

OF PIPES & PEDALS

St. Peter Lutheran Church
Organ Committee Update #4

This is the fourth in a series of updates from the organ committee discussing our journey of learning about our organ, its problems, and possible solutions for the future. These reports can also be found on our website at www.stpeterhemlock.org/organ.

After visiting four different churches in August to see and hear different organs and to compare them to our own, members of our committee traveled to Indiana and Illinois in October to see and hear three different organs built by the Buzard Organ Company. We also visited the Buzard factory in Champaign, Illinois. All who made the trip noted the high quality of both the sound and the construction of the instruments and the scope of the factory.

At our October meeting, the following general items were discussed:

- The differences between two- and three-keyboard organs and the space required,
- The small size of our balcony as a concern for a developing music program,
- Structural modifications to our balcony,
- Repair of the current organ vs. replacement, and
- The longevity of a new instrument in comparison to the shorter life of a repaired instrument needing multiple major updates as a stewardship issue.

At our December meeting, several items deeply engaged committee members. The first was a list of six options to address the current organ problems:

1. Repair the existing organ as is, without making changes to its size or sound.
2. Repair and supplement the existing organ with electronic speaker sounds.
3. Relocate a used organ from a different congregation to St. Peter. A larger, used 1968 Casavant organ is available.
4. Construct a new larger and more versatile pipes-only instrument using some new and some old pipes from other organs no longer in use, via the Scott Smith Organ Company in Lansing, Michigan.
5. Have the Buzard Organ Company use pipes from our current organ and construct a new larger instrument.
6. Install a completely new pipe organ.

One of the startling revelations to us was that our current organ, purchased in 1978 for \$57,000 would now in 2021 cost \$600,000 to build (ten times the original cost.)

We have come to know and appreciate the great skill and care needed to build quality organs. We have also learned of the costs involved and wish to be good long-term stewards of the resources God has provided.

In our next report, we will explore the pros and cons of the six options listed above and our reasons for not recommending some of those options for further consideration.