8' Geigen Principal
- 8' Viole de Gamba
- 8' Viole Celeste TC (49 pipes)
- 8' Flauto Dolce
- 8' Flauto Dolce Celeste TC (49 pipes)
- 4' Geigen Octave (12 pipes)
- 4' Koppel Flute
- 2 2/3' Nazard
- 2' Flageolet
- 1 3/5' Tierce

**IV-VI Mixture 2' (300 pipes)**

- 16' Contra Oboe (12 pipes)
- 8' Trumpet
- 8' Oboe
- 8' Vox Humana (separate tremolo)
- 4' Clarion (12 pipes)
- Swell to Swell 16'
- Swell Unison Off
- Swell to Swell 4'
- Tremolo

**CHOIR/SOLO** (flues 6", reeds 7¾", Tuba 18" wind pressure)

- 16' Gemshorn (61 notes)
- 8' English Diapason
- 8' Hohl Flute
- 8' Gamba
- 8' Gamba Celeste TC (49 pipes)
- 8' Gemshorn
- 8' Gemshorn Celeste (49 pipes)
- 4' Principal
- 4' Traverse Flute
- 2' Piccolo
- 1 1/5' Quint

- III Choral Mixture 2' (183 pipes)
- 8' Clarinet
- 8' French Horn
- 8' Tromba Heroique
- 16' English Tuba (49 notes, non-coupling)
- 8' English Tuba (non-coupling)
- 4' English Tuba (49 notes, non-coupling)
- Choir/Solo to Choir/Solo 16'
- Choir/Solo Unison Off
- Choir/Solo to Choir/Solo 4'
- Harp (61 notes, digital, on tablet rail)
- Zimbelstern (9 bells, on tablet rail)
- Tremolo

**PEDAL**

- 32' Untersatz (32 notes)
- 16' Principal (12 pipes)
- 16' Double Open Diapason (Great)
- 16' Gemshorn (Choir/Solo)
- 16' Bourdon (12 pipes)
- 16' Lieblich Flute (Swell)
- 8' Octave
- 8' Open Diapason (Great)
- 8' Gemshorn (Choir/Solo)
- 8' Bourdon
- 8' Chimney Flute (Swell)
- 4' Choral Bass
- 4' Cantus Flute (Great)
- III Mixture 2 2/3' (Great)
- 32' Contra Trombone (32 notes, digital)
- 32' Harmonics (32 notes, wired cornet series)
- 16' Trombone (12 pipes, Choir/Solo)
- 16' Contra Oboe (Swell)
- 8' English Tuba (Choir/Solo)
- 8' Tromba (Choir/Solo)
- 8' Oboe (Swell)
- 4' Clairon (Choir/Solo)
- Chimes (32 notes, Great, on tablet rail)

**Inter-manual couplers**

- Great to Pedal 8'
- Great to Pedal 4'
- Swell to Pedal 8'
- Swell to Pedal 4'
- Choir/Solo to Pedal 8'
- Choir/Solo to Pedal 4'
- MIDI on Pedal
- Swell to Great 16'
- Swell to Great 8'
- Swell to Great 4'
- Choir/Solo to Great 16'
- Choir/Solo to Great 8'
- Choir/Solo to Great 4'
- MIDI on Great
- Great to Choir/Solo 8'
- Swell to Choir/Solo 16'
- Swell to Choir/Solo 8'
- Swell to Choir/Solo 4'
- MIDI on Choir/Solo
- MIDI on Swell

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Additional information on our firm and projects  
can be viewed at [www.pipe-organ.com](http://www.pipe-organ.com)