

A Musical Summer...

and a look ahead

This past summer at St. Andrew and St. Paul was filled with musical activity. Each Sunday, a reduced choir of twelve to eighteen singers led the congregation in sacred song, with soloists alone on two Sundays.

A particular highlight came in early July, when our church hosted many events as part of the annual national convention of the Royal Canadian College of Organists, this year held jointly with the Northeast chapters of the American Guild of Organists. On Monday, July 3, nearly 1,000 organists and choirmasters filled the church for the convention's opening worship service. Rev. Glenn Chestnutt preached, while Jean-Sébastien Vallée and Jonathan Oldengarm provided musical leadership along with the choir and brass ensemble. The hymn singing was something to behold; the choir gave first performances of choral works commissioned for the occasion from noted Canadian composers Mark Sirett and John Burge. We were also delighted by the participation of the Revs. Gwenda Wells and Sherman Hesselgrave (Anglican), and Père Pierre Dufour, c.s.c. (Roman Catholic) in the service. Other convention events held at our church included the opening recital (Sunday, July 2), the National Competition in Organ Improvisation of the AGO (Wednesday, July 5) and the winners' recital of the AGO Regional Competition for Young Organists and the National Organ Playing Competition of the RCCO (Thursday, July 6).

Each Thursday in July and August we hosted the Organ Intermezzi midday recitals, featuring artists from Latvia, the Czech Republic, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and Canada. Each brought a unique take to our mighty Casavant organ, presenting repertoire rarely heard in the city to great effect.

This coming October 31 at 7:30 p.m., D.V., we will host a service of Vespers in honour of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, an event that is one of the key reasons our church exists. Our choir is joined by the musicians of Serenata St. John in presenting J.S. Bach's *Magnificat*, BWV 243, and Mendelssohn's *Verleih uns Frieden*, a touching setting of Martin Luther's famous prayer for peace. The Rev. Glenn Chestnutt officiates. The service falls within an international academic conference being held at McGill University entitled "500 Years Reformation 2017", which includes speakers Charles Taylor, Torrance Kirby and others. Details may be found at cite-m.com/event/500th-anniversary-of-the-reformation-2016-2017/.

In addition, our choir will sing Arvo Pärt's haunting *Passio* at St. Joseph Oratory on November 21; the annual benefit concert for the Maison du Parc on November 24, together with members of the MSO Players' Association; and two performances of Handel's *Messiah* on November 30 and December 1 together with the McGill Chamber Orchestra, at St. Andrew and St. Paul and l'église St Jean Baptiste, respectively.

Open Church

A very busy summer!

Things started off with a bang as we opened right after Canada Day and went straight into the American Fourth of July holiday. The city was teeming with tourists and St. Andrew and St. Paul seemed to be on the radar of many people. We are in several guide books and the banners out front drew in the curious. As well, the museum with many special installations meant that there were constant crowds out front.

The Church, of course, did not disappoint and we received many, many positive expressions of amazement at what the building contains. Montreal citizens who took the opportunity to come in were also excited with what they saw. The garden was another delight for visitors who enjoyed its beauty and peace. Last but not least, our guides Louis Buckett and Alex Sheasby met visitors with cheerful grace and friendliness. Alex also took time to play the violin each day which was an added bonus. A neighbourhood child care group had a scavenger hunt in the building. I think the goal was to find the Scouts motto in the Chapel. The total number of visitors was 5247! All in all I think we can consider this summer's opening to be a success.

Don Kelly
Programme Coordinator



Visitors – just two of the 5247 that came through the doors this summer!