

Report of the Organ Committee
to the South Church Trustees
September 2, 2011

The Organ Committee:

Greg Brooks
David Cody
Alice Morse
Nancy Torrey
Marilyn Brayne, *ex officio*
Will Bridegam, Chair

Summary of Recommendations

The Organ:

Recommendation: *The committee recommends unanimously that the Church contract with William Czelusniak to remove its Berkshire organ and to purchase, rebuild, install, and voice the 1896 Casavant organ he has offered South Church for the total sum of \$130,000. The committee further recommends that if the terms of the proposed contract are deemed satisfactory, the Church sign the contract by the end of November 2011 so that Mr. Czelusniak will have sufficient time to rebuild the Casavant organ in his shop from December through May and install it at South Church during June through August, 2012. The committee also recommends that the Trustees develop a plan to reconfigure the front of the sanctuary to accommodate the dimensions of the Casavant organ.*

The Piano

Recommendation: *The committee recommends the immediate sale of the Steinway piano. It also recommends that the Church advertise widely that it is interested in a gift of a concert-quality grand piano in good condition or a gift of the funds to purchase one. If a new grand piano of concert quality is given to the Church, the committee recommends that it be installed in the right front section of the sanctuary where the Steinway piano is now located.*

Report of the Organ Committee to the South Church Trustees – September 2, 2011

Introduction

South Congregational Church has a strong tradition of providing well-performed, high quality religious music as part of its worship services. The Church's organ, which was purchased about 42 years ago from the Berkshire Organ Co., has been critical to the Church's efforts to maintain high musical standards. During the past year increasingly serious problems with the Berkshire organ have made it clear that our organ will require major repairs over the next few years if it is to remain useful to the congregation. In addition, the series M Steinway grand piano now located on the right side of the sanctuary has deteriorated to point where it is unusable. The uncertain condition of the organ, as exemplified by a series of recent disruptive malfunctions, and the deterioration of the Steinway piano have prompted the Trustees to appoint an Organ Sub-Committee to "evaluate the current and anticipated future status of the organ and the grand piano, to develop options for their repair, replacement, or removal, and to report back to Trustees their recommendations." The outline of the committee's charge has been retained in this report.

1. Areas of study – a. The Organ

i. Evaluation of historical and future use – why do we need it?

South Church has a long history of enhancing its worship services with high quality religious music. The organ has been used primarily to lead congregational singing, to provide appropriate music for worship, and to accompany the choir and other musical groups. The organ has also been used to great advantage for concerts sponsored by the South Church Arts Committee. The Organ Committee believes the organ will continue to be essential for worship services at South Church for the foreseeable future. The committee does not foresee more than occasional use of alternative instruments and "praise music" in South Church's worship services. Although other churches might be moving toward popular church music, the people worshiping at South Church seem to appreciate and prefer traditional church music. The committee believes that the quality and style of our music attract people to the Church and that the music performed at South Church is an important aid to worship.

ii. Evaluation of existing condition (Please include findings of any previous committee evaluations)

In response to an inquiry from Marilyn Brayne and Will Bridegam, William Czelusniak the local organ builder who has maintained the South Church organ for many years, provided a written evaluation of the Berkshire organ in an e-mail dated 10/19/10. (See Appendix A). It details the Berkshire organ's problems and estimates the cost of fixing them. Subsequently, the committee engaged Jonathan Ambrosino, a highly regarded organ construction consultant who maintains many of the largest organs in Boston, to provide an independent assessment of our Berkshire organ. His assessment, which corroborates Mr. Czelusniak's evaluation of our organ, is provided as Appendix B.

iii. Anticipated timeline & costs for upcoming repairs

William Czelusniak, who maintains our organ, informed us that if the congregation decides to retain the Berkshire organ, major repairs should be budgeted now and undertaken within the next five to ten years. Mr. Ambrosino provided the same advice, pointing out that it is not unusual for pipe organs such as ours to require extensive repairs every 40 to 50 years. The two most important issues are the need to replace the organ's console (i.e. its keyboards, stop combination pistons, and electro-pneumatic connections to the keyboards and pedals) and its 42-year-old soft leathers (i.e. air-tight leather pouches that connect the wind supply to the pipes). Mr. Czelusniak's and Mr. Ambrosino's estimates may be compared as follows:

	Czelusniak	Ambrosino
Essential Repairs Needed in the Next 5-10 Years		
Replace the organ console	\$ 75,000	\$ 86,368
Replace the leathers	\$ 45,000	\$ 40,000
Subtotal:	\$120,000	\$126,368
Elective Repairs		
Revoicing flue pipes	\$ 22,000	\$ 12,000
Reconditioning reed pipes	\$ 8,000	\$ 6,500
Subtotal:	\$ 30,000	\$ 18,500
Total Estimated Cost	\$150,000	\$144,868

Messrs. Czelusniak and Ambrosino both warned that these cost estimates should be considered subject to normal inflationary increases.

iv. Recommendation for funding those repairs

The committee identified the following options for addressing the Berkshire organ's problems:

Option 1: Conduct a special campaign now to replace the console and leathers, to revoice the flue pipes, and to recondition the reed pipes at a total cost of about \$150,000. If not enough money is contributed to cover the cost of these repairs, borrow the amount remaining and ask up to five church members to secure the loan

Option 2: Conduct a special campaign now to cover the cost of replacing the console and the leathers (\$120,000). Borrow the remaining amount and ask up to five church members to secure the loan. Defer work on the flue and reed pipes (\$30,000) until additional funds can be raised.

v. Evaluation of replacement options – new or refurbished (Please consider several keyboard instrument options.)

Option 1: Purchase the 1896 restored, 12-stop Casavant organ offered by William Czelusniak for \$130,000 (price includes removing the Berkshire organ, transporting the Casavant organ to South Church, installing it, and voicing it.) Budget an additional \$10,000 to reconfigure the front of the sanctuary to accommodate the Casavant organ (See appendix D for a possible reconfiguration plan).

The 1896, 12 stop, two-manual Casavant organ is a historically significant instrument rescued from a closed Catholic Church in Woonsocket, RI. It is a "tracker" (mechanical) action instrument that was constructed by the Canadian firm, Casavant Frères, a high-quality organ builder that is still manufacturing fine organs. The owner of the organ, whose identity we do not know, has consigned and delivered it to William Czelusniak, who recently refurbished and installed a similar 1897 Casavant organ at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Westfield, MA.

