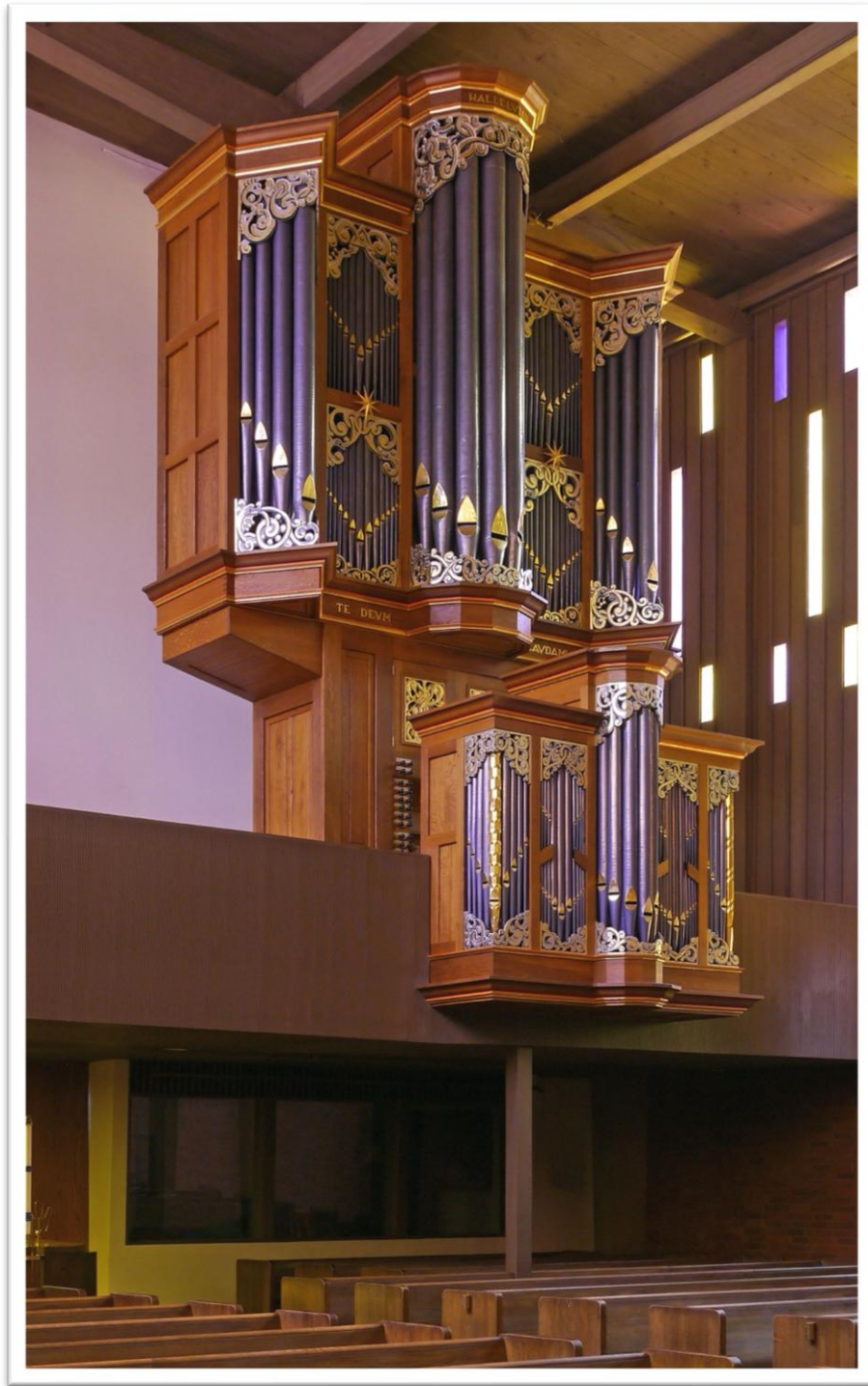


THE HISTORY OF THE BROMBAUGH ORGAN
CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, EUGENE, OREGON
SPECIAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION FOR THE CENTRALITE
1976-2026



BRIEF HISTORY OF ORGANS AT CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH -- AESC

Central Lutheran Church at 18th and Potter Streets was designed by the Italian immigrant architect, Pietro Belluschi, Dean of Architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who designed many outstanding churches and other buildings in the Northwest including San Francisco's imposing St. Mary's Cathedral (Roman Catholic) and the Juilliard School in New York City. When this sanctuary was completed in 1954, there were no additional monies available at the time to finance a pipe organ appropriate for the large new church. While the congregation met in the Parish Hall during the late 1940s, Mrs. Rikka Johnson, Ingrid Carmichael's mother (Bob Carmichael's grandmother), had donated a small, Møller *Artiste* Organ of three ranks (with about 300 pipes, slightly larger than our current chapel organ), which was used for services before the sanctuary was built. Later this organ was moved into the choir loft and served the congregation in this position for well over a decade. The Møller organ was subsequently sold to a Presbyterian Church at 38th and Hilyard and later moved to its current home at Peace Presbyterian Church on River Road. Following the Møller *Artiste* Organ, the University of Oregon loaned Central Lutheran one of their practice organs, a seven-rank Schlicker organ (with about 500 pipes) until the Brombaugh organ arrived in August 1976.

