

J. GORDON CHRISTENSEN

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J Gordon Christensen was raised on a family farm near Dannebrog, which, by legislative action of the Nebraska State Unicameral, is the "Danish Capital" of Nebraska.

Dr. Christensen holds a Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance from Hastings College; a Master of Music degree in piano performance from the University of Colorado-Boulder; a second Master of Music degree in music education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; and a Ph.D. with an emphasis in organ and liturgical music from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where Dr. Quentin Faulkner and Dr. George Ritchie were his organ instructors.

Dr. Christensen taught elementary music in Imperial, Nebraska, initially moving to the Southwestern Nebraska community to carry out a three year pilot project sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts placing a performing musician in a public school music class-room. The Imperial community quickly embraced the idea which led to a 41 year career as an elementary music educator. Support and encouragement for a highly developed elementary music program by the Imperial community led to recognition as the "National Teacher of the Year" in 2000, sponsored and presented by NORTEL NETWORKS, a nation-wide communications business.

Very early in my Imperial tenure, I became the organist at Zion Lutheran Church, an additional tenure that lasted 41 years. During those years, my AGO membership was in the Denver chapter, earning the SPC, CAGO and AAGO certificates under the guidance of Dr. Joyce Shupe Kull, a long-time member of the Denver chapter. Due to growth in membership at Zion Imperial, a new church building with a capacity of 400 was built in the late seventies. Housed in the west end balcony of the new building is a 3/33 pipe organ, mostly Reuter, including seven ranks of re-voiced pipes from the earlier instrument.

Prior to my retirement, I was practicing organ at Zion Lutheran Church, Imperial, when their present pastor introduced me to one of his long-time friends, Pastor Nathan Sherrill of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Council Bluffs, Iowa. Upon retirement from the 41 year teaching position in Imperial, I became the organist and Director of Music for St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Council Bluffs. During those 10 years, St. Paul's has developed the parish-based "St. Paul's Music Conservatory," with more than 125 studio students taught by 12 teachers. As the organ instructor, I teach 18 organ students weekly, some of whom are members of AGO, successfully earning guild certification through their organ lessons at St. Paul's Music Conservatory.

My personal hobbies include collecting original paintings by significant Nebraska and/or Mid-western artists, gardening, and driving my Corvette convertible.

As an organist, I have traveled and presented organ recitals and Bach-related workshops in Russia, the Republic of Slovakia and the Czech Republic. I always had the good fortune of knowledgeable translators. These trips were organized by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod when I was still in Imperial.

Organ recitals include one at the Tchaikovski Conservatory of Music in Moscow, and conservatories in three major cities in Russia.