The Committee visited St. Mary's Church to hear a demonstration of that organ, which, except for one 8-foot pedal stop, has exactly the same stop list as the organ being offered to South Church. The sound of the St. Mary's Casavant organ is excellent. Its tone is full and well articulated. It has the force and character to lead a full congregation in the singing of hymns. Its stops combine well. The range of its sound extends from a soft string stop to a full organ that raised goose bumps and thoroughly impressed the committee. Grant Moss, who served as a consultant to our committee, demonstrated convincingly that compositions from both the Baroque and the Romantic periods could be played effectively on the instrument.

William Czelusniak removed panels from the organ case so that the committee could see the tracker mechanical action, which unlike our organ's electro-pneumatic action, is entirely mechanical. There are no electro-pneumatic circuits

that may corrode or short-circuit. The use of leather is minimized. There are no small soft leather pouches connecting the air supply to pipes. In fact, this mechanical system is so efficient and uncomplicated that it is expected to function without the need for major repairs for the next 50 years or more.

When Marilyn Brayne played the organ, she found its action was surprisingly light (due, as Grant Moss pointed out, to the skill with which Mr. Czelusniak had balanced the action.) She also found that the three pedal combination pistons were mechanically activated, thus eliminating the major problems she has been experiencing with the Berkshire organ's electronically activated pistons.

In reference to tracker-action organs versus electro-pneumatic or electronic organs, Grant Moss asked the committee a critical question. "Would a concert pianist be willing to play a concert on a Yamaha electronic keyboard?" The answer, of course, is that a concert pianist would insist on a mechanical action grand piano. His follow-up question was predictable. "Why then would a good organist prefer an electric or an electro-pneumatic action?"

Option 2: Purchase a new electronic Allen organ similar to, but smaller than, the one at First Congregational Church.

The Allen Organ Company, located in Macungie, PA, is the earliest, the largest, and perhaps the most successful of the electronic organ manufacturers. Although there are other electronic organ companies, the committee chose to consider Allen organs because of the company's reputation and because Allen had a local installation at First Congregational Church which the committee could hear.

First Congregational Church of Amherst reportedly paid \$105,000 for its Allen organ with three keyboards and 23 speakers ten years ago. The Allen Organ Company informed us that a new Allen Chapel Series, model CF15 with two manuals, 28-33 stops, and two to four external speakers would probably be the recommended organ for a sanctuary of our size.

Having researched the differences between pipe and electronic organs, we learned that while the sound of an electronic organ's individual stops is quite good, the sound of combinations of electronic stops could be distorted. This distortion is caused by mixing too many signals into too few loudspeaker channels. First Church attempted to solve this problem by purchasing 23 speakers (The maximum number of speakers available for the CF15 recommended for South Church is four), but even with this expanded number of speakers most of our Committee members were easily able to hear the organ's distortion of sound at higher volume levels. Members of the committee described the sound as "flat," "without character," and "empty" at those levels. Colin Pykett, in an article titled "Digital Organs Today" published in "Organists' Review" in Nov. 2009, wrote, "It is a well known phenomenon with digital organs that, while individual stops or small combinations might be good or excellent, anything beyond this can become

progressively more unconvincing and sometimes unpleasant. Two reasons for this are distortions due to intermodulation and those caused by mixing too many signals into too few loudspeaker channels... The consequence is that considerably more loudspeaker channels are required than manufacturers often provide, with at least 24 being a reasonable goal to aim for. But this means a large and expensive installation, of course.”

Pykett also had serious questions about the quality of electronic consoles. He commented that, “A high quality console built to pipe organ standards is also expensive in itself, and [it is] not always found in the standard offerings of many manufacturers [of electronic instruments.]” Allen provides one standard console for the model CF15 organ.

Option 3: Purchase a newly constructed pipe organ (e.g. a Holtkamp organ)

The purchase of a newly constructed pipe organ is not a viable option for South Church. Consultant Grant Moss said it would cost \$30,000 a stop for a newly constructed organ. Using Grant Moss’s estimate, the price of a 12-stop newly built pipe organ would be about \$360,000 plus installation costs. Consultant Jonathan Ambrosino estimated the cost of a newly constructed pipe organ for South Church at \$300,000 to \$600,000, depending on the quality of the instrument.

Option 4: Purchase an 1898 Hook and Hastings Organ offered through the Organ Clearing House on behalf of a church in Lebanon, NH

The Hook and Hastings Organ is not a viable option because the organ’s tallest pipes are higher than our sanctuary’s ceiling and because it would cost about \$200,000 to buy it, transport it, and install it in South Church’s sanctuary.

Option 5: Sell or give away the Berkshire Organ and rely on a piano only for worship services.

The Committee believes this option would not be acceptable to the congregation. As stated in the introduction to this report, a reliable organ is critical to South Church’s ability to provide well-performed, high-quality, traditional religious music as part of its worship services.

vi. Aesthetic evaluation for each replacement option

Option 1: Purchase the 1896 restored, 12-stop Casavant organ offered by William Czelusniak

The 1896 Casavant organ is two and one-half feet deeper and almost two feet narrower than our Berkshire organ. Its tallest pipes (150-¾ inches) would be well below our sanctuary’s ceiling. The console would be in the center front of the

sanctuary. A wooden screen similar to the one in place now might be installed behind the organist. The organ's installation in the front of our sanctuary would reduce the space between the relocated platform supporting the lectern and the front pew to 4 feet. The unpainted Casavant organ case is made of oak. The pipes are unpainted gray metal similar to the Berkshire organ's displayed metal pipes. The present configuration of the front of the sanctuary is shown in Appendix C. The proposed reconfiguration to accommodate the Casavant organ is shown in Appendix D, and the accompanying narrative is in Appendix E. While the committee is of the opinion that the reconfiguration shown in Appendix D is viable, it encourages the Trustees to study this matter further and to consider alternative configurations.

It should be noted that the congregation is accustomed to the appearance of our Berkshire Organ. Most do not remember what its predecessor looked like. Therefore, a change of any kind will require an adjustment in how we view the aesthetics of the sanctuary. Our Berkshire organ is housed in a dated, 1960's style cabinet, which says "retro" rather than "historic." Other than being white, its case has little in common with the historic nature of South Church.

While the case of the Casavant will indeed be a contrasting brown, it will closely match that of the wood detail outlining the existing pews. This will tie it together with the rest of the sanctuary and at the same time become the focal point that an historic organ in an historic church should be.

Option 2: Purchase a new electronic Allen organ similar to, but smaller than, the one at First Congregational Church.

An electronic Allen Organ would have the following dimensions:

A console that is 57" wide by 58 " deep by 55 ½ " high
Four speakers that are each 17 3/8 " high by 33 ¼ " wide by 18 ¾ " deep.