Before the commissioning of the new instrument, organ committees had made proposals to the congregation for a large pipe organ from such organ companies as Æolian Skinner, Casavant (a Canadian firm) and Holtkamp, Reuter, and Schlicker, but none of these proposals were accepted by the congregation. We have a box full of new organ proposals in our archive. Finally, in 1972, almost twenty years after the sanctuary had been built, John Brombaugh and Associates of Germantown, Ohio, visited Eugene for a congregational meeting right before an Olympic Trial Track meet at Hayward Field. At that meeting, the congregation voted to commission a two-manual (keyboards) mechanical action organ of 31 stops. During the final building stage, a third manual was added bringing the organ to 38 stops with 2827 pipes. The final project cost \$120,000 in 1976; the replacement value of the organ nowadays is well over \$1,800,000.

Many congregations have built organs -- some larger than Central's organ, but only a few of these instruments enjoy both the success of leading corporate worship as well as performing recital literature as the bold voice of the Brombaugh organ does. It would be fair to say that in 1972 Central's congregation had no idea that this decision would be an artistic creation of such visual and sonic beauty. The success of the organ fundraising drive lies with Lyle Jacobson (1919-1994) and Iris Jacobson (1919-2019), whose gentle encouragement each week during the Sunday announcements led to a generosity, which made this 20-year dream a reality.

While returning to Winter Term at the Guildhall School of Music in London in 1976, I first saw the instrument that was to come to Central Lutheran Church. Much was being said about the work of Brombaugh and Associates, so I stopped in Germantown, Ohio, to visit the shop. During my time in Ohio, I visited Brombaugh organs in Toledo and Oberlin. The organ for Central Lutheran was being built in the shop. The main case was standing to wind chest level; the upper case had not been assembled nor any pipes installed. Looking back 50 years, I did not envisage spending so many years in Eugene playing this magnificent instrument. A visit with University of Oregon faculty member John Hamilton in London while I was completing my studies there, brought me to Eugene for graduate work. I arrived in 1976 just weeks after trucks came, bringing the organ to the Northwest. Eugene has a unique environment for organists who enjoy instruments with strong historical roots. Jürgen Ahrend's largest instrument in the Western Hemisphere (3½ manuals, 38 stops) is located at the School of Music's Beall Concert Hall, a two-minute walk from Central Lutheran Church. AESC

The Building of the Organ in Germantown, Ohio (near Dayton) 1972-1976

Pictures from slides taken by Bruce Shull



A plastic enclosed tent is built around the oak organ case. A bucket of ammonia is placed in the sealed tent overnight. The fumes of ammonia works with the natural oil of the oak to create a dark, honey color oak, which looks centuries old –No stain required!

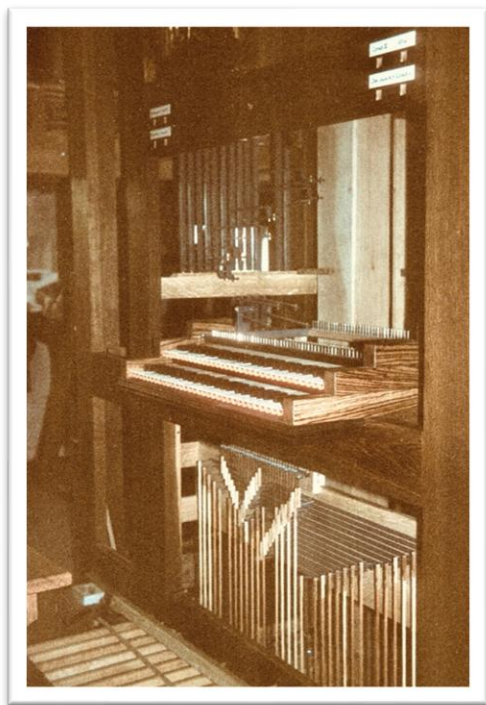
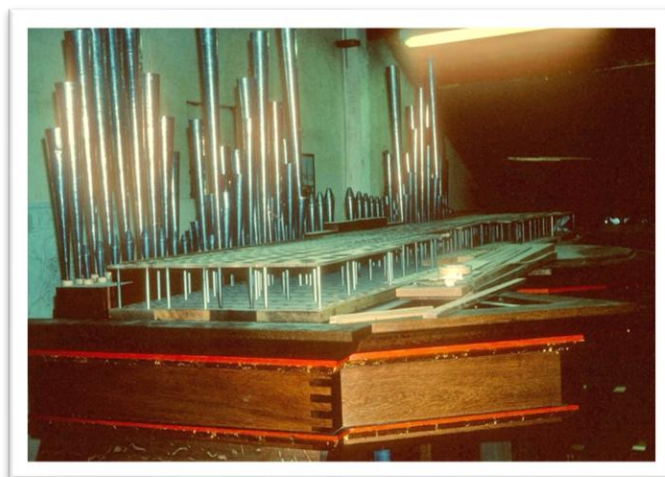


The pipes covered with a sizing compound await voicing (making them speak). Pipes are 98% lead with other trace metals to give the lead stability.



