

Frequently Asked Questions

concerning the organ at Calvary Church

Are there young people being trained to play the organ? Will there be someone able to play it in the future?

Though numbers of organ students are somewhat fewer than in past decades, music schools around the country remain strong with vibrant music programs, including organ students. There are many qualified organists coming up today throughout the country. Churches with minimal organ use tend to have more trouble finding organists because the salaries are not competitive.

There is, however, competition for quality organist and/or music director positions, especially in areas like Frederick with growing a population as well as its proximity to Baltimore and Washington DC. From this perspective, a fine organ would insure the widest possible selection of organ candidates in the future. Likewise, Calvary would also be better able take an active role in attracting and encouraging young organists through planned activities and concerts.

How will organ casework affect the air conditioning?

As plans develop for the organ, consultation with the proper air conditioning expert will go hand in hand with the design of the organ casework. The a/c is so strong that most of the concern is for the protection of the organ. However, consultation with experts may suggest some modification such as directing the air more towards the center as it exits the vents to insure it passes across the chancel. It is not certain that anything will need to be done at this point.

Casework helps in two ways, the back panel, being solid, would help keep the air from blowing directly on the pipes, and larger pipes in the front of the casework are not affected as quickly as all the small pipes exposed to the air in our current situation. We are fortunate that organ builders have not insisted on re-routing the a/c vents.

How do we fund this project?

The Organ Committee was not given the task of figuring out how to pay for a new pipe organ. They were asked to consider the current instrument, come up with a list of

requirements that the organ needs to meet, and make recommendations about the best way to proceed. Should the church council decide to move forward with the committee's recommendation, it will be necessary to set up a new committee to investigate options for raising the necessary funds.

There is good reason to think that a reasonable plan can be put together to fund a new pipe organ. The current membership and friends of the congregation might work together and to walk by faith to raise the money.

Calvary Church has undertaken various projects in the past that are comparable in size or larger, including air conditioning the main building, replacing the slate roof and building the Calvary Trust Fund to its current level.

A new pipe organ would be an investment in Calvary's future. Its life span would exceed the next several generations of Calvary's members – more than 100 years, and with proper maintenance and care, far beyond that.

Are there other big projects or repairs expected in the next 3 to 5 years?

This has been a project that has been under consideration for a number of years. As the current organ fails or requires expensive repairs, the need to take action becomes more pressing. The Board of Trustees is aware of other projects that will need funding over the next few years. The projects range in urgency and expense. The Trustees are working on creating a detailed 5-year plan for repairs and renovation projects that includes estimates. This will allow the church leadership and members to know how the purchase of a new organ might fit with other capital expenses we can anticipate.

Are there any parts of the current organ that can be used in a new organ? Is there any value that we can recapture from the current organ?

Generally speaking, there is little value in an old organ. When churches do obtain a "used" organ, it is usually an organ of outstanding quality that must then be rebuilt to fit into the new space. The cost then approaches that of a new organ anyway. As with most churches making this decision, it is often of greater worth to retain any pipework of value to incorporate into the new instrument. Knowing that some of our old organ "lives on" in the new one can also bring value and meaning to the congregation.

How long would it take to have a new organ?

Assuming that we signed a contract and had the funding plan in place, the actual design, building and installation of the new instrument would likely take 18 months. Most of the

work takes place offsite. The installation of the organ at Calvary Church would take about six weeks depending on the scope of the project. The timing would be estimated by the organ builder before the contract is signed. During the installation, we would be without an organ and there would be some areas of the sanctuary that would not be available for seating for weekly worship services.

What happens if we do nothing?

As the Organ Committee Report says, "If nothing is done, the organ will continue to fail". The organ has multiple major problems that need to be addressed, and many are beyond the normal scope of a renovation. The cost to keep the organ operational, such as it is, will become increasingly expensive. The committee is convinced that the best use of church resources would be to move towards replacement.

How might a new organ get used for organ events beyond Sunday worship?

Beyond the important contribution the new organ would make in worship, it would significantly increase the opportunities for concerts as additional outreach to the community. Other organ events, such as American Guild of Organist meetings and events, and other educational events for adults and students, and clinics/workshops would also be sought in Calvary's sanctuary. Such events would be granted through the normal process of building request and church calendar considerations.

So, what's next?

The presentation provided by the Organ Committee represents the culmination of the committee's work since 2013. It is now up to the Church Council to receive the report and act on the recommendation, namely to approve of the concept outlined by the Organ Committee and proceed with the recommendation to replace the current pipe organ with a new pipe organ. The Church Council will take up this matter at its next meeting, June 4.

There will be several more decisions to be made before any contract is signed or work is begun. For one thing, we need to come up with a plan for funding the project. If the Church Council feels that the funding is in order, it will then be necessary to choose a particular organ builder and work with that builder to settle on a design, price and timetable. There will be a series of decisions to be made and input and comments will be welcome along the way.

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