

THE WITTENBERG WAY

Organ Restoration Special Edition

July 2019
Volume 11, Issue 6



Dear Grace Family,

This summer special edition of our newsletter is provided to give you an update on our thirty-six month fund-raising campaign to restore our pipe organ, which has deteriorated over time and is now on life-support. Music is an inherent part of our humanity as image-bearers of God and a vital component of our life together, which is why this stewardship endeavor is so important.

The Lutheran tradition has been known as the “singing church” as our hymnody is rich and stood the test of time. Luther, who was a musician himself, was a strong supporter of both music and musicians. For Luther, the basis of understanding music in the life and worship of God’s people was viewing music as *creation* and *gift* of God. Luther’s own words make this point again and again. In the preface to Georg Rhaeus’, *Symphoniae lucundae*, he repeatedly stresses music as God’s gift:

I would certainly like to praise music with all my heart as the excellent gift of God, which it is and to commend it to everyone... And you, my young friend, let this noble, wholesome, and cheerful creation of God be commended to you... At the same time you may by this creation accustom yourself to recognize and praise the Creator.

Please take time to prayerfully consider how you might join us in preserving our rich musical heritage through the restoration of our beloved organ. Grace is a unique church reflecting our ancient and abiding faith, and our music serves as an important element in making this possible. I thank you for your prayer and financial support.

In Christ’s Service and Yours,



Pr. Thomas

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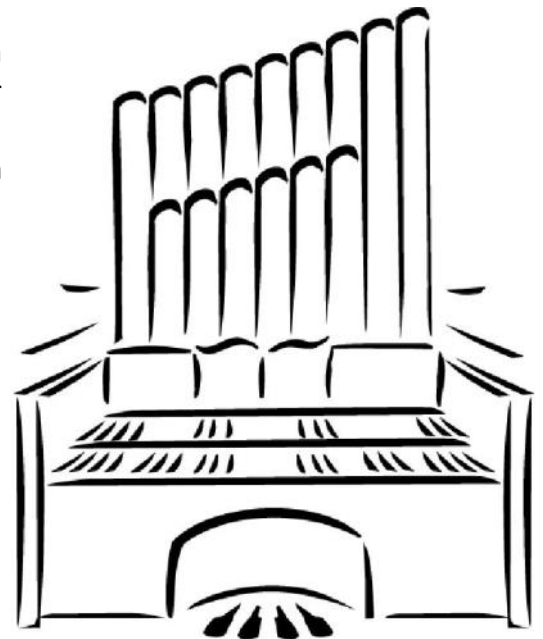
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Pulling Out All the Stops: Making the Case for the Pipe Organ

Pr. Brian W. Thomas

There is no end to the various needs of our church and the world we live in. We constantly get calls weekly in the church office, as I'm sure you do at home, from charitable organizations seeking our financial support. Your generous giving supports the mission of Grace, which includes mission endeavors both at home and abroad, so why should you additionally give to support the restoration of Grace's pipe organ?

The Pipe Organ Supports and Strengthens Congregational Singing

Think of any other instrument commonly used in worship: guitar, piano, percussion, etc. What

"the pipe organ is a wind instrument that wonderfully mimics the human voice in all its polyphonic wonder."

happens once you play a note or chord on any of these instruments? It immediately begins to decay, necessitating more fills on the piano or more chords on the guitar. Singing doesn't work this way, and the continuity of the sung line is often disrupted, sometimes violently so, by the constant reiteration of pitch required by the limitations of other instruments. But the organ's sound lifts and sustains the voice of the congregation through each phrase, guiding each breath, and setting the character of the song through its wide range of voices. In fact, the pipe organ is a wind instrument that wonderfully mimics the human voice in all its polyphonic wonder.

Among all other instruments which are suitable for divine worship, the organ, as one writer put it, "is accorded pride of place because of its capacity to sustain the singing of a large gathered assembly, due to both its size and its ability to give resonance to the fullness of human sentiments, from joy to sadness, from praise to lamentation."