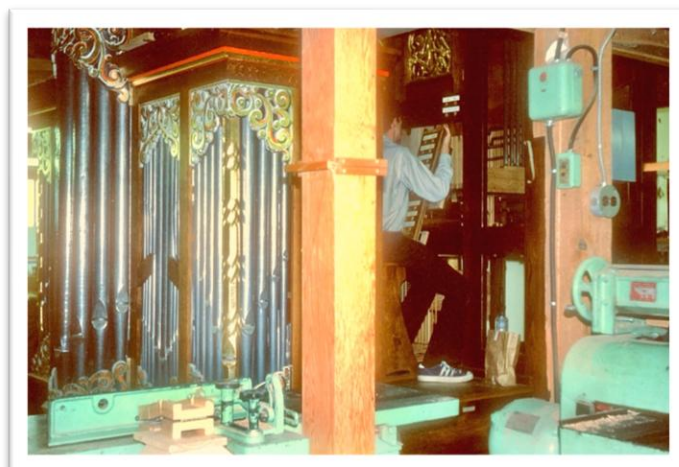
Michael Bigelow installs the sliders, which the stops move under the rows of pipes to stop or allow air up into the pipes so they speak.

Some of the reed pipes (trumpets) are installed on the main case. They need tuning when the temperature changes so they are placed on the rear so they can be easily reached. The upper walls of the main case had not been installed yet.



The keyboards (manuals) are fitted. Under the keyboards, the wooden trackers connecting the pedal board are visible. Directly above the keyboards in the center, the gray metal rods for the stops are visible. Also visible is the square wooden wind line, which carries wind up to the main organ case.

George Taylor installs the stop jambs which hold the stops on either side of the keyboard. The stops select the various pipes and sounds of the organ. John's organ shop was small in those days. The wood planer is clearly visible.





The Ruckpositive organ on the balcony rail is controlled by pallets (values) on the far right, which the keys open and close to allow the pipes to speak. Also visible is the rollerboard, which changes keyboard width of the linkage out to the full width of the organ case where the pipes stand. This is normally covered by a floor behind where the organist sits. Visible on the left is the back of the pedal board and organ bench.

George Taylor assembles the boots and shallots of the reed pipes (trumpet pipes). Each reed pipe (of which this organ has circa 400) has a brass reed that vibrates at the bottom of the pipe. The resonator stands above the shallots and affects the sound of the pipe. The brass shallots hold the vibrating reed. The machine, which punches the brass shallots, is also visible.



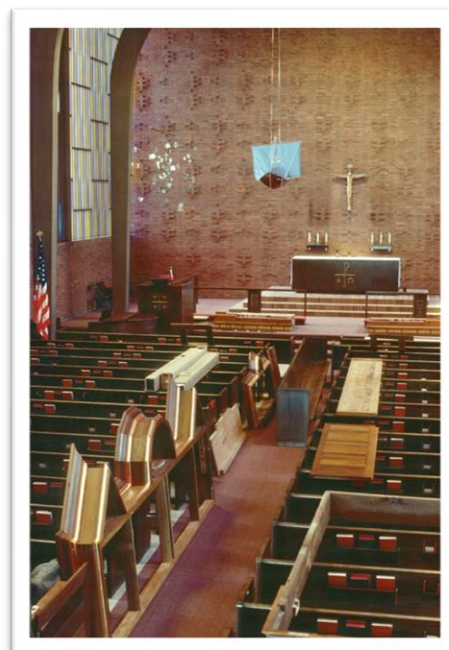
The Installation of the Brombaugh organ in Eugene, Oregon; August 1976

From slides taken by Greg Heinz



Truck arrives carrying the organ parts in August 1976.
Members of the congregation meet and help unload the moving van.

The Sanctuary becomes a home to the
many larger parts of the organ.



Michael Bigelow and James Morse check and remove minor dents in the façade pipes that occurred during shipping in the Narthex, with other bits of the organ visible.

Pipes wrapped for shipping stand in the corner of the Narthex.
Also visible is the organ bench.



More organ parts and pipes in the old choir robing room directly behind the choir loft.



(Right) Even the choir loft is full of trays, which hold some of the smaller pipes of which this organ has over 2800 pipes. They are fragile so they are carefully packed in paper.

(Left) The lower part of the upper organ case is prepared to be lifted up to the balcony from the main church floor. Visible is James Morse.



The organ keyboard desk/chassis as seen from the balcony prior to lifting up is inspected by Pete Cauble and Walter Brunner (Congregational members).



The forklift is preparing to lift the organ keydesk chassis up to the loft. Visible on the left is Dennis Vetrus, Roger Welch, and Lyle Jacobson (Congregational members). Ted Marks from the Brombaugh shop is on the left.

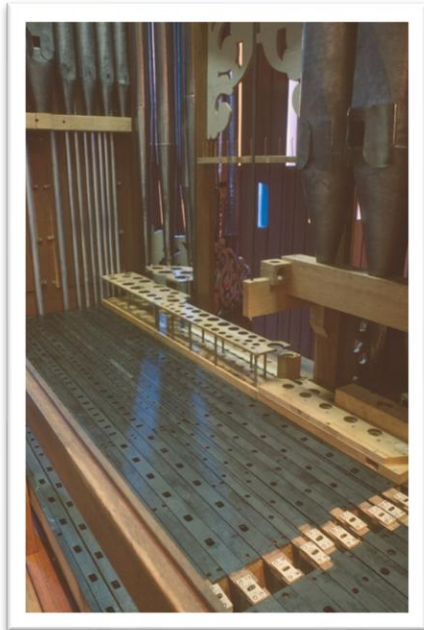


(Right) The keydesk chassis arrives in the balcony.