If the speakers were mounted above the organ console, the space required for installation of an Allen model CF15 organ would be less than the space currently required by the Berkshire organ. A large acoustic curtain hiding the speakers would replace the display pipes of the Berkshire organ. The committee is of the opinion that a large acoustic curtain in the front of the sanctuary would not enhance its appearance.

Option 3: Purchase a newly constructed pipe organ (e.g. a Holtkamp organ)

The committee does not consider option 3 to be affordable.

Option 4: Purchase an 1898 Hook and Hastings organ offered through the Organ Clearing House on behalf of a church in Lebanon, NH

This organ, which appeared on a list of available organs, seemed to be a possibility, but it could not be considered because the ceiling in our sanctuary was not high enough for its tallest pipes.

Option 5: Sell or give away the Berkshire Organ and rely on a piano only for worship services.

The committee does not believe this option would be acceptable to the congregation.

vii. A summary of costs for each replacement option

Option 1: Purchase the 1896 restored, 12-stop Casavant organ offered by William Czelusniak

The cost would be \$130,000 to rebuild, transport, install, and voice the 1896 Casavant organ. Mr. Czelusniak predicted that the refurbished Casavant organ would require few, if any, major repairs over the next 50 years because the mechanical action is so reliable and because a tracker action instrument requires a minimal amount of leather. Reconfiguration of the front of the sanctuary to accommodate the dimensions of the Casavant organ would probably require an additional expenditure of approximately \$10,000. Tuning and basic maintenance would be required. Currently we can afford this maintenance just once a year.

Option 2: Purchase a new electronic Allen organ similar to, but smaller than, the one at First Congregational Church.

The cost would be approximately \$100,000, or more, for a model that can accommodate the recommended 24 external speakers. It is likely that an Allen electronic instrument would continue to function satisfactorily for many years, and the Allen Company makes a point of continuing to stock the components required by every organ it has assembled, but it is also likely that newer electronic models will render older ones dated and/or obsolete as sound sampling and solid-state electronics continue to improve. Well-constructed pipe organs, by contrast, rarely become dated or obsolete. Only annual tuning and basic maintenance are required.

Option 3: Purchase a newly constructed pipe organ (e.g. a Holtkamp organ)

The cost of a new pipe organ of a size that is similar to the Berkshire or Casavant organ would be approximately \$360,000. The committee thinks this expense is prohibitive.

Option 4: Purchase an 1898 Hook and Hastings organ offered through the Organ Clearing House on behalf of a church in Lebanon, NH

This option is not viable.

Option 5: Sell or give away the Berkshire Organ and rely on a piano only for worship services.

This option is not recommended.

viii. Recommendation for funding each replacement option

Option 1: Purchase the 1896 restored, 12-stop Casavant organ offered by William Czelusniak and reconfigure the front of the sanctuary

Try to sell the Berkshire organ for its parts	\$3,000(?)
Request gifts for the purchase of the Casavant organ, conduct fund-raisers, and request a bank loan secured by up to five church members for the balance of the cost	\$137,000
Total:	\$140,000

Option 2: Purchase a new electronic Allen organ similar to, but smaller than, the one at First Congregational Church. Although the CF15 model with four speakers suggested for our sanctuary by the Allen Organ Company would cost about \$50,000, it is likely the CF15 model would be unsatisfactory for reasons stated on pages 13-14. An Allen electronic organ with 24 speakers (the recommended number) would most likely cost in excess of \$100,000. The Allen Organ installed at First Church, Amherst 10 years ago cost \$105,000.

Try to sell the Berkshire organ	\$3,000(?)
Request gifts for the purchase of the Allen organ, conduct fund-raisers, and request a bank loan secured by up to five church members for the balance of the cost	\$97,000
Total:	\$100,000(?)

Option 3: Purchase a newly constructed pipe organ (e.g. a Holtkamp organ)

This option is not affordable.

Option 4: Purchase an 1898 Hook and Hastings organ offered through the Organ Clearing House on behalf of a church in Lebanon, NH

This option is not viable.

Option 5: Sell or give away the Berkshire Organ and rely on a piano only for worship services.

This option is not recommended.

ix. Pros & cons of repair and each viable replacement option

Option 1 – Repair the Berkshire organ

Pros

1. Initial repair of the Berkshire organ (i.e. replacing the console and the leathers for approximately \$120,000) could be phased over a period of five to ten years, providing more time for the congregation to raise funds to accomplish this work. The balance of the proposed repairs (i.e. revoicing the flue pipes (\$22,000) and reconditioning the reeds (\$8,000) could be delayed until additional funds were available.
2. Retaining the Berkshire organ would allow the Church to keep the present space configuration in the front of the sanctuary.
3. The Berkshire organ would not have to be removed.

Cons

1. The estimated total cost of repairing the Berkshire organ (\$150,000) is \$10,000 more than the cost of replacing the organ with a rebuilt Casavant pipe organ and about \$50,000 more than replacing the organ with a new Allen organ with 24 speakers. An analogy is to consider what to do with an old, mediocre automobile. Would you pay a considerable amount of money to repair it, or would you use the same amount of money to buy a high quality, “factory certified” used automobile to replace it?
2. The Berkshire organ is a conglomerate instrument that consultant Grant Moss has described as “shrill and harsh” because it was designed and voiced in a North German style that would be more acceptable in a high stone church where the reverberation could temper its sound. Its tone does not provide good support for the choir or congregational singing. Unfortunately, it was a seriously flawed instrument from its creation, and while the suggested repairs could make it function reliably, the committee and both of its consultants do not think the

quality of the Berkshire organ is worth the considerable cost of the proposed repairs.

3. Phased repair work on the Berkshire organ would be more expensive. In addition, phased repair would disrupt our use of our sanctuary over a longer period of time, whereas replacement of the organ could be accomplished in three summer months of a single year.

Option 2 – Replace the Berkshire organ with the 1896 Casavant organ.

Pros

1. The historic 1896 Casavant two-manual, tracker-action organ being offered to us would be among the finest small pipe organs in this part of New England. This organ was made by Casavant Frères (a Canadian firm still making organs) during a period when craftsmanship and attention to detail were at their height. Scot Huntington, President of the Organ Historical Society of America, commented that at the turn of the previous century, “Casavant organs were considered the Cadillacs.” The superb quality of this organ would not only provide excellent support for the choir and for congregational singing, but it would also provide the full range of sounds needed to perform the Baroque, Romantic, and contemporary organ repertoire. Grant Moss predicted that if we install this organ, organists from throughout the area would want to have an opportunity to play it.
2. The cost of installing a high-quality older pipe organ (about \$140,000, including the cost of reconfiguring the front of the sanctuary) would be approximately a third the cost of installing a newly manufactured pipe organ (about \$400,000).
3. The Berkshire organ could be removed and the Casavant organ installed within three summer months, resulting in minimal disruption in the use of the sanctuary. The installation of the Casavant organ would immediately eliminate the serious problems and expense we have been experiencing with the Berkshire organ.

