



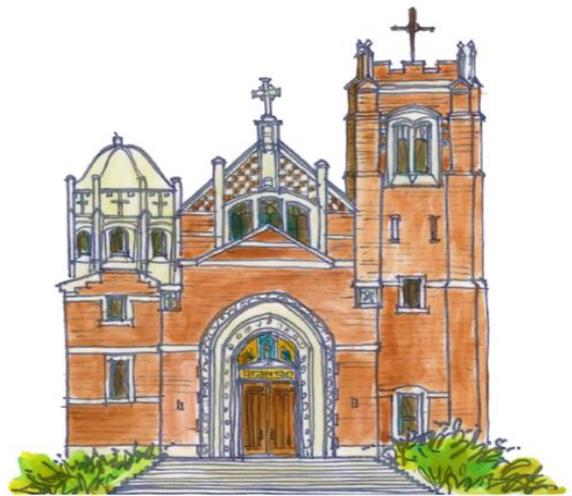
# St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church Case for Support

*Among all other instruments which are suitable for divine worship, the organ is “accorded pride of place” because of its capacity to sustain the singing of a large gathered assembly, due to both its size and its ability to give “resonance to the fullness of human sentiments, from joy to sadness, from praise to lamentation.” Likewise, “the manifold possibilities of the organ in some way remind us of the immensity and the magnificence of God.”*

*Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2007

The musical tradition of the universal Church is a priceless treasure. A combination of sacred music and words, music creates a vital part of solemn liturgy. At St. Francis our organ has been a part of our liturgical worship for over five decades. We write to you today to ask for your continued support and we plan for the continuation of the sacred tradition for the decades to come.

Since 1890, St. Francis of Assisi Church has continued the sacred musical tradition of the universal Church. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* recalls the vast, rich musical tradition for understanding the role and ministry of music in the liturgy. One of God's greatest creations is the gift of song. Our ancestors in faith—Moses, David, Deborah, Paul and St. Gregory—have taught us through words and music how to revel in God's infinite love, proclaim his glory, give thanks for his abounding generosity, and plead for mercy and forgiveness.



In 2007 the USCCB issued a document entitled, *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*. This important statement addresses the role of the organ in Catholic churches:

*In addition to its ability to lead and sustain congregational singing, the sound of the pipe organ is most suited for solo playing of sacred music in the Liturgy at appropriate moments. Pipe organs also play an important evangelical role in the church's outreach to the wider community in sacred concerts, music series and other musical and cultural programs. For all of these reasons, the place of the organ should be taken into account from the outset in planning process for the building or renovation of churches.*

To assure the future of this rich tradition of sacred music, and with the advice of the Pastoral Council, we established an Organ Committee to research the condition of our present Wicks Organ and to obtain proposals to either refurbish or replace it with a new instrument.



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## The Wicks Organ, Opus 4692

The organ at St. Francis of Assisi was built in 1966 by the Wicks Organ Company of Highland, Illinois, and has more than 1,000 pipes. The organ is remarkably small for a church the size of St. Francis of Assisi and lacks many fundamental components. Both the organ console and its functional mechanisms predate the advent of digital electronics which are now used throughout the industry to control the many components of the organ.

The Wicks Organ is 52 years old and in poor mechanical and tonal condition. The overall quality of construction has exaggerated the effects of its age. A number of pipes do not speak due to water damage and the poor quality of the organ's components. Also our organ suffers from poorly installed wiring and a crushed duct. Thus, the dilapidated condition of the current organ does not permit the splendor of sound to be produced.

## Organ Committee Findings

The committee sought out Keith Shafer, an independent organ consultant from Augusta, Georgia, to assist the parish in evaluating the existing organ and to make recommendations for a planning study.

Mr. Shafer conducted an onsite inspection and submitted a report detailing numerous issues with the organ. Three reputable organ companies inspected the organ and were in unanimous agreement on the condition and findings of the existing instrument. The reports determined the following about the Wicks Organ:

- † the organ is of poor quality, despite being regularly maintained;
- † the organ pipes are positioned incorrectly in the choir loft;
- † the existing double cabinets should be replaced with a single organ case located on the central axis of the nave congruent with the church's beautiful Gothic architecture;
- † the organ is inadequate for the needs of a vibrantly growing parish in the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- † some of the organ's existing pipe work could be reused;
- † the organ's console, wind chests, mechanical devices and cabinetry are incompatible with present organ building practices;
- † the organ lacks basic tonal resources;
- † the organ should be enlarged through the use of digital components.