(Left)
Now the keydesk chassis has arrived in the balcony, the main case is assembled above the keydesk chassis. Visible is (left to right) James Morse, Michael Bigelow, and Ted Marks and an unknown person.



The lower and upper cases are complete with some the largest pipes installed in the main case. It looked strange without the pipes.



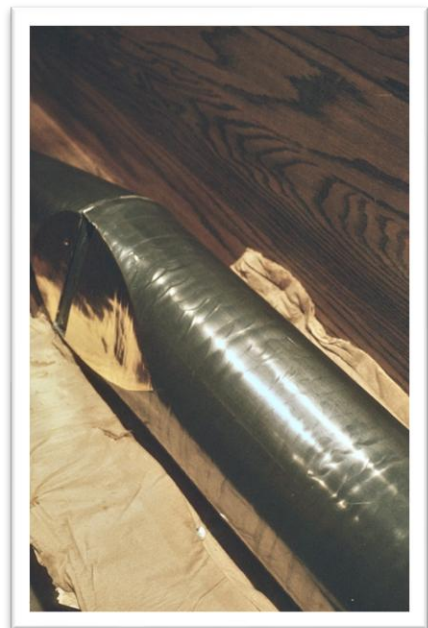
(Left) The stop sliders installed in the main case with some pipes placed in position on the side wall. The black sliders slide under the pipes. When the stop is pulled, the holes in the sliders align and air is able to go to the pipe and it sounds. When the holes do not align, the sound is “stopped.” That is why they are called “stops.” The phrase “pulling out all the stops” comes from the organ, which literally means pulling out all the stops or playing full organ.



The pews make excellent places to store the larger pipes before they are placed in position.



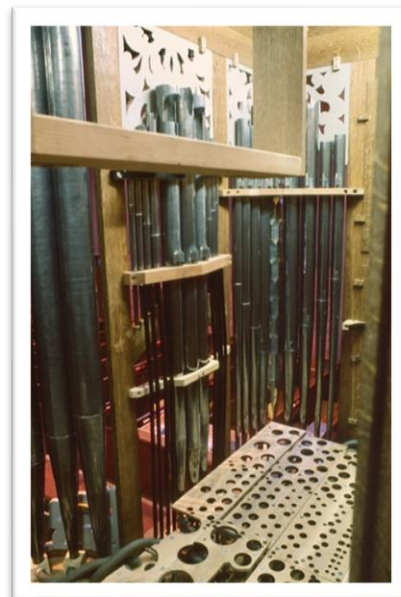
The gold pipe (below) is a regular pipe that is scored on the inside allowing the flat shapes to be fashioned. Then it is covered with gold leaf as are the mouths of all façade pipes. Each side of the balcony rail (Ruckpositive) case has one.



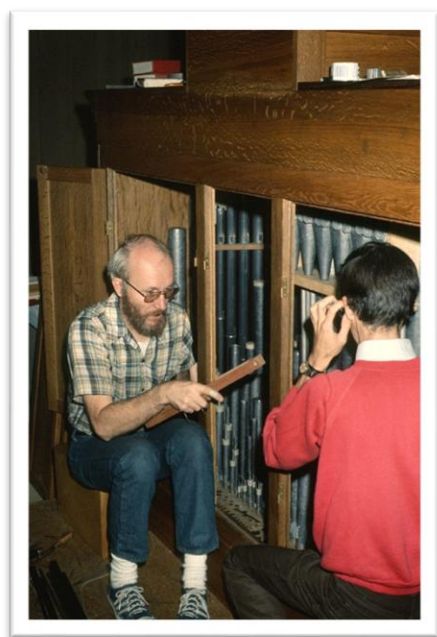
Main upper case. All the façade pipes are in place and the rack boards are placed and ready to receive the other pipes.



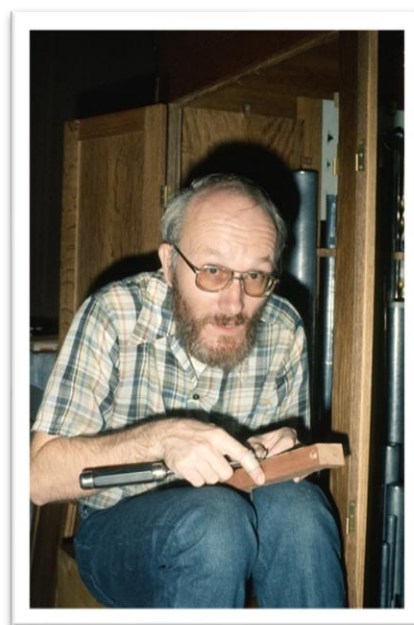
John Brombaugh used every available space for pipes. Most American pipe organs with 2800 pipes would require a space roughly the size of the whole balcony. Using ancient models, John placed pipes every place he could find. Air to those pipes is provided by tubes to the stacked pipes.



