

A NEW PIPE ORGAN FOR GRACE CHURCH, KESWICK

The Grace Episcopal Church pipe organ was damaged beyond repair by a heavy inundation of rainwater in October of 2015. The replacement organ recommended by the Organ Task Force and the Vestry after a year and a half of study is to be a beautiful hand-made instrument that will last for many generations. The new organ is known by its builders, Taylor and Boody, as their Opus 77. Like all pipe organs, ours will be expensive, costing \$1 million. Adjustments to the church building to achieve proper acoustics and some important historical restoration will add another \$600,000. Grace has received half the total amount already, some \$800,000, without a fund-raising effort. A capital campaign will account for the other half.

What is to be said for this ambitious project? Mainly this: we build the organ in the spirit of giving. It is our gift to our church, to our community and to posterity. It is a gift to our children and their children's children, as well as to new members and to new and old friends and neighbors of Grace, now and for years to come. All these groups make up the larger Grace Family that has always defined what we really are.

The pipe organ, then, is a gift from our current Grace Family to our future Grace Family. In many ways it reflects the courage and selflessness of those who founded this church on the edge of the wilderness in 1745. It also mirrors the vision of those who in 1845-1855 sacrificed to build a beautiful stone edifice to replace the original wooden building. Yet again, the new organ replicates the perseverance of those who restored and enlarged Grace Church after the devastating fire of 1895. And it advances the aims of the 1970 and especially the 2001 additions to the parish house that established Grace Church as a magnet and gathering place for the larger Keswick community. None of these changes came easily, for there are always differing points of view -- a historic trait and strength of Grace! But none of these landmark advances would have happened without a confidence in the future of this community and a willingness to take risks.

Change and growth have enlarged Grace Family's presence in the community and have extended its outreach to others. It is our great hope that these others have found new life and new light through our efforts. Our colonial founders would no doubt marvel at Grace's community outreach today, and would be proud of what their little clapboard church had come to be and to mean in Keswick.

Now, in 2018, the Grace Family once again has a major opportunity to expand and enrich its outreach to an even broader community, this time through music and related artistic programs that will promote spiritual growth and cultural appreciation to all who seek it. We pray for success and ask you to join us in that prayer and in our campaign to raise the funds necessary to finish the task.

March, 2018

Grace Organ Task Force