

AVENEWS

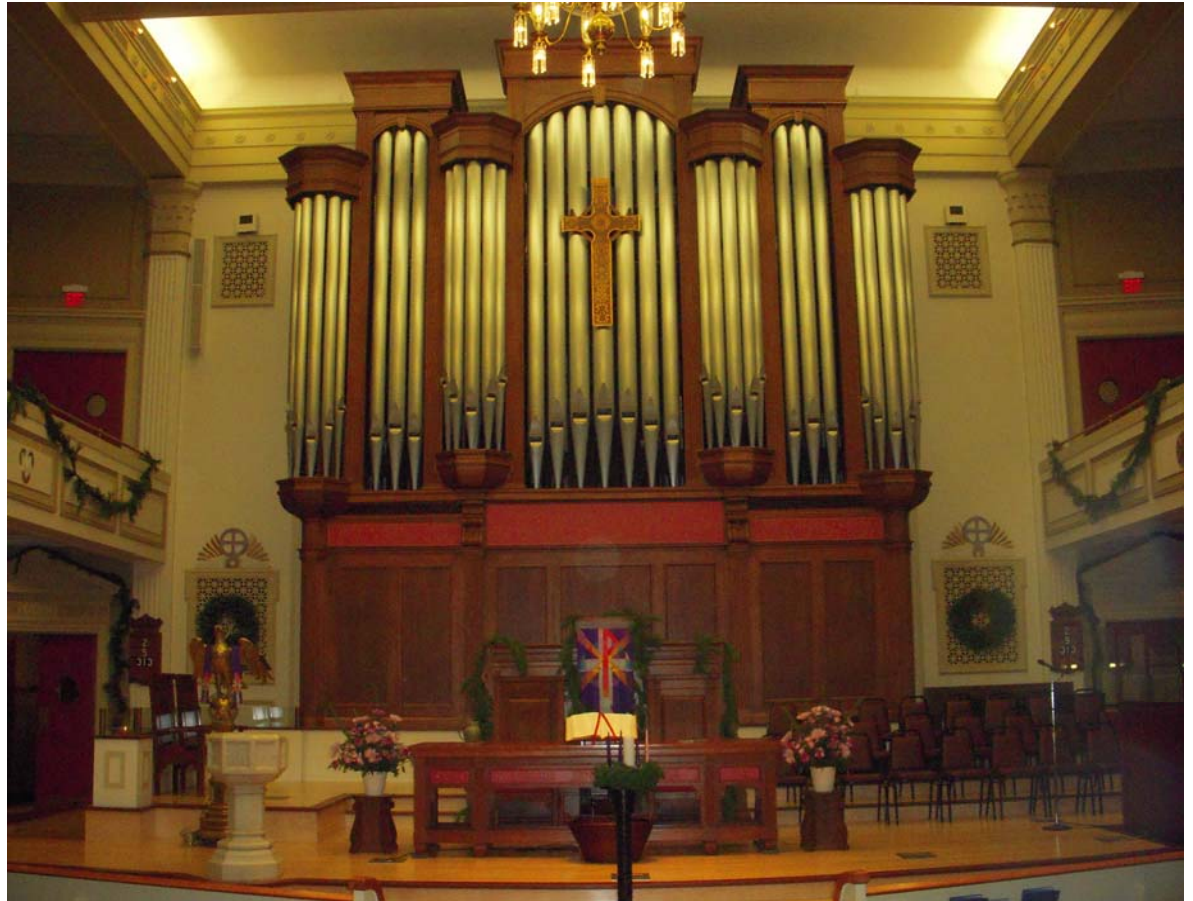
Newsletter of THE NEW YORK AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Washington, DC

Hallelujah, New Organ Nears Completion!

By Doug Porter

For the last two months, the NYA family has had the unique opportunity of tracking progress on the installation of our new organ. As the photo to the right shows, the organ is almost finished!

The rather awesome framework rising up to the top of the Chancel came first. Then wind chests were connected to the wind blower and electric wiring snaked throughout the structure. The shades (louvers) that control the sound of the Swell and Choir chambers were then installed, obscuring our view of the interior. Things really got exciting when workers began installing the organ casework and the first ranks of pipes, starting with the awesome façade pipework.



