

# Organ Expansion Project at Prince of Peace



In 2014 Prince of Peace Lutheran Church acquired a pipe organ that was originally built in 1972 for Bryn Athyn Cathedral in Philadelphia by the Schlicker Organ Company. With its move to Dublin the organ was modified to work with a new keyboard console at Prince of Peace. While the Schlicker Organ company was a very prominent builder of its day, its tonal concept (the choice of “voices” in the instrument) significantly favored a particular style of music. If one were to visualize the tonal style, you might say it would look like an upside-down triangle with the higher sounds dominating.

If you were to compare this to an orchestra, it would be like having an ABUNDANCE of piccolos and flutes which become more prominent than the instruments in the middle (violins, violas, oboes, clarinets, etc...) or the low end (cellos, basses, bassoons, etc.) While this upside-down triangle concept works well

for some types of music such as Bach, Buxtehude, Mozart, Pachelbel and many composers of the German Baroque era (1600-1750) and early classical era (1750-1820), it struggles to play music of other styles and eras well or easily.

Our organ expansion project is an attempt to balance the middle and low sounds with the higher ones, or visually to make the triangle right side up. Again, if you consider the example of an orchestra, you usually only find 1-2 flutes and possibly 1 piccolo compared to numerous violins, violas, cellos and basses. This is because the higher pitches are more easily heard.

The organ expansion seeks to add voices in this middle and lower range as well as a few solo colors that help impact the voices in the middle and low range. While the organ currently leads congregational singing well (because everyone can hear the higher pitches) it struggles to work well to accompany soloists and choirs or play music of the romantic and modern eras.

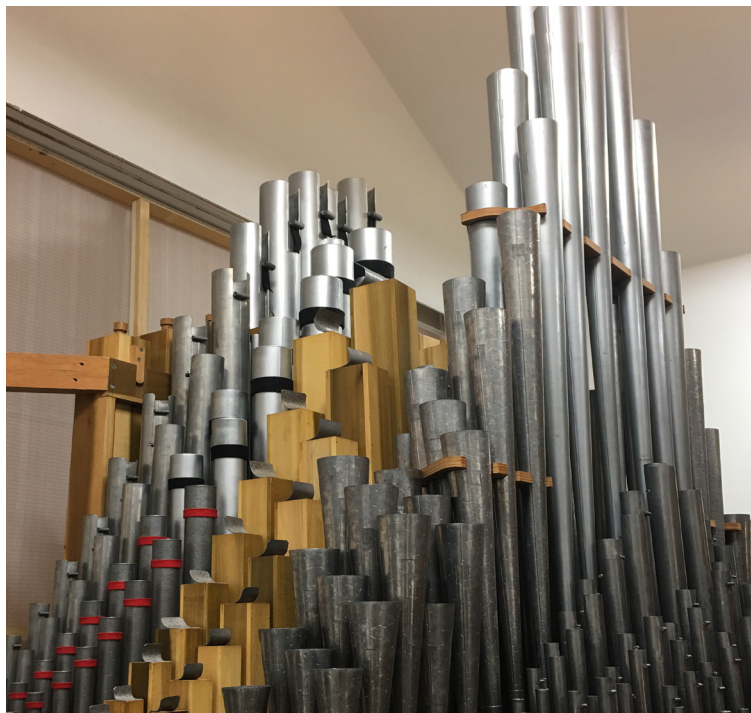
In addition to balancing the high sounds with the middle and low, the renovation would also include a new blower motor. The blower is crucial as it supplies the wind that makes the pipes sing! Last summer the blower had a rather major failure. And while it was repaired to remain workable, it needs replacement. Keep in mind, that component of the instrument is now 50 years old! Thankfully the new console can be modified to continue to serve as the “brain” or control center for the instrument. And almost all the original pipe work will remain in the instrument.



**Q: How does this affect the ministry at Prince of Peace**

A: Our pipe organ is easily the most used instrument at Prince of Peace. It is used to lead all our weekend worship services and provides musical leadership for countless other services such as funerals, weddings, morning prayer, evening prayer, and many of our concerts. The organ has a historic leadership role in the Lutheran tradition and remains the single best instrument\* to lead congregational worship, accompany ensembles, and provide a huge range of supporting music.

*\*Single best meaning that it would take a collection of instruments to replicate the wide range and dynamics of music that the organ is able to offer.*



**Q: Will this make the instrument louder?**

A: All the proposed additions are meant to expand the low and middle sounds of the instrument as well as offer more color choices in those ranges. The existing high sounds will be modified to work more harmoniously with the additions. Rather than being louder, the proposed additions will offer a wider variety to the sounds that are at a medium volume. The one exception is a Festival Trumpet which is intended to be a solo sound that will work well with a wide range of the other organ sounds.

**Q: Will there be a need to do further work down the road?**

A: All instruments require regular care, maintenance, and tuning. And although a pipe organ is designed to last for generations, there are still some components that wear out. Most of the current pipework is and should remain in good condition. There are, however certain components in the windchests (the boxes of air that the pipes sit on) which will someday need to be rebuilt or replaced. If fundraising results are favorable we would like to add that into the current renovation which will offer an incredibly substantial savings over doing it further down the road.

