

## Cory Whittier

Cory Whittier has been the Organist and Choir director at First Presbyterian Church in Lynchburg, Virginia since 2017. His early musical training was in piano but found a great appreciation and love for organ at a young age. He was born and raised in Idaho Falls, Idaho and participated in community and school musicals, choirs, and bands. He was a prize winner in the American Guild of Organists' Region VIII young artist's competition in 2007 and was the recipient of the Nona Hunter Memorial Scholarship at BYU-Idaho.

Cory served as the organist at First Presbyterian Church of Idaho Falls from 2011-2014, and Organist and Choir Director at Twelve Corners Presbyterian Church in Brighton, NY from 2015-2017. He serves as a guest organist at the Tabernacle at Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, where he participates in the daily organ recital series. He received a Bachelor of Music degree in organ performance from Brigham Young University-Idaho in 2014 where he studied with Daniel Kerr, and a Master of Music degree in organ performance and literature from the Eastman School of Music where he studied with Edoardo Bellotti.

Cory and his wife, Hayley, reside in Forest, Virginia, with their three children Addie (8), Benton (6), and Daniel (3).

*"I hope everyone is well there. What a wonderful congregation and how we will ever be grateful for the love and friendships we enjoyed while there!" ~ Cory Whittier*



***Welcome to the  
130th First Presbyterian  
Church Celebration  
Organ Concert Series  
Celebrating the 100th Anniversary  
of Our Pipe Organ***

The original pipe organ was made by E. M. Skinner Company of Boston, one of the foremost organ builders of that time in the United States. The new pipe organ and church building were both dedicated in April of 1920.

The organ was given by the Ladies Auxiliary and Mr. Bowen Curley, as a memorial to Mrs. Kate Baker Curley, a member of this church and ardent leader of the Women's Auxiliary. The cost installed was \$7,500. Mrs. James Orr, mother of Elizabeth and Marian Orr, was president of the women's organization, at the time, and instrumental in raising funds for the project.

In 1946, the Elizabeth M. Wheeler memorial chimes were added to the instrument, and in 1949, a soft set of pipes, the Aeoline, were added in memory of Winifred Aupperle.

The organ restoration project was started in December of 1977. An organ committee was formed to investigate and propose a rebuilding project. Two organ building consultants, in 1978 and 1979, helped the committee in its deliberations. The final proposal was presented to the Session in 1980. The rebuilding contract was awarded to Balcom & Vaughan Pipe Organs, Inc. of Seattle. The project was essentially completed in the fall of 1982 at a cost of \$93,000, and was practically paid for from a bequest by the estate of Bessy McCauly.

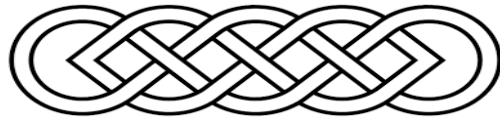
There have been many members and others who have helped to keep the organ playing each Sunday, but a special Thanks to David Maddison for his dedication in maintaining this beloved instrument.

## Halden Toy

Halden Toy, 27, organist and harpsichordist, has been playing the organ since the age of 10, and cannot seem to break the habit. He has studied with the late Norma Aamodt-Nelson, Douglas Cleveland, Daniel Kerr, and renowned Bach specialist George Ritchie.

In 2009, he took first place at the American Guild of Organist's Region VIII competition. In 2014 Halden was accepted as one of 8 finalists in the 5th International Organ Competition Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck. In 2015, Halden was selected as one of DIAPASON'S 20 under 30. He has also performed at many AGO Conventions in years past.

In 2020, Halden completed a degree in Diesel power technology (his secondary passion in life) and began work as an anaerobic digester and generator technician. In his spare time, he enjoys petting his two cats and working on his old Isuzu.



## Edward Poston



Edward Poston is a native of Clearfield, Utah, and holds master's and bachelor degree's music from the University of Kansas and Brigham Young University-Idaho, respectively.

He began piano studies at age four, and began playing the organ at age eight. In high school, he played the violin and cello and sometimes conducted his high school orchestra. Edward served as organist at First Presbyterian in Idaho Falls from 2016-2018.

In 2019, the Kansas City Arts Beat described that he played with "astonishing skill and musicality." Currently, he is music director and organist at Peace Lutheran Church in Raytown, Missouri. Earlier this summer, he was the pit orchestra conductor for *Half Time the Musical* in Theater in the Park in Shawnee Mission, Kansas. Edward also worked as choral assistant and pianist at Topeka High School during the 2020-2021 school year.

He looks forward to returning to the University of Kansas this fall to begin his doctoral studies in Church Music and Organ. He is grateful to see familiar faces and play in public once again.

## Jason M. Gunnell

Hello to First Presbyterian Church Idaho Falls!

My name is Jason M. Gunnell. I was organist at First Presbyterian Church for two years from 2007 to 2009. It was a joy for me to serve as organist there and to become acquainted with so many of the wonderful people there. I served under Rev. Dennis Falasco, and served with two choir directors: John LoPiccolo and Diane Mondell. It was a wonderful stepping stone for me as well in developing my talents and knowledge of service in the church. I have been asked to give a brief overview of what has transpired in my life since my service at First Presbyterian. When I began at First Presbyterian, I had just completed my Bachelor's Degree in Organ Performance at BYU-Idaho and gotten married to Kate. During my time there, Kate and I welcomed our first son, Grant, into our family. We left in August of 2009 to travel to Lawrence, Kansas to pursue a Master of Music Degree in Sacred Music and Organ at the University of Kansas. We spent two years in Lawrence and welcomed our second son, Mitch, into our family. While in Lawrence, I worked as organist at a Presbyterian Church in Kansas City.

In August of 2011, we moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, to pursue a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree at the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati (CCM). I began work as organist at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Terrace Park, a suburb of Cincinnati. Upon completion of my work at CCM in 2014, my employment at St. Thomas became fulltime as I took on more responsibility as the Associate Director of Music and Director of Communications. It has been a wonderful time serving and bearing testimony through the great power of sacred music. One of the highlights of my service at St. Thomas is belonging to the Bach Ensemble at St. Thomas, a professional ensemble that performs the cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach in the context of worship on a monthly basis.

Along the way, our family has continued to expand. We now have eight children and couldn't be happier. We have been able to buy a home large enough for us to build our family and teach them the things they will need to know.

Our children are Grant (12), Mitch (11), Brigham (9), William (8), Clark (6), Russell (4), Hyrum (2), and Ava (7.5 months). A girl came along after seven boys! Our family, faith, and work continue to bring joy into our lives.

I have also enjoyed wonderful opportunities to perform recitals at many locations, including the Salt Lake Tabernacle and Conference Center. Some of the greatest honors I have had vocationally include winning the Strader Organ Competition in 2011 held in Cincinnati, Ohio, and the biggest honor, being selected as one of the finalists for the position of Tabernacle Organist of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 2017.

We feel greatly blessed in our lives and are enjoying our time in Cincinnati, a place that has become home. We have valued and been enriched greatly by the places we have been and loved serving for a period of time at First Presbyterian Church in Idaho Falls. I would have greatly enjoyed to come give a recital and participate in the celebration of the organ there, but unfortunately, time, distance, and scheduling didn't allow for this to happen, but what a wonderful thing to recognize the organ and people of First Presbyterian Church Idaho Falls!

Sincerely,

Jason, Kate, Grant, Mitch, Brigham, William, Clark,  
Russell, Hyrum, and Ava Gunnell

