

100 Anniversary of the Fenelon Falls United Church Organ, 1924-2024

Built 1861, the first Methodist Church in Fenelon Falls was built on land loaned by Mr. and Mrs. William Jordan Senior located on the lot to the east side of Colborne Street and slightly north of the church's present location. Humorously called the 'fireproof church,' as the stovepipe was six feet from meeting the chimney in the attic, this wood frame church was replaced 16 years later by a sturdy brick building when it was deemed advisable to build a larger structure with a basement. Lasting just over 30 years, a new church was built to, once again, accommodate the ever-growing Methodist congregation. In 1911, a third Methodist Church in Fenelon Falls was completed, under the guidance of Reverend John Bedford.

From 1911 to 1924, the church was filled with hymns by beautiful house and visiting choirs and in 1924 an organ was added to worship. Known as 'the Chimes,' a Woodstock Organ was installed and dedicated to the memory of Reverend John Bedford on May 24 of that year.

The souvenir booklet from the opening services of the pipe organ reads,

"To commemorate his efficient and untiring zeal during the erection of this Church. It is their desire that whenever the Chimes are heard they who hear may think of him."



About the organ,

"I thought that it might be of interest to say a few words about our pipe organ. We are most fortunate to possess such a fine instrument and I can attest to the fact that there are many congregations that would love to have a pipe organ as fit as ours. Thanks must indeed go to the members of this congregation who were far-sighted enough to elect to have the organ renovated instead of purchasing an electric one.

The organ was built by the Woodstock Organ Co. and installed in 1924 at a cost of \$5,343.07 and was renovated in 1985 at a cost of around \$37,000.00! The renovation was done by the Alan Jackson Organ Co. of Toronto who are the representatives of the Casavant Freres Co., a leading world-wide builder of fine organs.

The 17-rank organ has 903 pipes, ranging from the size of a pencil, to pipes of 16' in length, 25 bells, two manuals (keyboards), with a total of 81 keys and 30-foot pedals! A Casavant Electric memory was installed making it possible to program up to 20 different organ sounds, all controlled by a series of buttons located under each manual as well as 5-foot pistons (large knobs) controlled by the feet, plus a volume and expression pedal."

-Unknown author



Courtesy of Maryboro Lodge, the Fenelon Museum

**The organ celebrates 100
years of music this year, the
same year as the Village of
Fenelon Falls celebrates
150 years!**

Thank You

Shirley Lambert, the Fenelon Falls United Church and Ian McKechnie for all of their help writing this exciting story!



Fenelon Falls United Church, 1930s