

MULLER PIPE ORGAN COMPANY

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St. Patrick Church London, OH

**Two manuals, 15 ranks
1979 Austin Opus 2636
Relocated 2018**

The cornerstone for St. Patrick Church was laid in 1865. An inventory of costs lists \$318.00 for a “small organ” but no other details about the instrument are available. In 1910, the church building was enlarged. Church records from that time are incomplete, but the Organ Historical Society archive lists a two-manual, 15-rank Wicks organ installed in 1911. A 1922 photo of the instrument notes the organ as 17 ranks. By the late 1950s, this organ was reported to be unreliable and was ultimately deemed unrepairable. Local organ builder Henry J. Durthaler removed the organ and installed a three-rank instrument comprised of used pipework and a new two-manual supply house console.

Although located in a warm and resonant worship space, three ranks were not nearly enough to lead a large parish in Mass. By 2000, there were also mechanical frustrations for the organist. A more suitable instrument was desperately needed, and budgetary constraints meant a used instrument would be the best option. To complicate matters, the organ had to fit with the choir in a relatively small rear balcony.

After many years of searching, an instrument with both adequate tonal resources and a small footprint was found. Austin Organ Company’s Opus 2636 was built in 1979. The 15-rank organ became available in 2016 upon closure of St. James United Methodist Church of Syracuse, New York.

The stoplist reflects the *Werkprinzip* tonal philosophy popular in America at the time. This can be seen especially in the Principals found throughout the three divisions. Originally lacking an 8' flute in the Swell, Muller added a 12-pipe extension to the 4' Koppelflöte and modified the existing action to allow the rank to play at 8'. All pipes were cleaned and revoiced to suit their new home in a bigger room.

The Austin minimizes its footprint with both clever windchest design and careful unification of larger pipes. For example, the two 16' flues are one set of pipes with two sets of valves. The Subbass stop activates two valves per pipe, while the Lieblich Gedeckt activates one valve. In addition, the Pedal 8' Octave and the Great 8' Principal share a bottom octave of pipes.

Because the Austin was originally installed in a chamber, Muller designed and constructed a red oak case for the organ’s new home, including new non-speaking façade pipes. At the request of the parish priest and organ committee, the case closely resembles one Muller had recently built for St. Francis de Sales Parish in Beckley, West Virginia. The console was updated with a new solid-state control system that includes multiple levels of combination action, record/playback, piston sequencer, and transposer.

We are pleased that St. Patrick Church now has a fine organ for leading worship, and that we were able to help find a new home for a deserving instrument.