Cons

1. While the cost of the Casavant organ is less than the cost of repairing the Berkshire organ or buying a newly manufactured pipe organ, it is more than the cost of an Allen electronic organ with 24 speakers, but it could be argued that one is comparing a high-quality, reconditioned classic pipe organ with a synthetic, electronic instrument that attempts to copy the sound of a pipe organ through digital sound sampling (i.e. recording and approximating the sound of real pipes.)
2. The installation of the Casavant organ would require reconfiguration of the front of the sanctuary allowing a four-foot aisle between the front pew and the platform. This reconfiguration would meet code requirements but would mean that the Bell Choir could not perform in the front-center of the sanctuary. It

would also provide insufficient space for the Communion table to remain in its present location.

Option 3 – Replace the Berkshire organ with an Allen electronic organ

Pros

1. It is likely that an Allen organ with 24 speakers would cost less than the reconditioned Casavant organ. (See Option 2 on page 10)
2. The space occupied by the Allen organ console and its speakers would be less than the space occupied by our Berkshire organ. The speakers would be mounted above the organ console and placed behind a large acoustic curtain. Few modifications other than the installation of an acoustic curtain in place of display metal pipes would be required in the front of the sanctuary.
3. The annual cost of maintaining the Allen organ would be lower than the cost of maintaining a pipe organ, but the long-term cost of digital and electronic obsolescence must be considered as well.

Cons

1. The manufacturers of electronic organs have not been able to solve the technical problems associated with reproducing the sound of clusters of stops, especially at higher volume levels.

While electronic organs may be able to reproduce the sounds of individual pipe organ stops satisfactorily through electronic sampling, they have not solved the problem of reproducing convincing sounds of clusters of stops because they “attempt to mix too many electronic signals into too few loudspeaker channels.” First Congregational Church in Amherst attempted to solve this problem by installing 23 speakers as part of its mid-size Allen organ. Despite this attempt, most of our committee members could easily identify the distortion of sound at higher volume levels. Colin Pykett, in the previously cited article titled “Digital Organs Today” comments, “Considerably more loudspeaker channels are required than manufacturers often provide, with at least 24 being a reasonable goal to aim for. But this means a large and expensive installation, of course.” The Allen Organ Company informed us that the most speakers the CF 15 organ could support is four. (Their representative also claimed that their organs do not produce distorted sounds at any sound level.) Pykett concludes that, “Although digital organs have come a long way since they first appeared around four decades ago, it remains a fact they still suffer from a number of intrinsic defects which have dogged them all along. Therefore it is also a fact that pipe organs retain the edge in terms of sound quality today because they have no limits to ... the number of inbuilt sound samples and other factors which plague digital instruments, and equally importantly, nor do they suffer at all from distortion.

Consequently there can be little argument that a good pipe organ, though not an indifferent one, should be the instrument of choice when space and funds permit, at least in a public building.”

2. The tone quality of electronic organs is disappointing.

Commenting on an electronic organ’s tone quality, Grant Moss said, “For about a minute an electronic organ is impressive, but after that minute it is a disappointment.” He commented that if we turn on a radio, we immediately realize we are not listening to the Boston Symphony in person. He suggested that an electronic organ produces a “flat sound.” “You can vary that sound to make it sound like a German, French, or Italian organ by flipping a switch. It is even possible to make it sound as though the organ is in a cathedral with a long reverberation period. It’s a cute toy. It’s not a musical sound. It’s dead.” Grant said that one of his favorite ads in an organ magazine is, “Butter never claims to taste like margarine.” He suggested that everything could be done more cheaply. We don’t have to have a reasonably good organ and piano in our sanctuary, but if we don’t, we will have trouble retaining a good organist and choir director, and the congregation will soon notice that the quality of music will have declined. Our decision depends on whether having music done with integrity is important to South Church.” A committee member commented, “The people of South Church have always valued what is real. There is an appreciation of quality because that’s what we do and who we are, and we do it for our kids because it’s going to last.”

3. Electronic organs become obsolete in 10 to 20 years because of the advancement of electronic and digital technology.

By contrast, there is a pipe organ constructed in the fifteenth century in Switzerland that is still being played. Parts of early pipe organs, such as the leathers, have of course been renewed, but they are still functioning. The pipes do not wear out or become obsolete.

2. Areas of study - The Steinway Grand Piano

i. Evaluation of historical and future use – why do we need it?

The Steinway piano is a model M made in 1932, serial number 274714. It was an unsolicited gift to South Church made in the late 1990s by Harriet Taylor Rozwenc, a former South Church organist who died about 10 years ago. There are two main reasons why it is advantageous for the Church to have a concert quality grand piano.

1. The tonal quality and the spectrum of sound of a high quality grand piano are far superior to those of an upright piano. A concert-quality grand piano enhances the

performances of instrumental and vocal soloists who perform during our worship services.

2. The availability of a concert-quality grand piano makes it possible for the Church to attract piano soloists and accompanists for performances as part of the Arts Committee's Music at South Church Series.

A concert-quality grand piano is not essential for South Church, but it is desirable. Since our Steinway grand piano has been unusable since January of this year, we have obviously learned to get along without it, but the consequence has been that Marilyn has had to use the Yamaha upright piano to accompany soloists during worship services, and the Arts Committee has had to tell several prospective performers that we can no longer provide a concert-quality grand piano. As a result several musicians have refused to perform at South Church, and the Director of the Amherst Regional High School Chorale has indicated that the Chorale might not be able to perform again at South Church until the Church can provide a suitable piano for its accompaniment. It is clear that the future of the Arts Committee's Music at South Church Series is at risk unless we can provide a concert-quality grand piano.

ii. Evaluation of existing condition (Please include findings of any previous committee evaluations)

Jim Mackie of Mackie Piano Restoration evaluated the Steinway piano on January 3, 2005. He found the pinblock in poor condition, a split in the soundboard, worn hammers, the need to replace the shanks, flanges, and key bushings, and to recondition the wippens. Mackie's estimated cost to repair the Steinway in 2005 was \$6,000.