The primary function of the organ in worship is not to further divide solo playing, but for supporting the singing of the congregation. No single instrument is better equipped for that purpose.

The Pipe Organ Fills the Room Naturally

Speaking of limitations, without amplification, it's impossible for any other instrument to fill any but the smallest of spaces. The organ thrives in an open room like our sanctuary, and consequently, allows for a more organic accompanying sound. There is a reason organ accompaniment in the church has

endured for centuries. It wasn't because it was contemporary or cool. In fact, at one time it was called the "devil's pipes" by believers who were wary of this new instrument.

I have nothing against the piano or guitar. I enjoy playing both of these instruments quite often. But those instruments were simply never meant to accompany congregational singing as they are not well-suited to the task. I can dig a hole with a shovel, but I would much prefer to use a backhoe if the hole is to be a large one. Some tools are just better for the job.

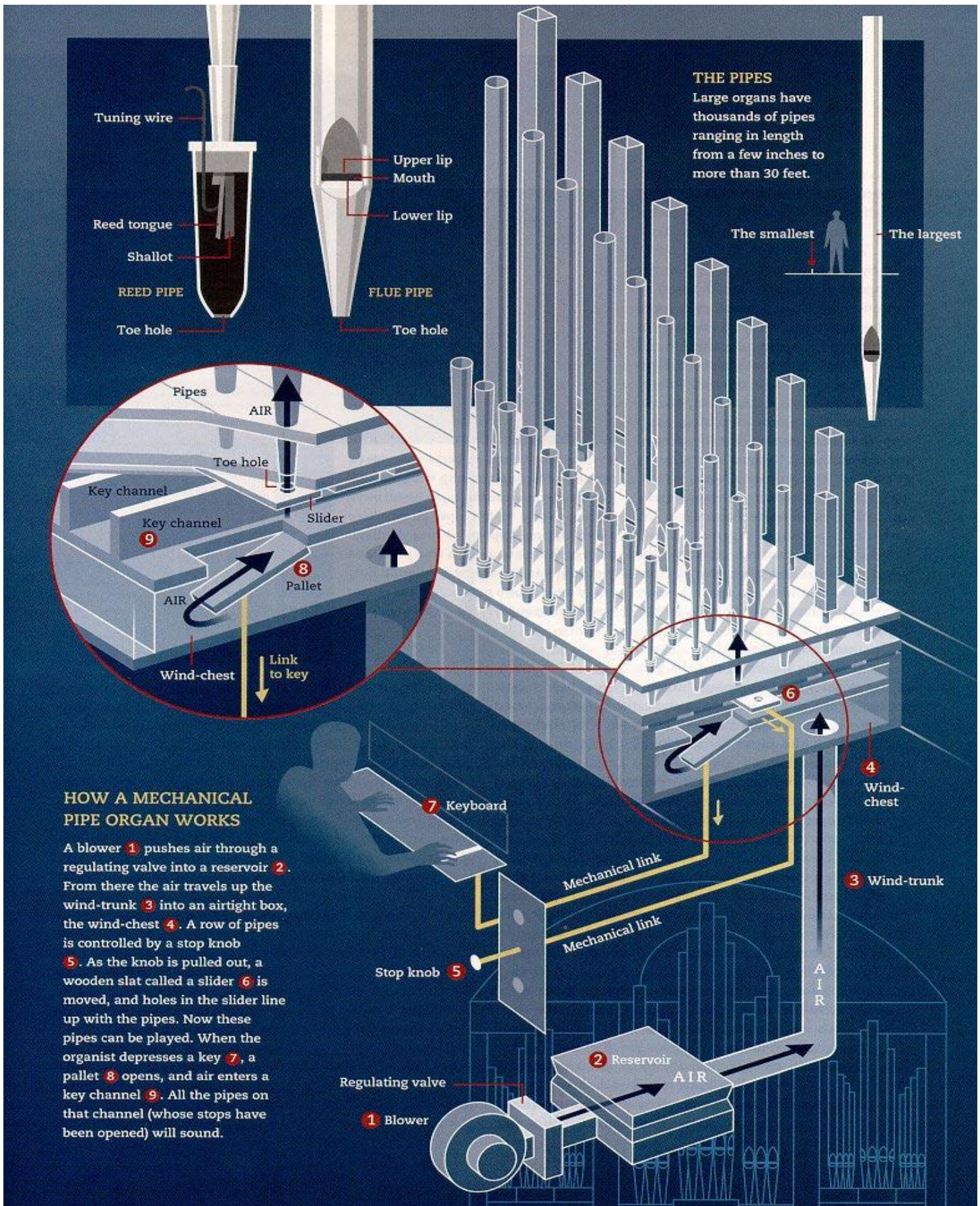
The Pipe Organ is Historic

Grace Lutheran is a registered historic landmark, but more importantly, we are a historic Lutheran church that seeks to faithfully proclaim the Good News of Jesus in such a manner that those who went before us would actually recognize *our* church as *their* church. Many years ago in an effort to sound cool and attract new members to the LCMS, some churches ran ads that said, "Not your grandfather's church." We at Grace Lutheran not only want to be your grandfather's church, but your great-great-great-grandfather's church!

While it is possible to turn any liturgy into traditionalism (the dead faith of the living), what we are advocating here in our use of the historic liturgy and traditional music is what historian Jaroslav Pelikan calls "the living faith of the dead." As Pelikan insists, tradition has the capacity to develop while still maintaining its identity and continuity. Our historic liturgy and music is one of the most important reasons we are a multi-generational church. I don't have to run three worship services catering to the needs of target demographics, which only serves to divide the church. Instead, we execute our historic liturgy and sing our traditional hymns to the best of our ability, and we have been blessed to see multi-generational families sitting, kneeling, and standing to pray, praise, and confess the truths of the faith together.

