

THE ORGAN

An organ search committee was formed in January 1972 to begin listening to and evaluating many organs. Everywhere they went, the name of Rudolf von Beckerath of Hamburg, Germany, was mentioned. After hearing his landmark organ at Trinity Church in Cleveland, Ohio, the committee decided to recommend him as the man suitable to build the organ for First Lutheran. A contract was signed in January 1973. The succeeding months found a mounting inflation. Immediately after the first payment was made, the United States dollar was depreciated 10%.

At last on June 21, 1974, the organ arrived at New Orleans and came to Knoxville on July 2. Some 10 men of our congregation plus 2 from Hamburg carried the crates into the church. Getting 600 pounds of console to the second floor required a bit of courage. Construction was begun on July 10 and completed on July 31. Voicing and tuning of the organ was begun on August 19.

The organ is at once an example of the finest type of classical organ building, combined with the best technological advances of our time. The tracker action is typical of that of the great organs of the past, but the action has been made functional in 20th century terms. The organ has been built along lines similar to those of northern Europe and the contemporary tonal design philosophy of the "Orgelbewegung," or a stressing of tracker action, low wind pressures, casework surrounding the pipes, and an integral, self-contained approach to the design of the instrument.

The casework of the instrument is oak. Pear wood is used around the keyboard, oak or mahogany for wood-pipes, and grenadilla for the keys. The metal pipes contain a much higher percentage of tin than usual in many modern organs. The beauty of the sound we enjoy is partially a result of that. The organ contains 19 stops, 24 ranks, and 1204 pipes.