Craig Hair and Richard Blais, representing Hampshire Piano Conservators in Florence, MA, submitted a formal evaluation of the Steinway piano on 3/15/2005. They found that the tuning pins would no longer hold, the hammers were worn out, the center pins were corroded and stiff, the leather backchecks needed replacement, the wippen heel feet were matted and worn, and the knuckles were flat and worn out. Their estimated cost to repair the Steinway piano in 2005 was \$5,215.

Cate Carulli, a local piano repairperson, gave an informal cost estimate of about \$2,000 to repair the Steinway piano on November 22, 2005.

In June 2008 Orca Giarrusso asked Jim Vonluk, her piano tuner, to look at the Steinway piano. He concurred with the previous assessments, observing that it is "not a terrific piano and probably not worth the considerable sum required to restore it." The Music Committee decided to continue tuning the piano but not to restore it.

In January 2011 the Steinway piano deteriorated to the point where it was no longer usable. Marilyn could no longer play it during services, and the Arts Committee had to inform artists who wished to give concerts in the Church that the piano was no longer

available. The Amherst Regional High School Chorale had to revise the program for its 2011 spring concert to include mostly music that did not require piano accompaniment.

iii. Anticipated timeline & costs for upcoming repairs

The committee has reviewed the evaluations, recommendations, and repair cost estimates of the experts who have examined our Steinway piano and reached the conclusion that the Steinway piano is not worth the considerable cost of repairing it.

iv. Recommendation for funding those repairs

The committee does not recommend funding the repair of the Steinway grand piano.

v. Evaluation of replacement options – new or refurbished (Please consider several keyboard instrument options.)

Option 1: Sell the Steinway piano and do not replace it. Retain the Yamaha near the choir.

The Steinway piano's use has been limited to accompanying soloists for worship services and as a concert instrument for concerts sponsored by the Arts Committee. It is desirable but not essential. Soloists can be accompanied on the Yamaha upright piano for worship services. Concert accompanists or piano soloists would be unlikely to want to perform on the Yamaha because its tone and volume are inadequate.

Option 2: Sell the Steinway piano and replace it by gift with a grand piano relocated near the choir. Remove the Yamaha upright piano from the sanctuary.

With a new location near the choir a grand piano could serve as an accompanying instrument for the choir and soloists. It could also serve as a concert quality solo and accompanying instrument. The large space required by a grand piano would most likely require the removal of the two pews in front of the choir on the left side of the sanctuary. The space now occupied by the Steinway grand piano could be used by the Bell Choir and as an additional seating area when needed.

Option 3: Sell the Steinway piano and replace it by gift with a grand piano located in the same place. Retain the Yamaha upright piano on the left side of the sanctuary.

This option would give us the same capabilities we had before the deterioration of the Steinway grand piano. A new grand piano located on the right side of the church could be used for solo performances and as an accompanying instrument. Unfortunately, the space it occupies would preclude having the Bell Choir perform in that part of the sanctuary.

vi. Aesthetic evaluation for each replacement option

Option 1: Sell the Steinway piano and do not replace it. Retain the Yamaha near the choir.

Eliminating a grand piano from the right front of the sanctuary would free that space for the Bell Choir and for independent instrumental ensembles such as a brass sextet. The Director of the Bell Choir indicated that her group could perform in that space if the bell players were arranged in two rows.

Option 2: Sell the Steinway piano and replace it by gift with a grand piano relocated near the choir. Remove the Yamaha upright piano from the sanctuary.

The right front of the sanctuary would be available for the Bell Choir, instrumental ensembles, and overflow seating. On the left side of the sanctuary it is likely that the front two pews would have to be removed to make room for a new grand piano. The position of the piano might make it difficult for the pianist/choir director to see and lead the choir from that position.

Option 3: Sell the Steinway piano and replace it by gift with a grand piano located in the same place. Retain the Yamaha upright piano on the left side of the sanctuary.

The configuration of the front of the sanctuary would remain unchanged.

vii. A summary of costs for each replacement option

If replacement of the Steinway piano is by gift only, the sole cost might be for transportation of the donated grand piano to the Church.

viii. Recommendation for funding each replacement option

If replacement of the Steinway piano were by gift only, there would be no need to fund the purchase of a replacement piano.

ix. Pros & cons of repair and each viable replacement option

Option 1 – Sell the Steinway grand piano and do not replace it

Pros

1. The sale of the Steinway piano could provide \$1,000 to \$3,000.
2. Removing the Steinway from the right front of the church would provide space for the Bell Choir or for small instrumental ensembles such as a brass sextet.
3. Removing the Steinway would provide space for overflow seating.

Cons

1. The Church would not be able to provide a concert-quality piano for accompanists or soloists. The absence of a concert-quality piano would probably result in the discontinuation of the Arts Committee's Music at South Church Series.

Option 2– Sell the Steinway grand piano and obtain a new grand piano by gift. Install the new grand piano on the left side of the sanctuary near the choir.

Pros

1. The sale of the Steinway piano could provide \$1,000 to \$3,000.
2. The new grand piano would replace the Yamaha upright piano and be available to accompany the choir, to accompany soloists, and to serve as a solo concert instrument thus reducing the number of keyboard instruments in the sanctuary to two.
3. The space where the Steinway grand piano is now located could be used by the Bell Choir or for overflow seating.
4. The Arts Committee could program artists requiring a concert-quality piano.

Cons

1. Placement of a new grand piano on the left side of the sanctuary near the choir would require reconfiguration of that part of the sanctuary. It is likely that the front two pews on the left side would have to be removed to make space for the new piano and that some expense would be involved in making this change.
2. Sight lines between the choir and the pianist might be difficult. Choir members near the pianist would be able to see her easily, but those in the back would have difficulty seeing her. It should be noted, however, that sight lines from the Yamaha upright in its present location are far from ideal.
3. The new piano would partially block the view of members of the congregation who are seated in the left front of the sanctuary.

Option 3 - Sell the Steinway grand piano and obtain a new grand piano by gift. Keep the new piano where the Steinway is now located on the right side of the sanctuary.

Pros

1. The new grand piano would be available to accompany soloists during worship services. It would also be available for concerts sponsored by the Arts Committee.
2. It would not be necessary to reconfigure the front left part of the sanctuary since the Yamaha upright would be retained to accompany the choir.
3. The sale of the Steinway piano could provide \$1,000 to \$3,000.

