



Two services this Sunday will go ahead as normal in the Langley Canadian Reformed Church sanctuary, despite the presence of scaffolding around the pulpit, explained church organist Frank Ezinga (far left). The church has spent years planning and renovating (left) the worship space to accommodate the new pipe organ which arrived in pieces (above) Tuesday.

Canadian Reformed

Church replaces antiquated pipe organ

by Roxanne Hooper

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After four years of detailed craftsmanship to create it; after travelling more than 4,000 kilometres across the continent to deliver it; and after four days of waiting for it while it sat in a freight truck in a Langley parking lot; a mammoth new pipe organ worth almost \$400,000 was unloaded at the Langley Canadian Reformed Church Tuesday.

And now, after another four weeks of installation and fine tuning, this one-of-a-kind organ is expected to belt out its first song inside the sanctuary in mid-June.

A moving crew was brought in Tuesday morning to help unload literally dozens of boxes holding in excess of 1,250 pipes (16 feet to just over one inch in length)

and several dozen meticulously handcrafted oak components for this organ.

By later that same afternoon, much of the packaging had been stripped away, and two workers from Casavant Freres – the oldest pipe organ builders in North America – were already piecing together the giant musical puzzle atop a platform that stands about 15 feet above the church pulpit.

The initial process, at least, was observed by gleeful church organist Frank Ezinga.

"It's going to be very exciting," he said, wringing his hands while watching its arrival.

LCRC was first developed on 52nd Avenue in 1981 to accommodate Langley residents who had previously been worshipping in Surrey. Despite limited funds available at the time, the new

church acquired a discarded organ from Surrey and a series of old parts (some more than 100 years old) and managed to piece together a workable organ.

Its presence was unmistakable since it encircled much of the old pulpit. But that organ has since been dismantled and sold to a 70-year-old man who plans to reassemble it in his own home in the Bavarian-style village of Leavenworth, Wash.

In the meantime, the church has used the \$12,500 raised from its sale, plus thousands raised by the congregation during the past few years, to pay for this new organ.

For Ezinga, this is a once in a life-time experience.

Growing up in a musical family in the community of Baarn, Holland, he began taking organ lessons and playing at his church

at about the age of 12.

Despite moving to Canada, the 41-year-old Murrayville man said, he's never lost his passion for playing, and happily took up the position as church organist at LCRC 10 years ago.

Through all those years, he's longed to play one of the Casavant organs, and says his dream will soon come true.

Admittedly, he played the new organ once before. In February a handful of church members visited the Montreal-based manufacturing plant to test and approve the organ before it was disassembled again and shipped west.

But Ezinga said he can hardly wait to play it again. This time he'll be performing for the 650-member congregation during an "extra-special service" planned for June 15.