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In keeping with the promise of the Archdiocese of New Orleans to assess our facilities to ensure the appropriate use of resources, the committee has determined that remodeling and refurbishing the existing organ is cost-prohibitive and limiting.

Three companies submitted detailed proposals including the reuse of the existing pipe work in a new specification with significant additions of digitally reproduced organ components that drastically expand the organ's tonal resources. After evaluating the proposals, the Organ Committee recommended the parish work with Cornel Zimmer Organ Builders of Denver, North Carolina, to build a new instrument for the church.

Cornel Zimmer Organ Builders use progressive imagination and methodology in the design of their instruments. They have a great deal of experience building organs. Each and every project carefully utilizes the artistry of European and American traditions of organ building and combines it with a new age of technology to create organs that will fully support worship and musical programs. The size of the company allows the flexibility to fully customize each one of their instruments while maintaining a high degree of quality control. All components in a new organ are built to the highest quality standards and their integrated design work ensures that their organ will complement and enhance our worship space.

## A New Organ for St. Francis of Assisi



Artist Rendering

The Organ Committee developed specifications that would provide a new organ incorporating most of the existing pipe work, as well as the addition of digitally produced organ components. This instrument will be housed in a beautifully carved single organ case located on the central axis of the nave. A new four-manual movable organ console will provide additional floor space and maximum flexibility for singers and instrumentalists. Speakers for the digital components will be hidden from view.

The estimated costs of our new organ, including needed renovation of the choir loft, are as follows:

### *By the Numbers*

<i>New Organ</i>	\$638,625
<i>Performance Bond</i>	\$ 40,000
<i>Electrical, Lighting, HVAC</i>	
<i>Structural Expenses*</i>	\$ 21,375
<i>Total Project Cost</i>	\$700,000
<i>*estimated expenses</i>	



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## In Our Music and Song God is Glorified

St. Francis of Assisi is a welcoming community centered in the Eucharist. We are committed to the teachings of Jesus Christ, the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church and the dignity of human life. We are a family that strives to learn and share our faith by living the Beatitudes and by reconciling ourselves with God and one another.

St. Francis is uniquely located in Uptown New Orleans and is a destination church that welcomes visitors from around the world. St. Francis is abundantly blessed to celebrate dozens of weddings throughout the year for couples wishing to share their holy covenant in the beauty of this historical church. Music is a harmonious gift to be enjoyed by all. It touches the depths of our souls speaking to emotions and allowing us to praise and worship through song. New Orleans is known for Jazz and being part of the heart and soul of music. Music is the universal language-one where we do not need to speak the same tongue but can feel the message being delivered together.

Our parish patron, St. Francis of Assisi, inspires us to be instruments of peace, to sow love where there is hatred, pardon where injury, faith where doubt, hope where despair, light where darkness and joy where sadness. Each week, parishioners and visitors gather together to thank and praise God in ritual and song in shared faith and lived love. *When, in Our Music, God Is Glorified* is one of the hymns of praise in the Worship Hymnal. In the final verse we sing,

***Let every instrument be tuned for praise!  
Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise!  
And may God give us faith to sing always: Alleluia!***

By its very nature song has both an individual and a communal dimension. Thus, it is no wonder that singing together in church expresses so well the sacramental presence of God to his people. The many voices of the organ and of instrumental ensembles, with their great range of expression, add variety and colorful dimensions to the song of the assembly, especially with the addition of harmonization.



For many generations to come, a new organ will enhance the worship for our parishioners and the numerous visitors throughout the liturgical year. As the centennial anniversary of the dedication of St Francis of Assisi Church approaches in 2021, the installation of a new pipe organ is the final jewel in the crown of this historic Uptown church.

Join us as we strive to follow in the footsteps of our ancestors in faith and glorify our Lord's teachings through song. On behalf of the parish leadership, thank you for considering an investment in the liturgical and sacramental life of our friendly church. For in our worship and song, God is glorified!

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### *A Very Special Thanks from Our Organ Committee:*

Fr. Michael Schneller, Pastor  
Stan Ellington, Finance Council

Tom Foutz, Finance Council  
Thomas Wright, Musical Director

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