The tradition of our music serves as a means of relating to the present through contact with both the practices of the past and our collective hope for the future. It places us into the story of God's people and stirs our sense of belonging to a continuing fellowship that stretches throughout time and space.

HOW THE ORGAN WORKS



THE STEPS NEEDED TO GET THERE

PHASE I - CONSOLE REPLACEMENT

This is where the organist sits and controls the sounds and volume that the organ is capable of producing. Each set of pipes are represented on the console in a series of buttons called “Stops”. Stops are pulled out and pushed in to change the various sounds that the pipes produce. Pedals, which resemble a car accelerator are controlled by the organist’s feet which open and close shades in the front of the chambers (the rooms behind the pipes on the wall). Closing the shades will decrease the volume of the sound in the Sanctuary, opening them will increase the sound.

Why do we need a new console?

A Digital Control and Electrical Switching System is located inside the console and is the “brains” of the organ. Everything that organist does to control the organ goes through this digital system which has been nothing but a problem for the past 20 years. For example, the digital system allows for 128 levels of memory (programmable settings which allows the organist to switch to different stops quickly). The memory system has failed and presently provides for 1 level of memory. Also, this system has been responsible for the intermittent sets of pipes failing to play, and in the alternative, having pipes play when they’re not supposed to. The entire digital system will be replaced with one from a different manufacturer, that has been used on various organs in the city (the Spreckels organ for one) and is tried and true.



Our organ also has 5 “Divisions”. They are: the “Swell” (stops and pipes that are accessed by playing the top keyboard on the console); the “Great” (stops and pipe that are accessed by playing the middle keyboard); the “Choir” (stops and pipes that are accessed by playing the bottom keyboard), and; the “Pedal” (stops and pipes that are accessed by playing the pedalboard with your feet). The organ also has a division called the “Positiv”. These pipes are located in the rear mezzanine, however, they do not have a specific place where they are played due to the limitations of our present console. Therefore, in order access these pipes, there are what’s known as a “coupler” which directs those pipes to be played on a specific keyboard. Replacing the console will also solve this limitation problem as there will be a keyboard (and pedalboard) available for each division.