**Q: Will it be more expensive to maintain the organ with these new additions?**

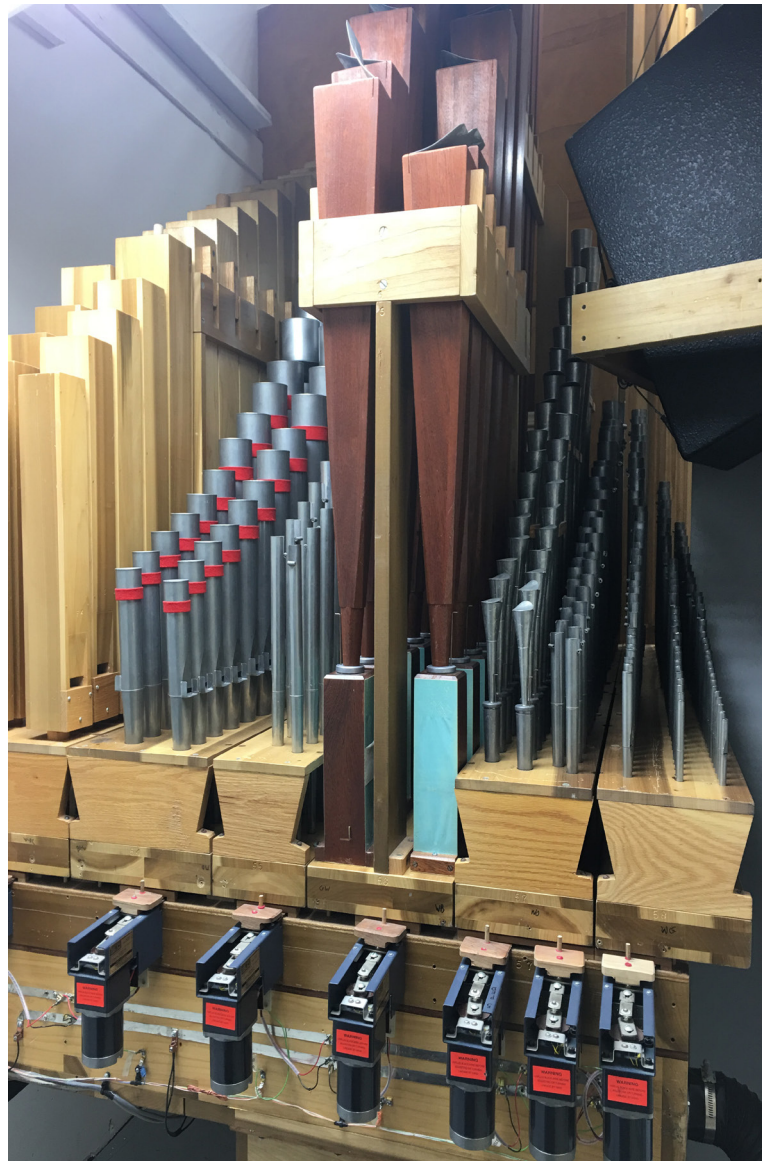
A: Our organ is tuned twice a year and because our sanctuary has both heat and AC, the tuning remains in pretty good shape. It's when we make the change from heat to AC and vice versa that we have the most issues, which is why the tuning happens twice a year.

While the additions mean more pipes, the actual number of added pipes is not overly significant in the grand scheme and therefore won't have a big effect on the time it takes to tune.

**Q: Who will do the proposed expansion?**

A: The committee received two proposals for the expansion project. Both companies are in Ohio. One proposal suggested a more in-depth reworking of the pipework, replacing the windchests (boxes of air that the pipes sit on) and enough changes so that a new keyboard console would be needed.

A second proposal addressed only the tonal issues needed for a better balance as well as the possibility of including the windchests. The committee weighed both options and decided to go with the second proposal offered by Muller Organ Company. Their proposal was more modest (in scope AND cost) but still addressed the needs of tonal modifications while keeping the current console (only 10 years old) with some minor modifications. If fundraising efforts are favorable, they would also install new windchests.



**Q: Will construction be required?**

A: Minor construction will take place in the organ chambers where most of the pipes and mechanics are located. This will be to create more space in the chambers. No modifications are expected to the façade which is the front of the organ that you see when you enter the sanctuary.

**Q: How long will the process take?**

A: Once the process begins, there will be about 3-4 months of work. Some of it will be preparatory, but the organ will likely be unusable for a couple of months.

**Q: How much will this cost?**

A: Although the basic modifications we are considering will cost \$500,000, we are setting a goal of \$650,000 in hopes of including the replacement of windchests. We have already received some significant lead gifts towards this goal.



Organ Committee

Jeremy Bankson  
Suzy Biehl  
Lucille Gill  
Barb Hoyt  
Jim Hoyt  
Barb Hunt  
Ron Kenreich  
Pastor John Morris



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