



Newsroom

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Historic pipe organ donated to Thiel College to be featured in David Johnson Memorial Chapel



GREENVILLE, Pa.—The Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has donated a historic pipe organ that was originally housed in the Lutheran Center in Pittsburgh to Thiel College.

The Kirmeyer Organ worth approximately \$10,000 will be used in the College's David Johnson Memorial Chapel. Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Bishop **Kurt F. Kusserow '85** facilitated the move. The synod is in the process of moving spaces, and they wanted the instrument to remain "in the family," Kusserow said.

“The gift of music and of singing is so deeply ingrained in the Lutheran tradition that it is bittersweet to receive the gift of such a beautiful instrument in the middle of our institution’s ongoing challenge of dealing with COVID-19,” said Campus Pastor Brian Riddle ’07. *“Yet this organ, a generous donation from the Southwest PA Synod, points to a time in the future when we will sing together again in worship. It stands as a reminder that our tradition’s musical heritage, even paused as it is right now, will live on, and that the sound of music emanating from our chapel will soon be a reality again. It is a gift of hope, and a promise for a better future for our campus community on the other side of this present pandemic, and in that sense, it was a very timely gift.”*

The Kirmeyer family, headed by Joseph Kirmeyer, spent his life working for US Steel Corporation as the head of construction and carpentry. He and his wife donated the master-crafted organ to the Lutheran Center as a remembrance of their faith and life’s work.

The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with about 4 million members in nearly 10,000 congregations across the United States.

Thiel College history is firmly rooted in the Lutheran tradition. Thiel College was formed in 1866 under the leadership of the Lutheran pastor William A. Passavant. During its first decades, Thiel College was led by the brothers Henry and Theophilus Roth, Lutheran pastors who served respectively as Thiel president from 1870 to 1887 and 1893 to 1902, all but six of the first 32 years of the College.