Organ photos by Julia Hiemstra

During most of November and now into December, visitors during the week can see specialists putting finishing touches on groups of pipes spread around the Chancel platform. Some pipes are

(see Organ, Page 8)

Together in Silence

By Elizabeth Young

Reverend Roger Gench led ten of us on a silent retreat at Meadowkirk -- the first silent retreat at NYA in over twenty years! On Tuesday morning, November 17th, ten of us piled into vans and cars and drove down to Meadowkirk and its 350 acres of land to begin a period of meditative silence and reflection. We had the new inn and lodge all to ourselves, complete with a fireplace, plentiful food, a chapel with high ceilings and a great view of the mountains, and lots of plush chairs.

Loaded down with Bibles, spiritual reading materials, and spiral notebook journals, our little contingent first met with Rev. Gench at 11:30 as we outlined how we would



The labyrinth at Meadowkirk

Focusing on Advent

by Meg House



Thirty-six NYAPCers, ranging in age from 1 to "senior," gathered for a snowy Saturday at Meadowkirk December 6 for an Advent Retreat. The retreat focused on the theme of gifts.

Those who stayed overnight began the retreat with a "white elephant" gift exchange. (David Clark ended up with the Frisbee, Bob Doan looked marvelous in his sun hat, and in the end, Elizabeth Kelly-Doan had the miniature manger scene.) Free time included a game of Scrabble, a jigsaw puzzle and a showing of *Miracle* on 34th Street.

Saturday morning, the whole intergenerational group had a lively discussion and presentations on how the various characters in the Christmas story respond to the gift

they are given. What do Mary and Joseph do? Zechariah? Herod? How about the animals, the shepherds, the wise men? What about the angel Gabriel? Herod was a particularly popular character.

Linda Lader led us all in a discussion of our favorite and least favorite gifts (Garfield telephone, anyone?) and on the importance of being thankful. Children then worked with Rev. Tara S. McCabe, making holiday thank you cards to share with our Radcliffe Room guests, while Rev. Gench led the adults in a fascinating sharing of family gift giving traditions ... and a discussion of the gift of the incarnation.

The group met at the Inn at Meadowkirk, a facility that includes 20 motel-like rooms, along with a comfortable seating area around a fireplace and a large conference room, complete with white board.

Even though we had to shorten the retreat because of the snow, we still had time for fellowship and snowball fights and lots of singing. It was a wonderful way to observe the Advent season.

Together in Silence (from page 1)

proceed for the next 26 hours. We agreed that outside of two short meetings the next morning, we would remain in silence, even throughout the meal times.

Sound intimidating? For some, I think the idea of silence that long does. But all of us quickly found that Meadowkirk's beautiful surroundings and rolling hills, with layers of leaves rustling underfoot, were comforting and soothing, and we all fell into a state of relaxation very fast. The day seemed to fly by as each of us found our niches and routines. Rev. Gench gave us some guidelines to follow from St. Ignatius, but we also relied on books about prayer, spiritual journeys and disciplines.

Several shared the following experiences at our closing session:

- ◆ Journaling that opened up a plethora of thoughts and feelings;
- ◆ Reflection on passages from Isaiah that took on new meaning;
- ◆ Long sessions of prayer while gazing at the beautiful cross in the new chapel;
- ◆ Finding deep inner peace just sitting at the pond, leafless trees reflected in the still water;
- ◆ Spying a bald eagle flying over the creek;



- ◆ Gazing upon graceful white tailed deer leaping across the hills;
- ◆ Walking on the labyrinth, strategically set on a hillside, the stones crunching beneath our feet;
- ◆ Sitting on the rockers on the porch, watching the sun rise and set, thinking about our connectedness to past generations.

One of us celebrated her birthday on the retreat and reflected that "there aren't many better ways of celebrating one's birthday than with one's Creator."

We were together in silence, not alone, an important reminder from Roger. Even without words, we knew that we were in prayer for each other, that speaking was always an option if something really needed to be said. All of us felt enriched by the experience, aware of the need for silence in our lives.