Approximate cost \$120,000

Phase II

Replaster the Organ Chambers

The rooms where the pipes are housed are called “Chambers”. There are 3 Chambers in the front of the Sanctuary, 2 of which are behind the pipes on the wall, and the third above the Chancel. The plaster in each of the rooms has deteriorated over the years and is falling off the wall. Falling plaster can damage a pipe by either hitting it or falling inside of it.

Relocate the pipes in the pedal division to the present Choir Chamber.

Did you know that in one of the organ expansions that they ran out of room to house the pipes? To accommodate the majority of the pedal division, they located the pedal pipes in the closet behind the pulpit. The only way for the sound to get out is through a louvered door across from the Sacristy. Consequently, if you’re standing in the hallway when the organ is being played, you have a nice bass sound, but in the Sanctuary, not so much. These pipes will be moved up to the present choir chamber so that they will actually speak into the room. The chamber will need to be expanded to accommodate those pipes, so the new chamber will encompass the closet presently in the Men’s Room upstairs.

Replace or Re-leather Wind Chests

All of the wind chests in each of the divisions (except the Positiv) need to be re-leathered or replaced. What is a Wind Chest you might ask? The top of the wind chest is what the pipes sit on. They have a series of holes in the top panel that each pipe sets in exactly and are arranged by rank (a rank is a set of pipes that play one instrumental sound). Beneath the top panel is a box that expands with air when the organ is turned on. When a note on the keyboard is played, a door underneath a particular pipe is opened and the air is allowed to go through the pipe, making it sound. The air is housed in the wind chest under the top panel of pipes. We have several issues with the Wind Chests. First, the Wind Chests are sealed with leather so air in the reservoir cannot escape. All of the leather in the Swell, Great, Choir and Pedal divisions has deteriorated resulting in massive air leaks (which is why the organ is turned off during the Sermon). Further, each time the organ was expanded, different types of chests were used. This has resulted in different systems of opening the

THE STEPS NEEDED TO GET THERE

“doors” under the pipes. For example in the Choir Division, there are 3 different types of chests. Each work a little differently causing some pipes to speak before others. These Wind Chests would be completely replaced so that each would be the same type allowing the pipes to speak in unison.

Re-voice Choir and Pedal pipes

Each builder has their own tastes when it comes to how a particular stop should sound. This is called “voicing”. This is not unlike different companies who make, say, flutes. A Gemeinhardt flute sounds markedly different than one made by Yamaha, even though they are both flutes. Voicing an organ is similar in the fact that each builder decides how they want a particular rank to sound. The Grace organ has been expanded on 4 different occasions with 4 different builders. Each has left their own mark on the pipes they added to the organ. The problem here is, some of the pipes voicing, doesn’t work in concert with pipes that were voiced by other builders. For example, the Spanish Trumpets were added by one of the builders, but they weren’t voiced to work in concert with the rest of the organ. When the Positiv Division was restored in 2010, Lyle Blackinton revoiced the Spanish Trumpets and they are now fully usable. Revoicing the Choir and Pedal Division pipes will take place in this phase.

Approximate cost \$180,000

Phase III

Wind Chests under Great Division pipes replaced

We have the same situation in the Great Chamber with the Wind Chests as the Choir and Pedal. These chests will be re-leathered or replaced during this phase.

Re-voice Great pipes

The same process with re-voicing the Great Division pipes as the Choir and Pedal will occur during this phase. Just as an aside, re-voicing involves minutely changing the tonal quality of each individual pipe. This is obviously very labor intensive considering there are hundreds of pipes in each division.

Expression shades fixed/replaced

The shades in the front of the Swell Division and Choir Division are only partially working. These shades open and close when the organist wants to control the volume of the pipes. The shades in neither chamber close all the way, which forces the organist to use different stops to control the volume, rather than the shades. The control mechanisms will be replaced during this phase and broken shades will be replaced. Also, a shade will be added the Great Chamber allowing the volume to be controlled in that division as well. This will make the organ much more versatile.

