

# **Explanation of the New Organ Renovation Project**

By Michael White

In this organ project, we want to: To preserve and maintain the historic nature, namely the sound, of our historic 1885 H. L. Roosevelt Pipe Organ; To replace the current console and control system with modern technology and specifications. (The current console and control system currently utilizes 1980's technology.); and To identify and fix any known problems with pipes or other mechanical equipment within the organ that have been neglected in the past, fix it and ensure the organs life for another generation.

## **NEW CONSOLE and CONTROL SYSTEM**

A new console will be custom designed just for us with a historical nod to the past (looks wise), but will be built with all the modern specifications/standards as set forth nationally by the American Guild of Organists.

The console will be custom built locally by a small company in southern Virginia. It will be constructed of White Oak, or similar value species and Keyboards will be of premium grade! It will also be movable to allow for greater flexibility in the loft.

The New Control System (think similar to a computers operating system ...) will have 100 levels of Memory for the organists' stop/sound combinations (currently there are only 4) and other modern tools useful in today's world.

## **TONAL CHANGES**

Due to the new control system for the organ, we are going to be able to expand the instrument by about 20 stops/sounds. These will be all wind-blown organ pipes, and will be done primarily by "borrowing" existing stops/sounds and adding pipes from other parts of the organ, allowing them to play on different keyboards allowing a greater palette of sounds to choose from.

A set of REAL tubular Chimes with striking actions will be added.

A NEW solo "Tuba" stop will be added to the organ as well. This stop will be on high wind pressure to allow it to be heard over the rest of the organ. It can be used for such things as "soloing-out" melodies of hymns, and it also become quite handy for use at Weddings playing the many "Trumpet" type pieces everyone prefers.

## **MAINTENANCE/RENOVATION/RESTORATION**

New Wind lines (that carry the air from the blower to the respective divisions within the instrument) will be installed. Currently they're of low quality "flexible" (Dryer exhaust tubes) but will be converted to "rigid" wood and/or PVC pipe.

Surface vacuuming, and wiping of surfaces (organ case, façade pipes, top of the organ, blower room, etc...)

Cleaning and washing some of the exposed pipes that have been exposed to the dirt and dust over the years.

Re-cabling of the entire instrument and wrapping of said wires in protective sheaths.

A full cleaning and restoration of all 5 reed (trumpet like) stops by an industry specialist that will clean, repair, apply clear coat of lacquer to needed pipes, etc...

And FINALLY, the finishing touches! There will be "Tonal Regulation" of many of the stops/sounds to ensure they all sound the way their supposed to be sounding. Ie: Making sure one note isn't sounding louder or softer than it should.

Post-Script — There will also be some improvements to the Organ Loft such as removing existing platforms to allow for greater flexibility when there are instrumentalists or choirs present, and improvements to the floor. (This will be done "in house" using our maintenance staff.)

## **TIMELINE**

It is our goal, and hope, that the total time for the project will be about a year ... give or take. A lot depends on the vendors and their timelines, but there are many things that can be done behind the scenes in preparation while we wait for the vendors to complete parts of the project. The Music Staff and Business Manager will also have monthly meetings with the Organ Company that we've chosen for this project, to ensure the project keeps momentum and ensure the best for our parish community and historic pipe organ.