As Rev. Gench said in his sermon in late November, we all need to take time to be quiet during Advent, even if only to focus on our breathing. We hope to have another silent retreat during Lent. Think about joining Roger and others from our community for a day of prayer and reflection. You won't regret it!

Rededication Celebration in Worship Set for Sunday, February 7

By Wilson Golden

The renovated sanctuary and new organ represent more than a decade of planning... discernment ... fundraising... construction ...worship relocation — with the end result of our fresh worship space with new light and sound. This was not an extravagant project, although worship of God is indeed worthy of our extravagance! (Remember the woman who anointed Jesus' feet before he was crucified?)

Worship is at the heart of what we do as the people of God, and the worship space and sound are important for the proclamation of the Word through music, preaching and liturgy.

A special rededication service of the sanctuary, organ and NYA's ministries is scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 7, following a luncheon that will be served in Peter Marshall Hall after an 11:00 am service. Scheduling the rededication service on Sunday afternoon will enable us to welcome the Washington faith community to celebrate with us.

This service will also commemorate NYA's 150 years as a congregation and 60 years in the current building. The service is timed to also coincide with the conclusion of the celebration of the bicentennial of Lincoln's birthday. Through this service, NYA has the opportunity to alert the wider public to NYAPC's history and our ties to Abraham Lincoln, while allowing us to reassert our witness and leadership in the nation's Capital.

Please mark your calendars now for this special event in the life of New York Presbyterian Church.

Back by Popular Demand —Dinners for Nine!

Dinners for Nine is a program where participants come together in groups of eight or nine about every two months for a potluck dinner at a member's home. A host is designated and that person determines a date for the dinner and invites the other designated participants. Generally the host provides a main course and the other participants bring side dishes, appetizer or dessert.

This once popular program is being revived because it is a wonderful way to get know other people in the congregation and to visit with long time friends.

Interested participants should contact Miriam Dewhurst (703-560-0871) or Miriam.dewhurst@gmail.com. Dinners will begin in the new year.

AVENEWS

The Newsletter of
The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church

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Next Issue and Editor: February, Meg House
Deadline for Materials: January 31, 2010

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The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church
welcomes all people
into community, worship, service and leadership.

Editors Note: You are reading a special Bonus issue of *AVE-NEWS*. While the next issue wasn't planned before February, 2010, thanks to a generous offer from NYA's printer for a free color cover and significantly reduced printing costs for this bonus issue, we were able to squeeze in a smaller, but more colorful end-of-the-year Advent issue. Thank you to contributors who turned around copy very quickly, and thank you *VIA Mailing and Printing*, for making this special issue possible.

Add a Pair to the 2009 Mitten Tree



The annual NYA Christmas Mitten Tree will be in the sanctuary through December 27. This is your opportunity to contribute mittens, gloves, scarves, hats, sleeping bags, and socks for men, women and children. These gifts will be given to the Central Union Mission and the Radcliffe Room Ministry.

CUBA Corner

By Marilyn J. Seiber

Presbyterian Women's Workshop in Cuba supported by Presbyterian Women of NYA and NCP

In April 2008, Presbyterian Women of National Capital Presbytery held its annual Spring Gathering at NYAPC and decided to give its spring donations to Presbyterian Women of Havana Presbytery. In August 2008, Anayda Diaz visited NYAPC and NCP/NYAPC hosted a luncheon for her and presented her with the gift. The following letter from Anayda on November 8 describes how Presbyterian Women of Havana used the gift:

"More than a year has passed since I visited Washington DC and shared with you in that wonderful gathering at the restaurant. I enjoyed it very much, the lunch was delicious but talking with all of you and answering your questions about our church and PW in Havana Presbytery was really a big challenge if you take in account that my English is not so well. It was a wonderful experience for me and you were very nice to me and those I was representing showing your sincere interest in our organization and in our church in Cuba.

I am sending now this message to all of you so that you will be aware of our gratitude for your economical support to PW of Havana Presbytery.