Now the pipes have been placed in the cases, the “voicing” process begins where every pipe is adjusted (voiced) to fit the acoustic of the sanctuary. John Brombaugh spent nine months onsite voicing the organ after it was installed. Many American factory pipe organs may receive 2-3 weeks onsite voicing, but John worked in the ancient fashion of organ building. Below John Brombaugh and George Taylor voice pipes in the lower Ruckpositive case (case on the balcony rail).



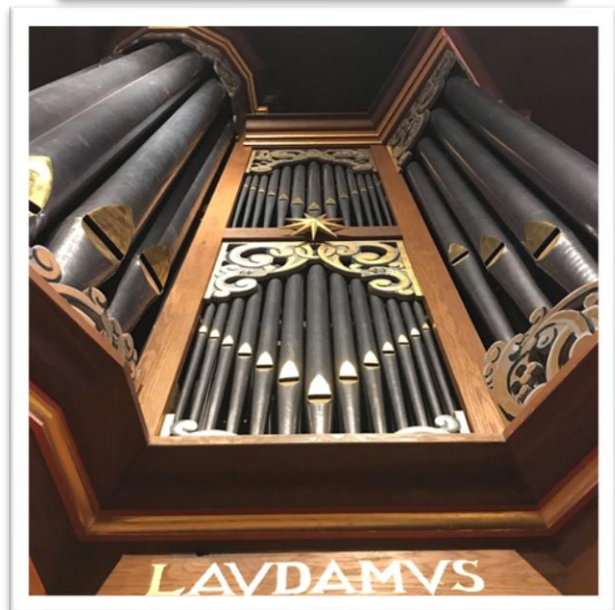
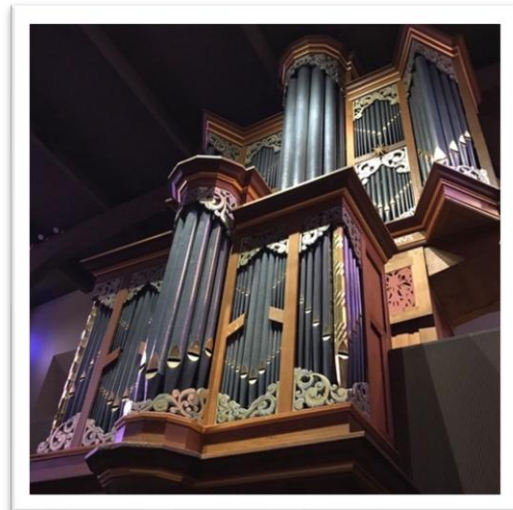
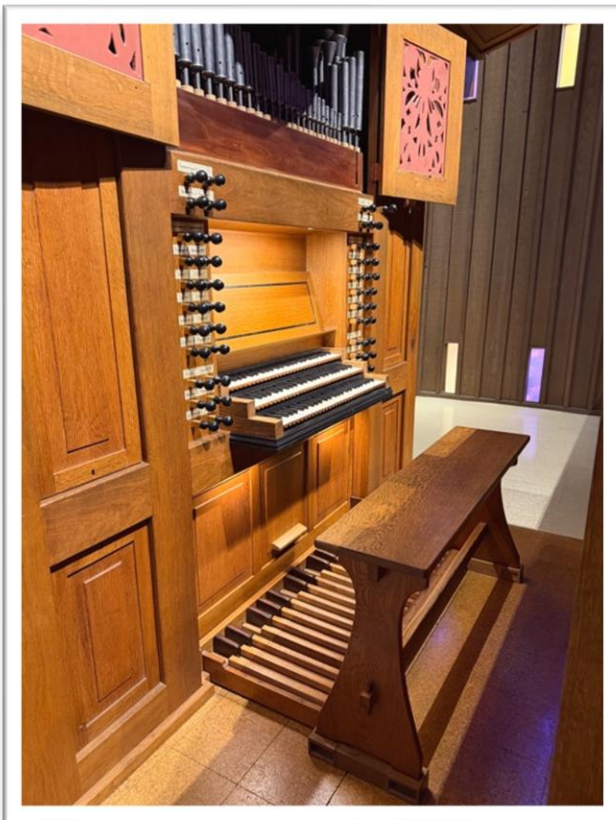
John voicing the Dulcian (reed) pipes (an ancient instrument that became the modern bassoon).



The Brombaugh Organ at Central Lutheran

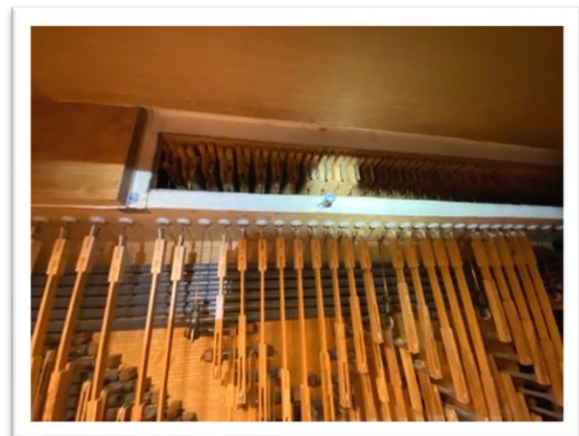


The Keydesk with stops



(Below Left) Keyboards with music rack removed.

