

Gay Street Digital Organ

One option being considered by the organ committee is the purchase of a digital organ, specifically, the Allen G350 (pictured below). Following are answers to your questions and additional information which we hope will be helpful. You will also find links to sites where you can actually hear this organ being played.

What is a digital organ?

A digital organ is an instrument that sounds like a pipe organ but produces all the sound through electronics. A digital organ looks almost identical to a pipe organ except (1) it does not have physical pipes and (2) it has a digital screen.

Isn't this just an electronic organ?

No. An electronic organ is an instrument that has more resemblance to a keyboard with foot pedals. They are much smaller and used more for jazz bands and gospel groups.



This is an electronic organ. It is much smaller than your typical pipe organ in a church. It is designed to be semi-portable and has much more limited capabilities. The majority are even small enough to fit into a home.



This is the **Allen G350** digital organ. This is very similar to the size of our current console for our organ. It has actual stops and foot pedals like a pipe organ. It also has an almost identical sound to a physical pipe organ. This is not designed to fit or be played in your average home.



This is a synthesizer. It functions like a digital piano and is capable of producing a variety of sounds, one resembling an organ. These are meant to be portable, function in a variety of settings, and offer a much less expensive option than a real piano. This is what we have in the chapel. This is **not** a digital organ.

What is the cost and maintenance of a digital organ?

The digital organ we are looking at will cost \$146,035 plus the cost of removing the current organ and the cost of shelving for the speakers. Digital organs require less maintenance than a pipe organ as they have less moving parts. You do not have to regularly tune a digital organ like a pipe organ.

What is the average lifespan of a digital organ?

30-40 years. Some first generation Allen organs sold in the 1970s are still being played today. With appropriate maintenance and updates when needed, a digital organ can last through your lifetime at the church. If you're interested in learning more about the development of the digital organ, visit

<https://www.allenorgan.com/TheHistoryOfTheDigitalOrganAndSamplingSteveMarkowitz.pdf> .

What is the lifespan of the electronics?

This varies upon the amount it is used. Software and hardware can be fixed and upgraded as desired. Software updates can cost \$300-\$400, and hardware upgrades can cost \$800-\$1000 depending on what is being upgraded.

How long would it take to install the digital organ?

It would take approximately 6 months from the date we order the digital organ to complete the installation.

What will the sound difference be with a digital organ?

The sound difference will be very miniscule. Thanks to the advancement of technology in the past few decades, the sound of a quality digital organ is barely distinguishable from a pipe organ. If you'd like to hear a digital organ check out the links below.

Stonybrook UMC in Gahanna, OH - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4TLAMayUkY>

**Fast-forward to 5:22 to hear a hymn played on their digital Allen organ.

Holy, Holy, Holy on an Allen Organ -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4u6ADASv8Y&list=RDlw9ScBVnDvE&index=11>

**demonstrates different organ sounds

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdgCgNxA_W4

**This recording demonstrates the GeniSys voices. These sounds are similar to a synthesizer, but have a nicer quality due to the advancement of technology. The GeniSys voices have been included in the quote given to us by Allen.

If you have time, listen to the below recording for an in-depth description and demonstration of the different GeniSys voices available.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lw9ScBVnDvE>

If you're interested in learning more about Allen organs, feel free to visit their website

<https://www.allenorgan.com/> .

Questions?

Contact a member of the Organ Steering Committee with your questions, and we will either answer them or begin looking for the answers!