**Update on the Organ Transplant Forum**

Organ consultant Dr. Wayne Wagner led a 90-minute discussion of our organ on Sunday, October 27, with about thirty members in attendance. By all reports, his presentation and comments were well-received and informational. Enjoy selected points made during the discussion:

**Music and the Organ in Lutheran Worship**

* Music in Lutheran worship has a special role: to proclaim, to confess, to praise in a truly Lutheran manner, presenting sin and grace.
* The organ is a highly developed technology which efficiently and effectively serves the purpose of music in Lutheran worship. Efficient, because only one person is needed to play it. Effective, because of the science of how pipe sound is produced and spreads, enveloping and thus encouraging the singing congregation.
* Digitally produced sound (electronic organ) today is much advanced, but doesn't quite reach the pinnacle achieved over centuries by the pipe organ.

**Our Current Pipe Organ**

* Originally installed in 1919 by a now unknown builder
* Typical of organ installations of that era
* 10 ranks ( a series of similar-sounding pipes) and 579 separate pipes
* 1969: Converted from mechanical to electric action, and new console (keyboard and cabinetry)
* 2016-2017: About $35,000 rebuild of the control system inside the console – by Nolte Organ Building of Milwaukee
* The leathers (hundreds of pieces of leather which play a key role in a pipe organ) are about 50 years old and may need replacing soon.
* Insurance replacement value – about $300,000
* Used market value – possibly only $5000 to $10,000 because there is currently a flooded market.

**Should We Move the Pipe Organ to the New Church?**

* Could be moved as is (although it's not a historically significant instrument in the organ world) at a cost of possibly $20,000
* Lacks several stops or ranks (tuned sets of pipes) considered important in worship today. Two or three additional stops might be suggested at a cost of about $10,000 each.
* Still, “It does a lot of things very well. I think your organ is worth keeping,” Wagner said, because
  + ...it's still relevant to the 21st century.
  + ...it still leads singing.
  + ...it is an important part of the history of St. John.
  + ...over time a pipe organ is cheaper than a digital organ.

**What Other Options Do We Have?**

* Re-purpose a different (larger?) vintage organ
* Purchase a new pipe organ – $350,000 to “the sky is the limit”
* Purchase a new non-pipe (digital or electronic) organ – $60,000 to $80,000. This will need to be replaced every 25 years or so.

**A Recommendation from Dr. Wagner**

* Ask two organ builders to evaluate the condition of parts (such as the leathers) not rebuilt in 2017, to prioritize expansion options, and to submit bids for moving costs and for the repair and expansion recommendations made.

(Release #12 November II 2019)