We did so much with that money. Mostly we used it to organize a "gender workshop" at The Seminary of Theology in Matanzas City about 100 miles from Havana traveling east. We invited a physiologist from the University of Havana that also leads a Family Group as and advisor and consultant. We selected three women from each church of our Presbytery and rent a bus that belongs to the Council of Churches to travel there. We also invited three women that are pastors at Luyano, Nueva Paz and Los Palos Presbyterian Churches. The idea was that the women attending this workshop will transfer what they learned to the women at their congregations, This was an idea we had since I was the president but we were able to do it finally this year in April. We want to express our gratitude to you and the Presbyterian Women you represent for your support.

Thanks again for your hospitality and your support and thank to our Lord for our relations, although our governments are not friends one to each other, we PW from USA and Cuba will continue building bridges of love and peace between our countries."

Grace and peace, Anayda Diaz Herrera

Adios Alberto! Hola Carlos!



First Secretary of the Cuban Interests Section, Alberto Prieto, (at left in the top photo above) returned home to Havana, Cuba in September with his family after serving more than eight years in Washington, D.C. Alberto has been a good friend to NYAPC hosting our music mission in January 2006 at his home for dinner, meeting mission members at the Interests Section for briefings on Cuba, and attending many NYAPC programs including the War, Peace & Justice Forums.



On September 9, members of the Cuba Working Group hosted Alberto and his family for a going-away lunch and presented him with a plaque and gifts for his family. On September 18, Cecelia and Doug Porter, Marilyn Seiber and Bill Noellert attended the Cuban Interests Section farewell party for Alberto where Marilyn again presented the NYAPC plaque to him.

On September 10, Rev. Roger Gench and Marilyn Seiber welcomed First Secretary Carlos Hurtado with Alberto to NYAPC for a tour of the church and explanation of the stained-glass windows. Carlos has assumed the duties held by Alberto, and we are pleased to have him become involved in NYA's Cuba Partners program. Sr. Hurtado has previously served with the Cuban Foreign Ministry at the Vatican and in Geneva in association with the World Council of Churches.

Cuba Partners Network Meets in Cincinnati

The PC(USA) Cuba Partners Network met in Cincinnati, October 20-22, in conjunction with PC(USA)'s *Mission Celebration '09* at a time when most of the PC(USA) mission Networks also convened. Many Cuba Network representatives attended including churches and presbyteries from Chicago, Santa Fe, Baltimore, West New Jersey, St. Augustine (FL), Southern Louisiana, Texas, Minneapolis, and National Capital Presbytery. Our special guest from Cuba was the Rev. Dr. Reinerio Arce, current Moderator of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba and Rector of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas, Cuba.

The Network's meetings began with prayer and reflection based on a presentation at the Cuba Synod meetings in January 2009 on Luke 16: 1-9 done by the Rev. Dr. Ofelia Ortega, former Rector of the seminary, and a response presented at the Network meetings by Rev. Glenn Dickson, St. Augustine Presbytery. On the last evening, Marilyn Seiber led a workshop on "Partners in Mission: A Fresh Look."

In addition to sharing updates among the U.S. Partners, Rev. Arce discussed the activities and situation of the Presbyterian Church in Cuba, its challenges and goals and how it is seeking to meet them. A large part of its ministry is training



pastors and lay members for church work, as well as finding sources of financial support. Rev. Arce also discussed central tenets of partnerships from the Cuban perspective, and that especially includes doing partnership in mission.

The Network agreed to hold the 2010 Cuba Partners Network meeting in Washington, D.C., hosted by NYAPC if that is acceptable!

Miriam's Kitchen At NYA... What's Happening?



Following a six month discernment process that involved numerous discussions with the Congregation, presentations by Miriam's Kitchen staff, negotiations between NYA and Miriam's Kitchen, and votes of support by NYA's Session and Board of

Trustees, a Memorandum of Agreement between NYA and Miriam's Kitchen was signed on June 22. This agreement outlines principals, terms and conditions under which Miriam's Kitchen will lease and renovate a substantial portion of NYA's Park Level — pending the mid-2011 conclusion of a significant fundraising campaign now being conducted by Miriam's Kitchen.

Miriam's Kitchen has set a fundraising target of \$2 million which will provide enough funds to reconstruct portions of the Park Level of NYA for use as shared space, and provide enough additional resources to ensure adequate operating income into the future.