(Below Right) Music rack removed showing upper keyboard (Brustwerk) rollerboard and with pallet (value) box open.



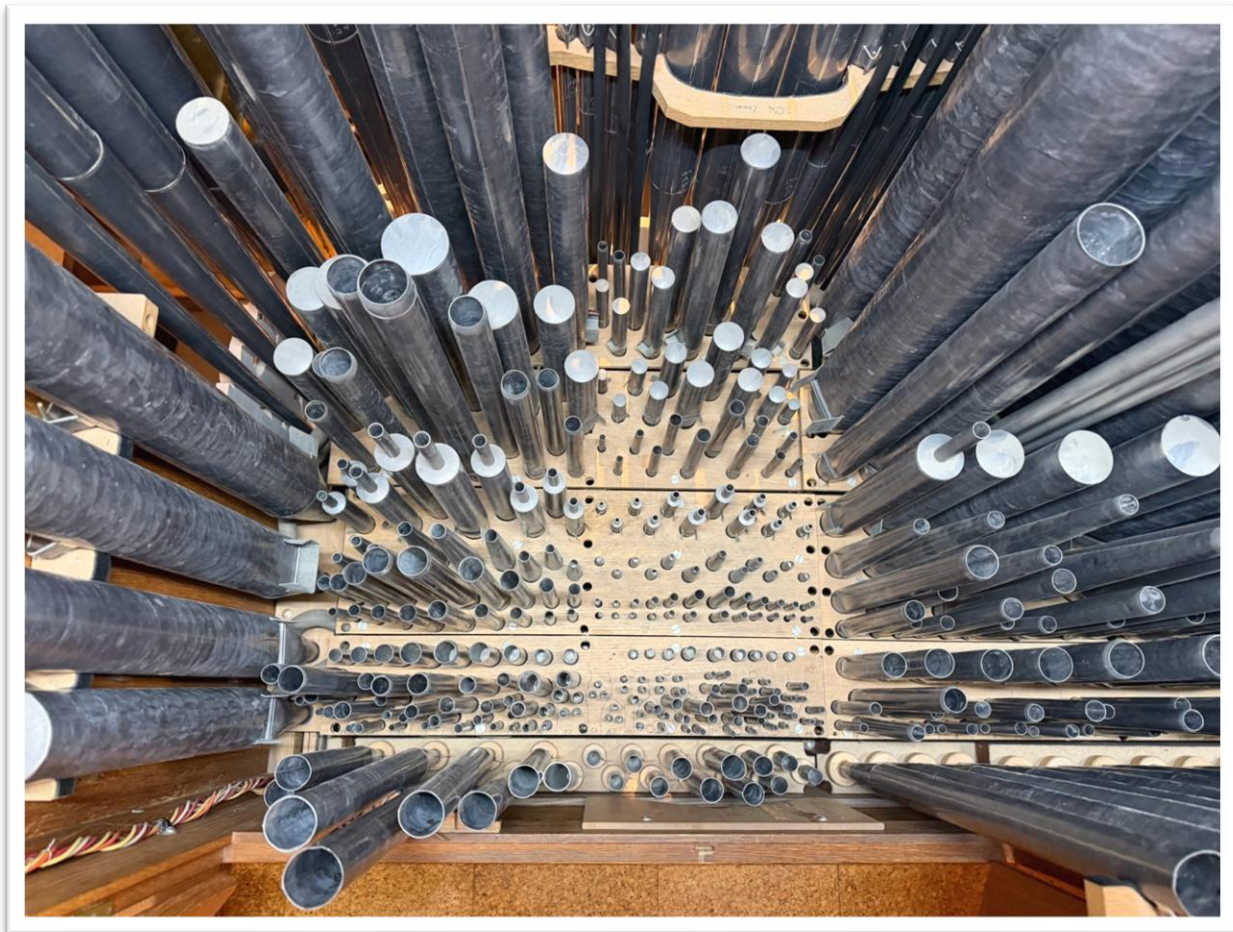


The Cimbelstern: The wheel (center left), which turns the spinning star and strikes the bars for the tinkling sound.

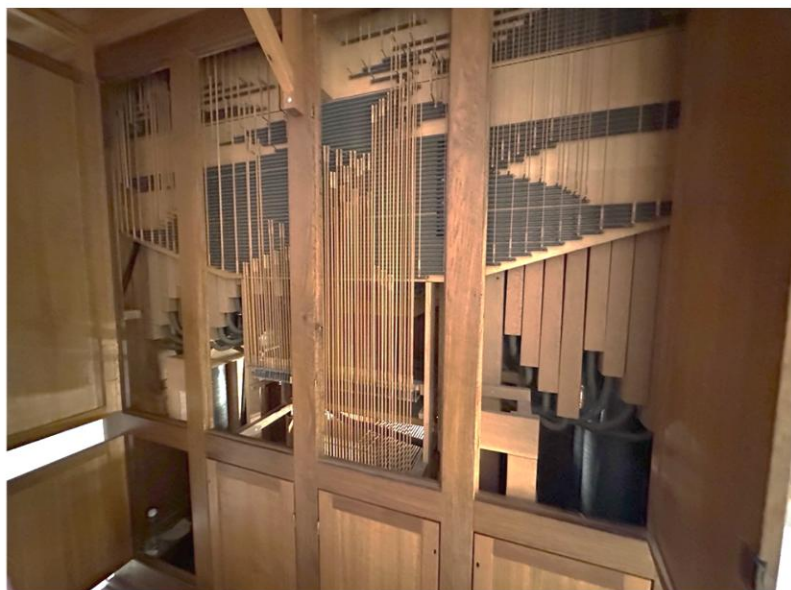
The Nightingale (bird sound) is three pipes upside down in a light-weight oil that burbles. Originally, we used water, but it evaporated so quickly that the bird sound was not always reliable. While visiting Sweden, I discovered that they use oil instead of water, which we do now as well.