Cons

1. The space on the right front of the sanctuary would not be available for the Bell Choir or for overflow seating.
2. The new grand piano could not be used to accompany the choir in its current position, thus requiring retention and maintenance of the Yamaha upright piano.

c. An Assessment of needs – for 1, 2, or 3 keyboard instruments

Basically, the Church's Music Program requires an organ and one piano. Ideally, the piano should be a concert quality grand that can be used as an accompanying instrument for the choir and as an accompanying or solo instrument for performing artists. The Yamaha upright piano currently located against the organ case and in front of the choir on the left side of the sanctuary is an adequate but undistinguished instrument suitable to accompany the choir, but not appropriate for performing artists. If the Church decides to replace the Steinway grand with another concert-quality grand piano, the location of the new piano becomes an important issue. There are advantages (see above) in reducing the number of keyboard instruments in the sanctuary to two, but doing so requires a reconfiguration of the left front of the sanctuary. If the replacement piano were located on the right front of the sanctuary, no reconfiguration of the sanctuary would be necessary. Failure to replace the Steinway piano with an adequate piano would make it difficult, if not impossible, to continue the Arts Committee's Music at South Church Series.

d. A recommendation of a preferred course of action and why

The Organ:

Recommendation: *The committee recommends unanimously that the Church contract with William Czelusniak to remove its Berkshire organ and to purchase, rebuild, install, and voice the 1896 Casavant organ he has offered South Church for the total sum of \$130,000. The committee further recommends that if the terms of the proposed contract are deemed satisfactory, the Church sign the contract by the end of November 2011 so that Mr. Czelusniak will have sufficient time to rebuild the Casavant organ in his shop from December through May and install it at South Church during June through August, 2012. The committee also recommends that the Trustees develop a plan to reconfigure the front of the sanctuary to accommodate the dimensions of the Casavant organ.*

The Capital Campaign has provided funding for the preservation of the Church's structure, but it has not addressed the need to preserve or replace its failing organ. The organ is critical to the tradition and style of worship that South Church members respect and want to continue. Consequently, it is essential that we address the problem of the poor condition of our organ.

The critical problems with the Berkshire organ have been described by William Czelusniak and confirmed by two highly qualified independent consultants, Grant Moss and Jonathan Ambrosino. Mr. Czelusniak's cost estimates to repair the Berkshire organ have been corroborated by Mr. Ambrosino, who is responsible for maintaining and repairing some of the largest church organs in Boston. Since Mr. Czelusniak's cost estimates to repair the Berkshire organ are \$150,000 and the cost of purchasing and installing the Casavant organ are \$130,000 for the organ plus about \$10,000 to reconfigure the front of the sanctuary, it is economically prudent for the Church to purchase a rebuilt high-quality organ rather than to repair our mediocre organ.

The Casavant organ, in the opinion of the committee and its consultant, Grant Moss, will be superior in sound quality to the Berkshire organ, which was improperly designed and voiced for our sanctuary. The committee is convinced the Casavant organ would provide excellent support for congregational singing and the choir. It would also provide the tonal quality and variation necessary for the performance of organ compositions from the Baroque, Romantic, and Modern periods. It is a versatile instrument. It is also unlikely to require major repairs for the foreseeable future.

The 1896 Casavant would be the oldest known playable Casavant organ in the United States. As a historic instrument from a highly respected Canadian organ manufacturer that is still in business, the organ would be of considerable interest to organists and others throughout the United States. It would be a major enhancement to our music program and would probably attract people who care about the quality and integrity of traditional religious music to our Church. The quality of sound of the Casavant organ would be, in the opinion of the committee and our consultant, much better than the sound of the Allen electronic instrument we heard at First Congregational Church, Amherst.

The removal of the Berkshire organ and the installation of the Casavant organ could be accomplished in the three summer months of 2012, whereas the proposed repair of the Berkshire organ would most likely be phased over a period of three to six summers, resulting in extended disruptions in the sanctuary.

The Piano

Recommendation: *The committee recommends the immediate sale of the Steinway piano. It also recommends that the Church advertise widely that it is interested in a gift of a concert-quality grand piano in good condition or a gift of the funds to purchase one. If a new grand piano of concert quality is given to the Church, the committee recommends that it be installed in the right front section of the sanctuary where the Steinway piano is now located.*

The committee studied the reports of several piano repair experts who found the Steinway grand piano to be in very poor condition. Since the cost to repair the piano would be about \$8,000 or more, and since its current worth is considerably less than that amount, the committee does not recommend funding its restoration. Replacing the organ has a higher priority.

If we receive a gift of a grand piano of concert quality to replace the Steinway piano, the committee recommends that it be located on the right front side of the sanctuary so that we would not have to remove any pews. The Bell Choir, in accord with its reported preference, might be encouraged to perform in the back of the church.

If an appropriate grand piano is not given to the Church, the most serious consequence will be that the Arts Committee Music Series will not be able to sponsor programs requiring or featuring keyboard artists. Alternatives would be to rent a grand piano for specific performances or discontinue the Arts Committee's Music at South Church Series.

a. A recommended timeline for action

The Organ

The committee encourages the Trustees to recommend scheduling a special Congregational Meeting to consider the replacement of the organ no later than November 30, 2011. If the Congregation chooses to purchase the Casavant organ from William Czelusniak and have it installed during the summer of 2012, he will need the months of December through May to assemble and rebuild the organ in his shop before installing it in South Church during June through August of 2012. If we wait until our Annual Meeting at the end of January 2012 to make the decision, we will most likely have to postpone installation of the Casavant organ until the summer of 2013.

The Piano

The committee recommends that the Trustees sell the Steinway piano and that we advertise our need for the gift of a grand piano of concert quality as soon as possible. If a new grand piano is received as a gift, it should replace the Steinway on the right front of the sanctuary.

2.a. A recommendation of how the proposed action should be funded

The Organ

The committee suggests that funds to purchase the Casavant organ be raised by requesting major gifts, by making a special appeal to the Congregation for contributions to an organ fund, and by having fund-raisers. If sufficient contributions are not received by the time the organ is installed, the committee recommends that the Trustees seek a loan secured by up to five members of the congregation for the balance.

The Piano

The committee recommends encouraging the gift of a new grand piano of concert quality. It does not recommend the expenditure of Church funds for the repair or replacement of the Steinway piano.

Closing Comments

The Organ Committee met five times and made field trips to First Congregational Church, Amherst and St. Mary's Church in Westfield. It reported its progress to the congregation in Newsletter articles. The committee's unpaid consultant, Grant Moss, attended one of the committee's regular meetings and demonstrated the St. Mary's Casavant organ. Consultant Jonathan Ambrosino from Boston met with the committee on July 21st to discuss the condition of the Berkshire organ and the estimated cost to repair it. Detailed minutes of the committee's meetings are available on request.