Included in the renovation plans is a new entrance to NYA's Park level off of the Triangle Park, a new elevator to the basement level from the new Triangle Park Lobby, some reconfigured classrooms, a new commercial kitchen,

new bathrooms, and upgraded HVAC systems. Included in the renovation plan is a redesigned nursery for NYA's exclusive use. The project is being designed as a LEEDS (environmentally sustainable) certified project. Reconstruction is tentatively scheduled for the summer of 2011.

NYA and Miriam's Kitchen will next meet in May 2010 to discuss Miriam's Kitchen fundraising successes and determine the continued viability of the project. In the meantime, in February, 2010, in response to growing needs and growing numbers of homeless, Miriam's Kitchen will begin a temporary evening meal program at Western Presbyterian Church. This program will eventually be moved to NYA if Miriam's Kitchen fundraising efforts are successful and the proposed project is able to go forward.

Help NYA Organizations with the CFC

If you plan to contribute through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) of the National Capital Area, please consider giving to these NYA-related organizations:

New York Avenue Foundation (CFC # 25839)
McClendon Center (CFC #67679)

The campaign deadline has been extended to January 15, 2010.

Christian Perspectives on Immigration

By Marilyn J. Seiber



Donald M. Kerwin, Jr., Vice President for Programs at the Migration Policy Institute, was the Adult Christian Education kick-off speaker for the 2009-2010 theme, “Christian Perspectives on Immigration.” Prior to joining MPI, Mr. Kerwin served as Executive Director for 15 years at the Catholic Legal Immigration Network where he coordinated the nation’s largest political asylum, detainee services, immigration appeals, and naturalization programs.

Mr. Kerwin began his presentation on “Immigration from a Faith-Based Perspective” by referring to the Bible’s questions and themes in the New and Old Testaments asking “Who is our neighbor?” and reminding us that migration is a common theme throughout the Bible—exodus and exile, the holy family to Bethlehem and Egypt—all evidence that migration is a Judeo-Christian tradition! Another common theme is that of welcoming the stranger and hospitality. This leads to our identification as brothers and sisters, as “us” instead of “them,” and we then will begin to see migration and immigration as an opportunity to build the “human family” rather than a cause of division. It will also bring us to understand that all of God’s family want the

same thing as we move through life as pilgrims on a spiritual journey to our final home: security, supporting our families, contributing to our communities and nation, and practicing our faith.

Mr. Kerwin addressed the issue of “illegal aliens”—a term that he does not use or like—saying that there cannot be illegal people, though people may break the law or practice illegal migration. He maintains that the key is to enforce our laws more effectively and humanely, and reform immigration laws so they respect human rights and are stable, fair, and consistently applied. We also should consider that we have been asking the wrong questions about illegal immigration. Rather we should ask: Why do people risk their lives to migrate? How do immigrants contribute to the good of our nation through service, labor, community and families? What is it about our laws that do not work or are not enforced humanely and proportionately to the situation?

The religious community—and the Presbyterian Church is part of this campaign—favors a broad approach to reforming U.S. immigration laws, including changing the ways we legally admit people, allowing certain immigrants to legalize their status over time, requiring people to learn English, and enforcing the laws.

Presbyterian Speakers Highlight Mission and Labor Rights

By Marilyn J. Seiber

Presbyterian guest speakers led Adult Christian Education classes in October on PC(USA) mission work in Taiwan and on labor rights of Immoaklee farm workers in Florida. Choon and Yen Hee Lim are a PC(USA) mission team to Taiwan who work with the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan’s Aboriginal College Ministry. Choon has worked since 1999 in Hualien with two universities and four colleges with campus ministries. Yen Hee is a registered nurse who works with handicapped children and in a mobile clinic traveling with a medical staff to remote mountain villages. Choon, an ordained Presbyterian minister, gave a fascinating presentation on the challenges, joys, and successes of their work with students.