The pipes of the Lower Case (Balcony Rail/Ruckpostive played from the bottom keyboard).
The Dulcian (reed pipe) is at the bottom with easy access for tuning.

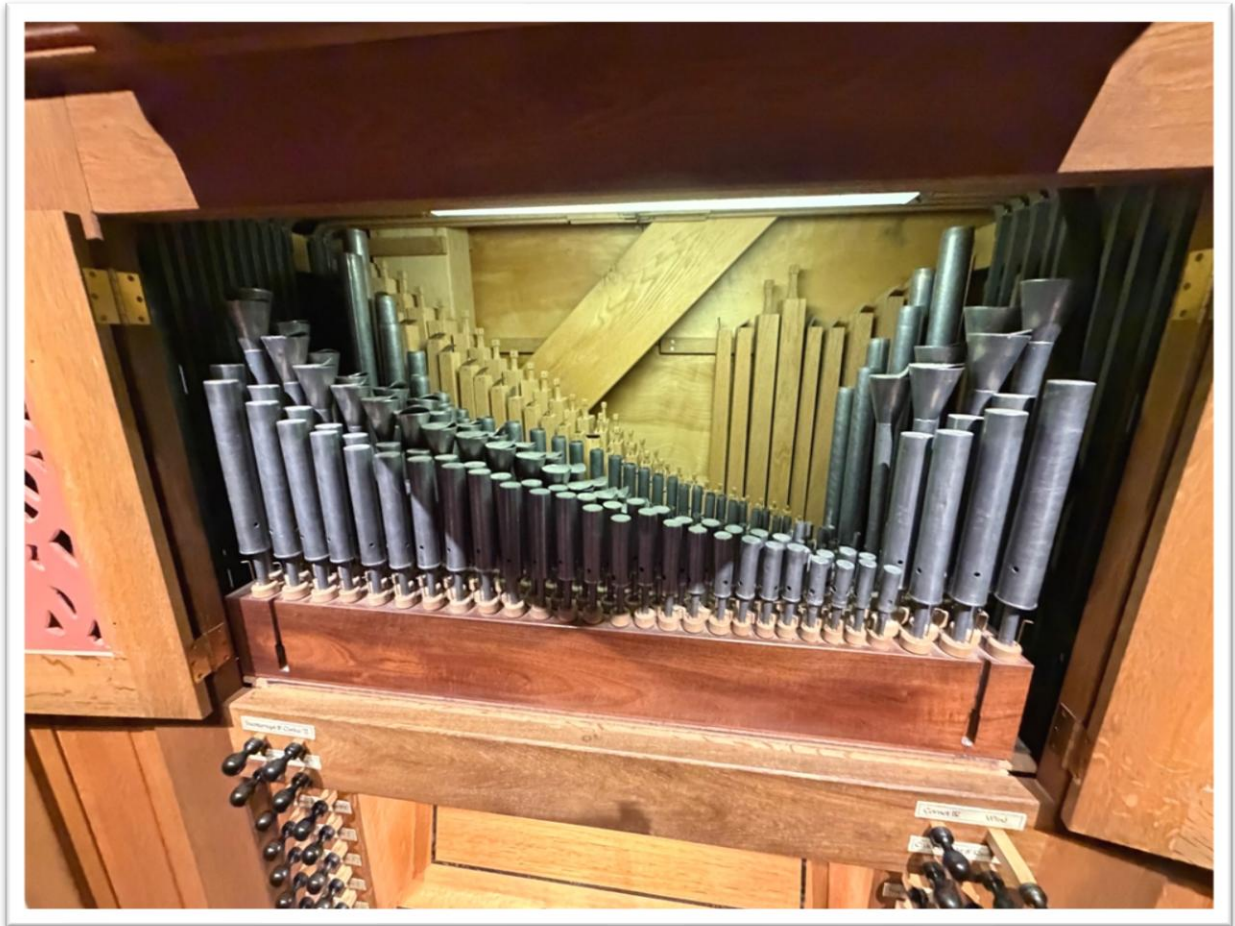


(Right) The large rollerboard that changes keyboard width to main case width.



