

A Service of Dedication of the Fairfield Memorial Organ and Hosner Memorial Chimes was held on Sunday, June 24, 1939. The Rev. George B. Ratcliffe was the minister, Mrs. Charles H. Dodge was the organist and Mrs. Mildred M. Lagatree was the Choir Director.

1939 was mostly likely when the present Casavant windchests were installed by the Herbert firm, a Detroit Casavant representative at the time.

In 1948 unspecified repairs were made to the organ and chimes, and the blower was moved to the basement. In 1960 the chancel was redesigned, and the organ was moved at a cost of \$250.96.

In the Spring of 1972, the Board of Trustees voted to use a \$1000 bequest of Mrs. Margaret Mair for "several items (that) need immediate attention." Bodman Organ Service was authorized to make the repairs, which included installation of a "good used blower."

By February of 1973, "the remainder of the organ pipes are to be installed back of the baptismal font."

In 1975, the Board of Trustees was told by Marney Bruske that the "Thrift Shop would absorb the cost of re-installing the pipes" in the archway for decorative purposes (evidently the front rank of pipes had been left out for several years so as not to block the sound; but members of the congregation evidently did not like the look, so the pipes were reinstalled.)

Finally, 1984, David Wigton, of Wigton Pipe Organs, Inc. rebuilt the organ, adding to the windchests and making quite a few tonal changes to make the organ more reliable and versatile. He replaced the mechanical switches with solid-state relay, and provided new façade pipes for the main organ arch. The organ now has 16 stops, 16 ranks and 930 pipes.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
Romeo, Michigan

HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH ORGAN

According to the January 13, 1887 minutes of the First Congregational Society, Romeo, Michigan, a motion was approved that:

“The bequest of \$500 from John S. Newbury of Detroit when paid to the Treas. Of the Society be put at interest and be the basis of a fund for the purchase of an organ.”

M. I. Brabb, Clerk

It is supposed that some sort of organ was being used in the then-new building (it having been erected in 1876), as a “Miss Pindon” was employed as organist at \$50 each year (to include all services) beginning in 1885. (It may be noted that the same year the Rev. E. A. Berry would receive a \$1,200 salary.) Miss Hattie Pindon continued as organist until she resigned in September, 1889, when Miss Nellie Newbury was elected organist for the balance of the year.

It is possible that the organist was playing a “melodeon”, as numerous members signed a pledge sheet, still in the church archives, agreeing to pay specified amounts for the purchase of a melodeon. Among those signing the pledge sheet were E. W. Giddings, C. B. Newbury, Dexter Mussey, A. B. Rawles, Daniel J. Poor and George Chandler.

A separate list of “Subscribers to Organ” includes the following: J. W. Dyar, E. W. Giddings, C. B. Newbury, Giddings Mussey & Co., Dexter Mussey, W. Loud, A. B. Maynard, H. T. Mallery, Mr. Farrar, Mrs. Dickenson, A. B. Ayer, S. A. Reade, D H. Rowley, Mrs. R. Owen, Oliver Nichols, A. B. Rawles, E. C. Newbury, A. M. Groves, Agness Sutton, V. Ames, A. B. Aynes, Brad Owen, Wm. Abbot, Joseph Holland, John Brabb, R. R. Smith, J. Thorinton, D. J. Poor, Geo. R. (?), M. Taylor, C. Seaman, S. H. Fitch, L. McIntyre, Abijah Palmer, Wm. Mims, Cyrus Hopkins, Mrs. Clark, W. A. Jennisen, Jonas Cupman, Dr. Andrews, E. F. Mead, N. D. Mussey, N. Gray, and John Phelps. In all, the “Subscribers’ Paid \$308.25 toward the organ.

On September 13, 1889, the Congregational Society (which handled the secular affairs of the Congregational Church) noted:

“On motion the following were chosen a committee to act with a like comm. already chosen from the church to purchase an organ. E. Newbury, Miss Lou Dyan, Miss Grace Gray. It being understood that this com. Shall be continued until a church organ is purchased the necessary funds provided for paying the entire cost of which organ raised.”

A month later, October 17, 1889, the Society minutes shows:

“Organ Com. Reported. On motion voted that contract be made for a [Casavant] organ with the Farrand & Votey Organ Co. of Detroit at \$675. & that piano and our old organ be exchanged for better instrument (some used) at difference of \$100. Organ & piano to be fully guaranteed & to be placed in church ready for use. The Organ Co. to give concert with help of church choir for the benefit of organ fund to make balance of funds needed to pay for same if possible. Organ Co. to repair old organ if only small repairs are needed.

In minutes of a special meeting held July 26, 1890, it was moved and supported “that the Organ Committee go on with the exchange of Organ.” Motion carried.

By a vote the Trustees on February 12, 1892, elected Miss Abbie E. Muzzy organist at a salary of \$75 a year and Frank Hopkins was elected organ blower at an annual salary of \$20.

In 1939, the organ was rebuilt and chimes added as the result of gifts to the church. Miss Marian Hosner contributed the chimes in memory of her parents, Mrs. And Mrs. Lincoln Hosner. Mrs. Charles (Lucinda) Fairfield contributed \$2000 for rebuilding the organ in memory of the Fairfield family. Her father-in-law, the Rev. M. W. Fairfield, served as pastor of the Congregational Church from 1874 to 1881.