If funds are available, it would be ideal to complete Phase II and Phase III at the same time.

Approximate cost \$150,000

Phase IV

Wind Chests under Swell Division pipes replaced

Same as the other divisions. The Swell Division will be completed in this phase.

Re-voice Swell Pipes

The same process of re-voicing will occur on the Swell Division pipes during this phase.

Approximate cost \$150,000

SUCCESS!

ORGAN DEDICATION AND BANQUET

- 1913 The mother church, Redeemer Lutheran in St. Louis sent an organ for our new church, the first English speaking Lutheran church west of St. Louis.
- 1920 An early emphasis was placed on the music program of the congregation.
- 1925 A vested choir was organized
- 1930 The Spencer 3-manual, 13-ranks liturgical pipe organ was most generously given by Miss Agnes L. Frisuis as a memorial to her mother.
- 1944 The original Carillon Bells were dedicated to the men and women who served in our military.
- 1958 The organ was enlarged to 20 ranks.
- 1960 The Coronation Carillon was purchased and installed.
- 1968 The organ was completely rebuilt, revoiced and increased to 43 ranks, 2611 pipes and 34 stops. The plan is to add 58 Spanish trumpets.
- 1998 Choirfest featuring Grace's five daughter churches.
- 2002 Designated funds from members allowed the refurbishment of the organ. The ranks were increased to 67.
- 2007 The grand piano was purchased with funds from the Van Dorn Estate.
- 2011 Refurbishment of the organ. Relocation of the organ to the refurbished mezzanine.



Grace Lutheran organist in 1932:
Madeline Andre Biederman

How the pipe organ works?

A pipe organ produces sound by air vibrations created in an organ pipe, which is controlled by the organist from a keyboard. Sound is air that is vibrating. It's like when you blow across the top of a soda bottle- it makes a "note", a sound that has a specific frequency of vibration called pitch. Similarly, one organ pipe produces one tone at one pitch and since there is just one pipe for each note, a keyboard with 61 notes (5 octaves) would have 61 pipes, one for each note. The one set of pipes for each note on the keyboard makes just one kind of sound. The organ will have several sets of pipes; each of these sets of pipes is called a "rank", which can make different sounds. If a keyboard of 61 notes controls a group of 10 ranks of pipes, there will be 610 pipes playable from that keyboard. There are many more pipes in an organ than the ones you typically see.

Would a new electronic organ be better?

With modern digital technology, electronic organs have improved greatly. However, just because something has a computer in it, it doesn't mean it's better. Digital sound samples from real pipes are used now to create the sounds, but one must still pay attention to the balance of sound within an individual rank, between ranks in one division, and between divisions.

What is a "stop"?

In very early organs, all the ranks of pipes were played together and there was no way to separate which types of ranks were used. It's sort of like a big choir where everyone sings together and there weren't any solo voices. Over time, there was a mechanism invented called a slider that was used to stop or isolate a ranks of pipes. The slider was a thin piece of material with holes in it that would run cross-wise to the channels and be underneath the pipes. At the organ console, a lever would move this slider between two positions- one where the holes would line up and allow all the pipes in a rank to receive air from the channels and another where the holes would not line up and thus block the air flow. Because the historical precedence was to have all the ranks on, the slider was viewed as stopping the sounding of pipes.

Grace Lutheran Organ Restoration Concert

Friday Nov. 1, 2019 @ 7 pm

World-renowned and San Diego Civic Organist
Raúl Prieto Ramirez



Raúl Prieto Ramírez is the first Spanish organist in recent times to establish himself among the elites of the international concert scene. "His powerful personality, passionate expressiveness, gift for communication, and outstanding technique make him shine in a wide range of repertoire and styles" (Los Angeles Philharmony).

His joy is making great music exciting and accessible for everyone – especially kids – and he is well known for being one of the few concert organists who performs from memory. His powerful personality, passionate expressiveness, gift for communication and outstanding technique make him shine in a wide range of repertoire and styles. Critics have praised his performances at major venues all over the world as "simply awe-inspiring," "electrifying," "colossally talented," "fearless," and "audience rose to its feet with applause at every opportunity."