Rev. Noelle Damico leads a national campaign on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to improve the labor conditions of the Immoaklee workers in Florida. Her work has resulted in national agreements with major food providers—McDonald’s, Burger King, Taco Bell—in providing fair pay and better working conditions for the thousands of laborers who pick tomatoes not only in Florida but in California and other major U.S. growing regions. Her presentation on the story of how workers organized and planned to gain labor rights was inspiring and a lesson on the influence and impact that the Presbyterian Church (USA) and its leadership has on improving human rights and welfare.



Is Christmas Blue This Year?

By Tamara Saltman

Sooner or later it happens to most of us. The Christmas season comes around, and we're supposed to be happy and joyful, laughing and chatting and running here and there celebrating everything in sight. But in fact, you feel anything but joyful and want nothing more than to hide under the bed for the next month until it's all over. There are many possible reasons for this feeling; today I want to talk a bit about one of them: grief.

Grief is a normal reaction of loving human beings to deaths and other losses. But let's be honest: normal it is, enjoyable it is not. I could write pages about theories of what happens, and most of us could contribute stories about how we and our families have coped well and not-so-well with the experience. I hope to have some of those conversations with you over the coming months and years. But in the meantime, I wanted to share a few thoughts.

Is someone you love or care for grieving this season? The best gift you can give is the gift of presence. Spend the time to truly listen, and leave your own stories and needs out of the conversation for the moment. Most people won't remember a word you said but they'll remember and be thankful you were there.



Over the Coffee Cups

By Mary Anne Davis

Evelyn Ying and Greg, Henry, and Olivia Lewis traveled to Taiwan and Japan this past summer to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of Evelyn's parents who are from Taiwan. The first trip to Asia for Henry and Olivia, they enjoyed being with extended family, experiencing Taiwanese culture, and visiting the villages where their grandparents once lived and historic landmarks of the tropical island. The Lewis-Ying family hiked several spectacular trails in Taroko Gorge National Park, with its steep marble gorges and waterfalls in midst of green mountains, and peaceful trails along Sun Moon Lake. The family visited the Presbyterian Church where Evelyn's mother attended in her youth, along with many temples and museums. Before heading home, the Lewis-Ying family stopped in Japan, where they visited Evelyn's uncle. They had great fun staying in traditional Japanese inns with hot springs and seeing the wonders of Tokyo and Kyoto. This trip will provide the Lewis-Ying family with many terrific memories of family and adventure for years to come!

Watch for a longer column in February with more Member sharing!
BCNU

Are you or your family grieving this holiday season? There is no right or wrong way to do it, only ways that work better for you. Some tips are:

- ◆ make times to grieve and times to celebrate
- ◆ balance a few obligations with some time for doing what feels right in the moment
- ◆ blend old and new rituals to respect both your past and your present

And most importantly, if you are grieving or supporting someone who is grieving, know that you are not alone. Our pastors and deaconesses are available, our congregation has many people who can help, and our community has resources including pamphlets, websites, and counseling (available on a sliding scale based on income), all designed to give you ideas and support.

The path of grief is not much fun, and for most of us it never truly ends, but there are things we can do to ease the path for those we care for and for ourselves. And no one need walk the path alone.

Homecoming Sunday At NYA

By Cathy Schultheis

Worship and friendship fed our souls while delicious food nourished our bodies at NYA's Homecoming Sunday, November 7.

Glen Davis coordinated a spectacular coffee hour held in the Lincoln Parlor between services. Nearly a hundred people stopped by to visit "over the coffee cups."

Immediately following the 11 am worship service over one and sixty-five members, friends and visitors gathered in the Peter Marshall Hall for a festive pot luck luncheon hosted by the Nurture Committee with Cathy and John Schultheis as coordinators. The room was decorated in a harvest theme, with garlands of autumn leaves, a scarecrow and centerpieces of teddy bears in baskets with fall flowers. Baked ham with pineapple, candied sweet potatoes and rolls were provided as a base, and 44 members brought salads, fruit, vegetables, meats and desserts to share. What a feast!

Those who participated in the coffee hour and luncheon said that the warm atmosphere of welcome and happiness at being together would long be remembered. The hum of happy voices and the sound of laughter which filled the air brought great joy to many hard-working volunteers who planned the events and served the meals. Special thanks to all who helped make Homecoming such a happy experience!

