

# The Tidings of Trinity Cathedral

Perspectives Issue

November 2, 2008 • Pentecost XXV • Vol. 38, No.

## BICENTENNIAL RESTORATION PROJECT UPDATE

by Wilson Farrell

Thank you for your patience with the disruption to your worship. I hope you appreciate the absolute necessity of making these repairs.

The decision to remove and replace the stucco was a good one. A much larger proportion of the stucco is delaminated than we first thought, and removing all of it is revealing many problems that need attention. You can now begin to see the results of that work, as portions of the scaffolding have been removed from the north side of the Cathedral.

There is no doubt that the original color was the tan/brown/sandstone. After much experimentation, mixing, and rejection, we resolved the formula to achieve the proper color. This is far from an exact science, and the results are beautifully varied and mottled.

Scoring seems simple, but the layout of the score lines can be affected by the trueness of the horizontal lines of the original building, its windows, and other openings. The elements must be scored so that the lines match the way stone would have been cut for each particular location since the various dimensions of the original work are not consistent. We simply have to work around the problems, but it does slow the process.

We have repaired the structure beneath the floors and are now working on the structure of the main roof over the nave and the roofs over the side aisles, the pinnacles beneath the spires, and the masonry walls.

We are removing trim and boxing from the trusses and finding that while key structural elements are in as bad, or worse, condition than we expected, other elements which were suspect do not have to be removed. The scaffolding holds up the work platform and also the roof while the structure is removed and replaced. In turn, the scaffolding is supported by shoring in the undercroft so that the loads are carried to the ground.

I hope you all have seen the portion of one of the trusses which we put on the flower preparation counter. It shows the truly bad condition of the wood. Structurally, damage to a minor area can destroy the load capacity of the entire truss, just as a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

You may remember my talking about the need to install 24-foot lumber between walls, 22 feet apart. We determined that the potential damage to the building walls from that work was just not warranted, and we have worked out a solution which is structurally sound and will not be visible as it is covered by trim and boxing. This work is being done by Palmetto Craftsmen from Charleston. Buddy Hill and I selected them based on their experience with such work on numerous church projects in the Low Country, among them St. Luke's, St. Paul's, Grace Episcopal, and Bethel Methodist in Charleston.

We have also found that portions of the structure supporting the roofs over the side aisles and the ceilings on both sides must be repaired or replaced. The ends

of the beams have deteriorated -- essentially, the same problems occur in the low roof support system as in the nave trusses. And the accumulated load of two roof applications has over-stressed the beams and purlins which we now must replace or strengthen.

To make these repairs we had to remove the ceilings and the pews, a task I truly had hoped to avoid. But we now realize removing, repairing, and refinishing the pews is one of the most valuable things we are doing. We have found some badly needed repairs, and even some termite damage. I promise you that we are not trying to make them look like new. While still showing that they have served well and long, they will also show that they are well cared for and loved. Nicholas Grant is a genius with wood and fusses over his responsibility assiduously. Those of you who are yourselves grandchildren can rest easy with the assurance that your own grandchildren and great-grandchildren will sit in these same pews. That is a tradition of Trinity that will not be disturbed.

Because we had to remove the ceilings for the structural repairs, the opportunity arose to add a sprinkler system. The piping will run in the narrow interstitial space between the ceiling and the roof, but just as importantly, we will have sprinklers under the wood floors. Getting the necessary piping up to the ceilings and hiding it from sight will be a challenge, but every effort will be made to avoid any visual impact on the Cathedral. I think we will all rest easier with a sprinkler system to protect this building whose primary structural element is wood, some of it at least 200 years old (if you include the "growing time" before it was cut to build Trinity.)

At this time we have a temporary fire alarm system in place and operating in the Cathedral. It is based on heat detectors above the floor and in the undercroft. When the project is completed we will have a system which will employ several different kinds of devices, but the undercroft heat detectors will remain in place.

It has been some 18 months since we began work. A great deal has been accomplished: a new heating and air conditioning system has been installed, an adult vesting space has been created, the narthex entrances and the handicap ramp have been re-built, renovation of the Sacristy has begun although it cannot be completed until we finish the other work in the Cathedral. We have repaired termite damage to the undercroft. Twenty-five percent of the structural repair has been accomplished. We have replaced the electrical service to the Cathedral building. About a quarter of the stucco work has been accomplished, the tower louvers have been replaced and about half the spires. The stained glass window work is a third complete. The structural problems and the necessity of replacing or repairing the interior trusses and the suspicion that we would find other serious problems, led to the realization that Trinity -- its worship, its spirit and its life -- would have to move for the work to be done. The disruption attendant to that move has always been accepted with wonderful patience. I think it has been a vivid example of the Christian spirit and a strong statement to Columbia that Trinity is much more than just bricks and mortar.



### A TRINITY FOUNDATION GIFT IDEA

There is a silver lining from the recent government bailout which favorably affects Not-for-Profit organizations like the Trinity Foundation. As you may recall, tax-free treatment of distributions from IRAs, where the distributions are donated to charity, were allowed under the Pension Protection Act of 2006, and applied to distributions made in tax years 2006 and 2007. Under the recently passed 2008 Extenders Act, the tax-free qualified charitable distribution rules are extended to apply to distributions made in tax years beginning after December 31, 2007 and before January 1, 2010 (calendar years 2008 and 2009). Taxpayers, age 70 ½ or older, may exclude from gross income up to \$100,000 of their qualified charitable distributions.

Although tax-free IRA distributions to the Trinity Foundation cannot be deducted as charitable contributions, the distributions do count toward satisfying your required minimum distribution for the year. Please consult with your personal tax accountant or financial planner before IRA distributions are made, as certain rules do apply. Contact Wade Stinnette (803-790-5800) or John Moorman (803-790-6656) for further information.

This is great news for the Trinity Restoration Campaign!  
Won't you consider making a gift to your Cathedral's restoration?