"As I became aware of my talent at age 15, I felt the impulse to serve this world making music come alive and shine in the spirit of every human being. As I embraced such a commitment, I never could have dreamed of a better place and better people to share my art with than those of San Diego," says Prieto Ramírez.

*Donations to the organ restoration project
are appreciated and gladly accepted!*

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
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HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- **Volunteer!**
- Do you have a vacation home to giveaway for a weekend?
- How about a spa getaway package?
- A BBQ dinner in your home?
- Does your business offer a valuable service?
- SD Padre baseball tickets?
- Babysitting services?
- A vehicle that is not used and still running?

There are so many ways to help with the organ restoration project in addition to financial giving. Plans are in the works for a festive gala and dinner on November 16, 2019. The gala will be a major fundraiser and will feature a live auction, silent auction, and balloon pop arch. Items are needed for the these events. If you have gift cards, new gift items that can be blended to make awesome gift packages, or large prize donations, we will gladly accept these items. In case you can't think of what items we might use, just ask Betty Burke at: unadillarose@gmail.com or Gretchen Jordan at: gjordan@gracesandiego.com.



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The Reverend
Brian W. Thomas

The Reverend
Gleason Snashall

Deaconess
Doris Snashall

Music Director
Michael Burke

Office Manager
Gretchen Jordan

Divine Service
10:00 am
Through the summer
September 8
8:00 and 10:30 am

Augsburg Academy
9:30 am

Nursery available



Preschool Director
Rexanna Blas

UPCOMING EVENTS



Private tours of the organ and pipes - Refreshments will be served.

Sunday, September 15 at 12:30 pm

Tuesday, September 24 at 11:30 pm

Friday, September 27 at 6:30 pm

Pledge cards and donations - early September

Organ Concert featuring Raúl Prieto Ramirez - Nov 1, 2019

Cocktails & Hors d'oeuvres

Concert

Meet the Organist

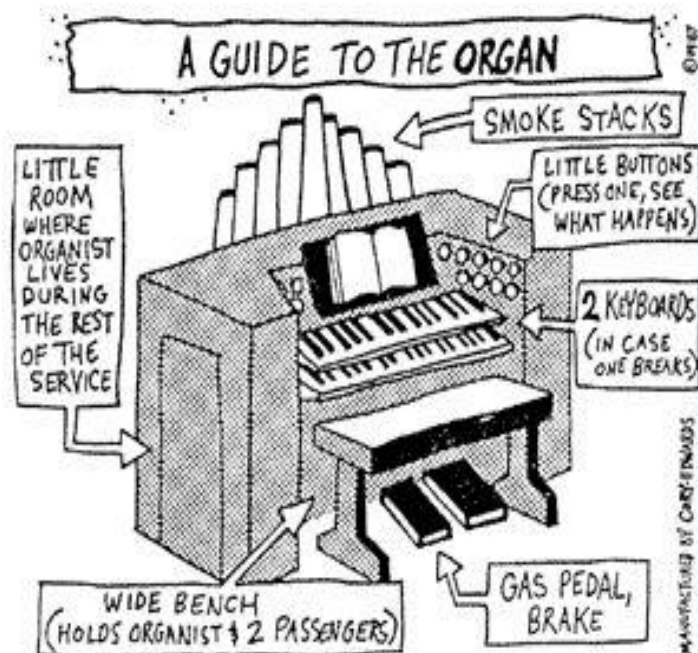
Festive Gala and Dinner - Nov. 16, 2019

Cocktails & Hors d'oeuvres

Silent Auction

Entertainment & Live Auction

Dress: Semi-formal festive/black tie optional



Look for Cary Edwards at <http://www.cleancomedians.com>

For more information about pipe organs, how they work and the restoration process visit:: www.pjmorgans.com
www.agohq.org/young-persons-guide/
www.lawrencephelps.com/Documents/Articles/Beginner/pipeorgans101.html