Organ Nears Completion! (from page 1)

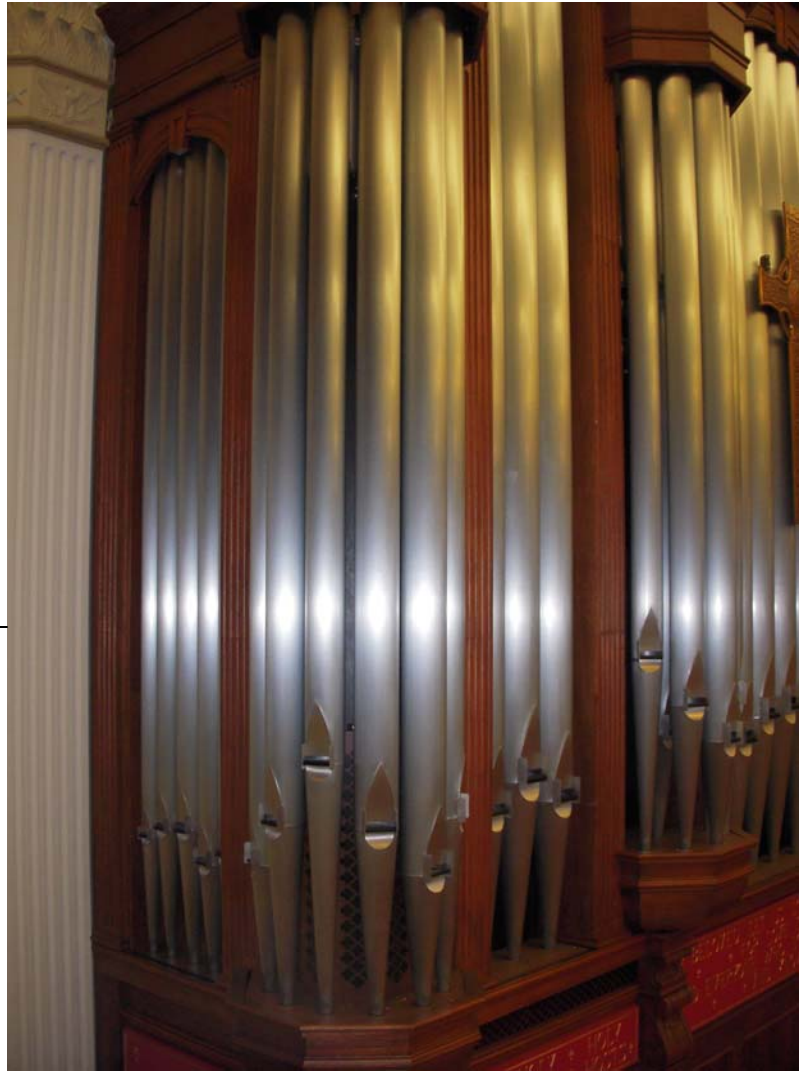
no wider than your finger and only 8 to 10 inches long. Others are 6 to 8-inch tubes that stretch for 8 or more feet. All are being groomed for great sound. Over 3,500 pipes in 618 sets (or ranks), including 12 sets of pipes from the old organ, are being shaped and tuned before installing them in the organ's four chambers.

The organ builders are making minute adjustments of the pipes to draw out the full color of each stop, whether the big pipes that will lead hymn singing or the smaller ones of many shapes that generate colorful sounds for organ solos. The experts working on them tell us that our Sanctuary is wonderfully resonant, a fact I can attest to after the "chief tuner" let me hear the full strength of the Great pipes. *Surroundsound* can't deliver more pleasing amplitude!

Capital Campaign Update

As we boldly approach the New Year and the February 7 rededication of the sanctuary and celebration of our new organ, please give your most prayerful consideration to completing your pledge or making a special year end donation to the Capital Campaign. Approximately \$60,700 in current pledges remain outstanding with another \$260,000 still needing to be raised to reach our initial Campaign goal of \$2.3 million — and that funding gap increases to \$382,500 when actual total project costs are fully included.

Thank you for all you can do to help close the gap.



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