

# Organ Rebuilding

at

First United Methodist Church, Gainesville, FL

## History of the FUMC Organ

When the present sanctuary was constructed in 1941, the Ladies Aid Society provided funding for a pipe organ. The contract with M.P. Moller, Inc. was signed **August 15, 1941**. The agreement called for a three manual and pedal instrument at a cost of eight thousand dollars, financed over five years. The new church was occupied in March 1942 and a recital was given to a capacity audience on April twelfth by Claude Murphree, University Organist.

In 1952 Mrs. Myrtle Waldo concluded her forty-seventh year tenure as FUMC organist and was followed by Helen Bell Jones, the daughter of a Methodist minister. Many present members remember Mrs. Jones' use of multiple choirs in both music and drama at special times of the church year. In 1971, Gloria Keister became the new organist and there has been several more since then. Ben Ehrlich has been our organist for the past five years.

Bert Kinzey led the project to **rebuild of the organ in 1979**. In this year the Moller was expanded to 1,960 pipes with over 35 ranks, from the original instillation of 1,427 pipes over 21 ranks. Other construction at this time included the removal of a masonite wall in front of the organ chamber and the addition of the present screen. Air drawn into the blower was altered to use conditioned air, as opposed to drawing hot humid-air from outdoors. This rebuilding project cost \$108,266.

A releathering project was undertaken in the late 80's and the swell shades were converted to use Solid-State Peterson motors in 2002.

In 2003, for insurance purposes, the organ appraised. The certified replacement value was found to be \$560,000. The Trustees were surprised by this figure since the organ had appreciated this value from an original investment of around \$120,000. This would not be the case if the organ had been electronic instead of being a pipe organ.

The tropical storms that hit Gainesville in 2004 flooded the church-basement blower room which, in turn, flooded the organ pipes and blower duct system.. Since spring 2005, repairs were made to the blower, the Hautbois windchest, and the pedal chests, but more repair is needed. Furthermore, several organ repair companies have predicted that water-damage problems, not apparent at present, are likely to occur in the future.

## Organ Rebuilding

A major rebuilding is needed. A large number of the organ components and wiring were from the original 1941 installation and have deteriorated over the past 65 years, although many of the original pipes are in good condition. Over this time technology has greatly improved from a mechanical-and-air type of control to modern microprocessor controlled technology.

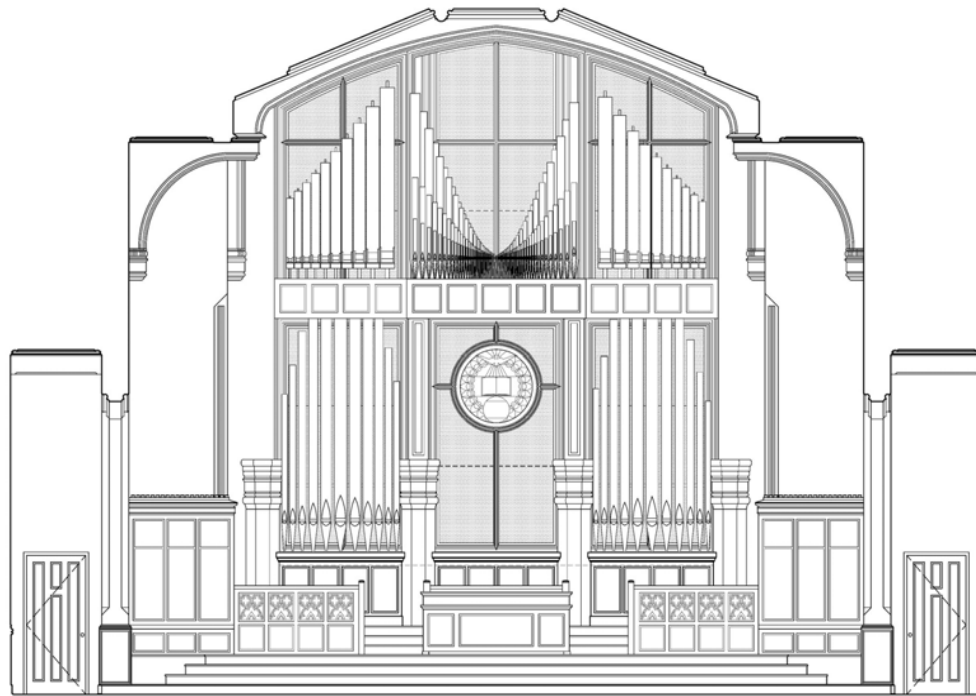
In the Spring of 2005 an organ committee was appointed by the Trustees to address the issue of necessary repairs or replacement of our organ. This committee worked very hard over the ensuing time and has considered over twenty-seven organ companies, including both pipe and electronic instruments. The organ committee understood the bond between this church and our current instrument, and it was the desire of the organ committee to restore this instrument if at all possible. After consideration of proposals that were received from five companies that visited our church, the decision was made to recommend to the Trustees that we accept a proposal from the Berghaus Organ Company of Chicago, Illinois. This was the only organ company that was truly committed to restoring our historic instrument. On July 18, 2006 the Trustees approved this recommendation. This project will cost around \$400,000. In August 2006 the organ was removed from FUMC by Berghaus for rebuilding at their factory. In addition to the restoration of the instrument, they will add a Sub bass 16' stop, a Viol one 16' stop, Viol one 8' stop, as well as adding 29 new pipes to the existing Pedal Trompette 8' stop. All of these new pipes will be displayed in a new pipe façade (see below), and will achieve the dreams of our congregation in the past when the organ was prepared for some of these stops, but were never included. Also, they will be add a Zimblestern, and place a new blower in the organ chamber rather than placing it in the basement where heavy rains can cause flooding.

The new 2007 organ was installed at FUMC during Sept-Nov 2007.

The rebuilding project includes:

- The rebuilding of all windchests
- Replacing of all parts and wiring inside the console with a modern microprocessor controlled technology which includes a midi connection that allows the playing the organ from a portable electronic keyboard or by personal computer with the appropriate software
- Refurbishing of the organ chamber
- Addition of pipes
- Replacement of the chamber screen with a pipe Façade as pictured below
- Re-voicing of pipes

Leon Couch, Organ Committee Chair  
Revised October 12, 2007



**Berghaus Façade**



**Completed Berghaus Organ Opus 292**