The committee understands that the Trustees must consider and establish priorities for several proposed projects, but it urges the Trustees to keep in mind the critical importance of the organ for worship services at South Church. A properly functioning organ is not a luxury for South Church. It is a necessity.

Appendix A

Excerpt from e-mail written by William Czelusniak to Willis Bridegam, dated 10/19/10

"While still relatively new and reliable (as pipe organs go), the instrument in the South Amherst Congregational Church has been subject to various alterations, partial rebuilding, and certain revoicing, since our Firm began the exclusive maintenance of it, circa 1975, and for a variety of reasons both musical and practical: the original 4' Octave never stayed in tune, being featured prominently in an elevated section of facade; the Pedal department needed to be relocated from a former corner closet (during an earlier room renovation); and, some stops just needed to be made to sound better and more stable. This introduction implies, correctly, that all ideal vision for this instrument has not been realized, yet; and, therein lies the footing for further discussions of projects and costs both to maintain the organ in its physical integrity, and for reliable service to the Congregation, but looking also to improve its musical characteristics and function. On this basis, there are a wide assortment of issues or objectives within the present pipe organ that deserve to be addressed, in various priorities, over some period of time, with favourable intent for the effective and continuing use of the organ. While the actual priority of these projects might be debatable, or otherwise forced by prevailing circumstances within the instrument, I can list major items from our recent discussions, as follows. Revoicing work should continue throughout the organ. The Great and Pedal, probably, are most fully treated already, although Marilyn's request for Pedal Bourdon regulation (and some related repairs) easily could add up to about \$800.00 work. Then, several ranks in the Swell division will benefit from shop overhaul of speech and tone: 8' Cor de Nuit (with loose tuning caps); 4' Koppel Flute (with loose tuning caps); Principal 2' needy of revoicing; and similar voicing treatment to the 1-1/3' rank, with the consideration of altering it to 2-2/3' pitch. Each of these stops might require \$4,000.00 of effort, on the average; if the 2-2/3' stop is produced by repitching, then the cost will be greater for the new bass pipes (to achieve the new and lower pitch). Thus, the total cost of these four ranks could run as high as \$22,000.00. There is one, unit reed rank (73 pipes) that serves the Swell and Pedal division, both. This stop requires considerable tuning and regulation effort, on a regular basis; and its bass end is quite troublesome, in no small part because of the particular form and style of construction of these pipes. It will cost approximately \$8,000.00 to achieve a thorough, shop renovation of this one rank, with no guarantee of any complete success for musical stability, given the original and prevailing form of pipe construction. (Out right replacement of the whole rank would double the suggested price, at least.) There have been, in the past, some repetitive problems with the manual keys, sticking during the winter weather. We have been able to maintain these keyboards at a useful level by means of service calls. Likewise, the thumb pistons of the organ, located under each of the two manual keyboards, have been troublesome in the past, but have been manageable with attention and investment. The present (original) electro-mechanical combination action is limited in its accessory services and is noisy and clunky when used. All of these problems together suggest a thorough rebuilding of the whole console, for optimal and durable results. The process as a whole would involve new keyboards, new and more thumb pistons, new stop controls (electric drive), and a new and broader, solid-state combination action. As a matter of course, we would overhaul the pedalboard in the process, so that all of the players' interfaces with the instrument would be new and consistent. The aggregate cost of all of these efforts will total approximately \$75,000.00. All of the renovation work for the pipe organ discussed to this point would be executed in phases, over time, with commensurate readjustment of cost

estimates and eventual prices. That fact of passing time, however, points up the continued aging of the pipe organ. Right now, the instrument is just over 40 years old. The work listed easily could occupy another 10 years' investment and shopwork. Thus, when the organ is shaped up so considerably as these projects will effect, the instrument will be 50 years old and subject then to considerable leather liability. At some point, then or later, but unavoidably, it will be necessary to dismantle the windchests to replace and restore the quality and condition of all soft-leather applied internally to effect prompt valve action to every pipe. The aggregate cost of releathering work, poked a bit for future value, easily could total \$45,000.00. All of this renovation work combined would render a fine organ in durable and reliable condition to continue in service to this Congregation, indefinitely (with ongoing tuning and maintenance). However, the total cost of these accumulated investments appears to be at least \$150,000.00. This sum could increase from this level, based upon the passage of time and inflation, the choice of pipework, supply of materials, subcontractors, or the extent of effort determined later to be applied to any one area of the renewal objective (more releathering, perhaps, to account also for the wind-supply system, in addition to internal windchest parts). It is unlikely that, pursuing all interests for the improvement of the organ, as well as for its preservation, the cost of such investment over the next 10 - 20 years would be any less than \$150,000.00."

Appendix B: Memorandum from Jonathan Ambrosino to Willis Bridegam:

Mr. Willis Bridegam
SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
1066 South Main Street South Amherst, Massachusetts 02026

ORGAN PROJECT — SECOND OPINION

Dear Willis,

Thanks again for your warm welcome on July 21 at South Church, and particularly helpful to provide such a tasty lunch. I thought it might be helpful if I summarized my findings into this short summary document.

DESCRIPTION: The instrument was built in 1969 by the now-defunct Berkshire Organ Company. It contains 13 independent registers, 15 ranks or actual sets of pipes, and 869 individual pipes. This is hardly a large organ, having just enough variety to lead congregational and choral music. The pipes and mechanisms are contained entirely within the wooden case enclosure, except for the blower in the hallway closet behind.

This is an instrument of average quality. Parts and pipes were sourced from reputable supply houses; a few old pipes and components were reused. The tone is adequate while offering little distinction. The organ's appearance hews much more to 1960s Modern Movement ideals than any attempt to blend in with the visual language of the New England meeting house.

VALUATION: To replace this instrument with one of similar size and average quality would run about \$300,000. An organ of top quality would cost about \$600,000. Because of its quality and tone, the present instrument has little sale possibility other than salvage; builders would find its pipes and mechanisms perfectly reusable as fodder for other projects. Changes to the sound over the years have made certain registers more pleasing and effective.

MAINTENANCE BUDGET: Annual maintenance generally runs between 3/4 and 1-1/4 percent of replacement cost. Averaging the two replacement values (\$450,000) gives a budget of about \$5500. In ideal circumstances, half of that sum is devoted to regular tuning and maintenance, the other half put into a fund for the organ's eventual restoration. That financial approach wouldn't make sense at this juncture, with overhaul imminent. Therefore, a budget of \$2750 should cover two to three annual visits for tuning, maintenance and emergencies.