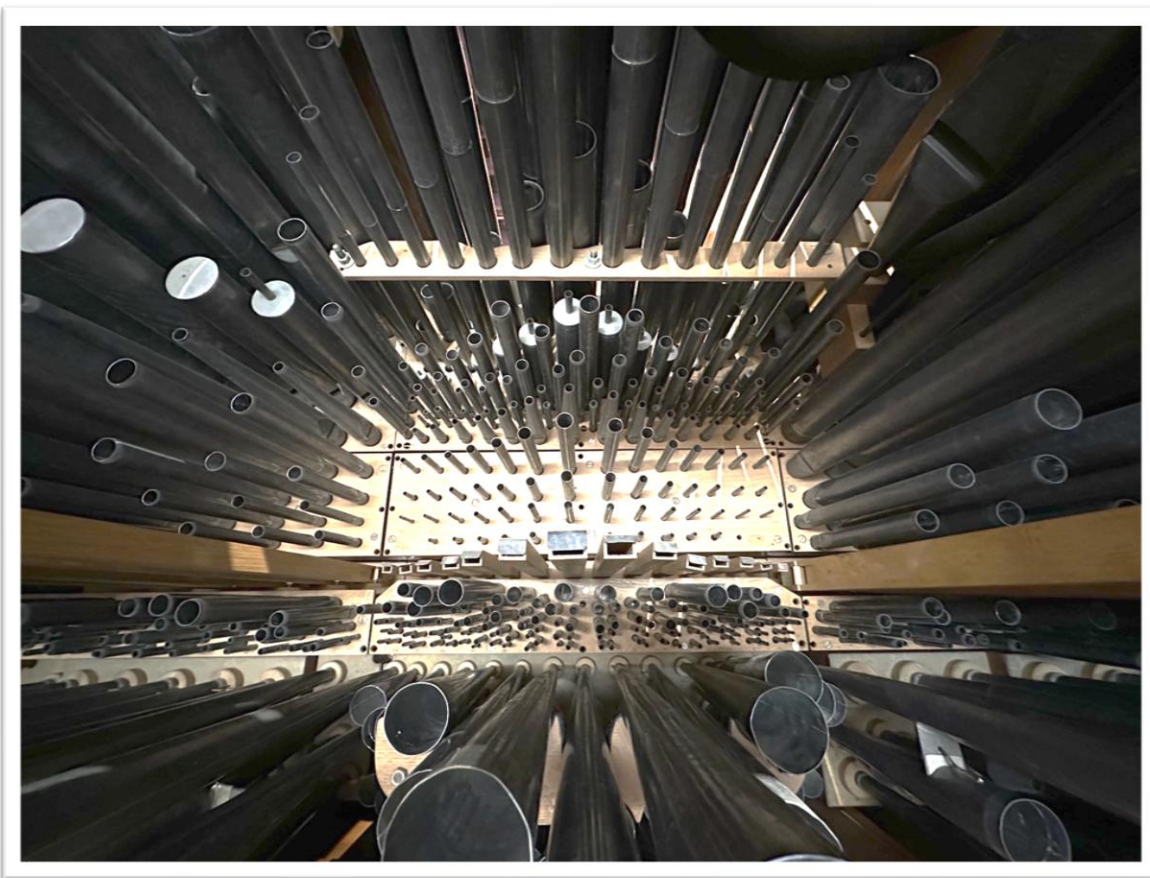
(Left) Brass reed in the bottom of reed pipes.
Rankett stop of Brustwerk.

The pipes of the upper keyboard; Brustwerk (upper keyboard), because it is the organist's breast level. Visible at the front are two reed stops, Rankett and Trechterregal. Also visible are the two oak flute stops, the Recorder (Blockflöte) and the Oak Gedeckt (covered flute stop).



Some of the pedal pipes are installed in a cage above the pipes in the main case.





A forest of pipes in the main case which is played by the Great organ (middle keyboard) and pedals. Trumpet pipes at the bottom; pipes with the small chimneys are called Chimney flutes (Rohrflöte in German). Square wooden pipes are the Oak Gamba.

The Brombaugh organ is very reliable. In the 42 years that I have served as organist, there have been only a handful of problems that I could not fix myself. Of the 2800 pipes, 2400 of them are flue pipes (basically sophisticated whistles). With flue pipes, length determines pitch – longer pipes produce a lower pitch; shorter ones a higher pitch. These flue pipes have only been tuned three times in 50 years. Most American pipe organs are tuned at least twice a year. The 400 reed pipes need to be tuned when the temperature/season changes as temperature impacts them in a different manner than the flue pipes, which all move together as the pipe metal expands and contracts. For most of my 40 years, I have tuned the reed pipes as needed, which takes about two hours. More recently Terry Lambert has assisted in that job, particularly for concerts. The organ is purely mechanical in the ancient style with no modern computer aids. The only electricity runs lights and the blower, which provides the wind. For the first 40 years, all maintenance of the organ was done at no expense to Central Lutheran with the caveat that we make the organ available for outside organists and the community to enjoy, hence our relationship with the Oregon Bach Festival and their Organ Institute program, which trains young organists from around the world. Since John's declining health, Paul Fritts Organs of Tacoma cares for the instrument when needed.

Dr. Andrew ElRay Stewart-Cook, Organist/Choirmaster (1984-present)
 Dr. Lindsey Henriksen Rodgers, Associate Organist/Choirmaster (2006-present)