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ROUTINE OVERHAUL: Organs with this kind of mechanism — electro-pneumatic — require overhaul when the perishable leather moving parts begin to fail, which in turn depends on the vintage of the leather, the degree to which the leather is exposed to light and the atmosphere, and the amount of use. In other organs from 1969, leather has lasted anywhere from 25 to 50 years. Here, it is nearing the end of its life, having probably another 5-10 years of useful life left. The leather in the mechanism of the relocated Bourdon pipes (the large wood pipes painted white, hugging each side of the case) is newer, yet the leather is now giving out. The leathering brings with it an occasion to clean the pipes and overhaul any other failing mechanism, re-setting the organ's usage clock for another generation.

OVERHAUL PRICING: I calculated a rough 'desk' estimate of \$144,868 for a complete overhaul, including revoicing of the Swell pipes to put them in line with what has been done to the Great, professional reconditioning of the Oboe pipes, and a new solid-state, multilevel combination action. This is not a proposal, nor intended as anything other than a second opinion. Without comprehensive knowledge of the instrument, my price doubtless leaves out items it isn't possible to uncover on such a cursory inspection. Also, a firm's pricing is unique to its circumstances and overhead. Any price in the range of \$135,000-\$165,000 strikes me as appropriate for what will be necessary here. This isn't a small figure, nor is this the sort of instrument that lends itself to a phased approach. The most cost effective means of seeing the work carried out is to raise all the money and do everything at once.

DUE DILIGENCE: Such a pricetag begs a larger question: is the Church actually happy with the organ's sound and appearance? South Church calls to mind dozens of similar New England churches outfitted with original organs built between 1850-1900. Instruments from this period are characterized by architecturally appropriate and elegant appearance, rich and pleasing tone, and a more straightforward mechanical action, which lasts longer before overhaul is required and then needs less of it than electric-action organs. Before you embark upon the overhaul of the present organ, I would ask these hard questions and, if there is interest, investigate the availability of an old organ of appropriate physical and musical dimension.

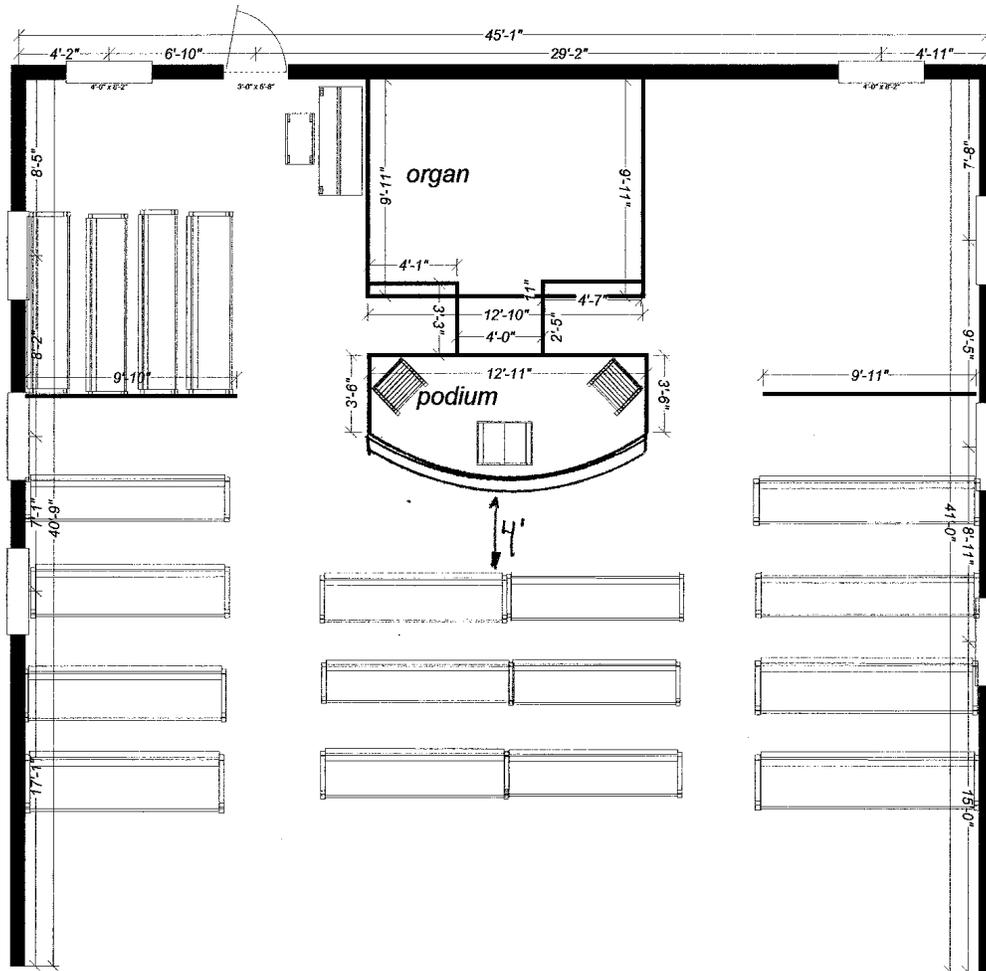
Please feel free to be in touch with any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Ambrosino /jca

(Note: Mr. Ambrosino's pictures of the interior of the organ are available on request.)

Appendix D: Revised Proposed Floor Plan – Front of Sanctuary – Provided by David Cody



Appendix E: Floor Plan Narrative Provided by David Cody

Alterations to the South Church stage to accommodate the Casavant organ.

1. The removal of the existing platform and wing walls
2. Repair to the floor to bring flush to the other floor areas (not leveling) for organ support
3. New Marmolite flooring to blend new and old floors
4. Build new platform as shown on the plans leaving a 4' wide floor space from the new work to the first row of pews
5. The platform will have a continuous front step following the curve of the platform
6. Raised panel organist privacy wall and platform rear and side rail, similar to the existing panel and wall.
7. The platform at it's widest will be approximately 6'
8. Optional side steps would eliminate the railing in those areas.

The organ will occupy a space that is some 2 feet deeper than the current organ. It will, with the elimination of the wing walls around it be 3 to 4 feet narrower than the current organ, this will aid in the traffic flow from the back entrance for all who use it. The additional space will also make moving the piano easier. The reduction of the 6' space in front of the platform now to 4', will not impede egress, but will interfere with the current communion table set up. By using a large radius curve to shape the front of the new platform and step, will allow for the most natural egress path and create the safest method of getting on and off the platform. If the step is continued around both 3' 6" sides of the platform, the railings could be eliminated. This will be less visually obstructive than the solid short rail that is there now. The back privacy screen will be recreated in a similar fashion to what is there now.