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www.smartsvillehistoricchurch.org

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Door Restoration – a BIG Project

Restoration of the interior and exterior doors began with John Wright of Wright Restorations recently bringing the four of them to his Grass Valley shop. Examination revealed damaged wood needing resurfacing and re-paneling. At the time of this newsletter, John is finished with the exterior door restoration and is priming them. We look forward to seeing the green paint as it once was, nicely setting off the entry to the church and matching the window shutters John has restored.

Brandon Senn and Donovan Blais will work together, as they did on the window restoration, to install the four 9'5" doors, while adjusting and straightening the frames. The original exterior hinges and interior dual action spring hinges that allow the doors to open both ways are in good shape (seen in the above masthead). We are currently choosing hardware to replace door latches and handles. Brandon and Donovan will also work on the sanctuary railing restoration and installation, the next project on the schedule.



Dual action spring hinges



Dismantled interior doors in John's shop

HAPPENING THIS YEAR

As we work behind the scenes to help the ongoing, complex restoration process, we also keep in mind activities and events to share. Here are two:

One event is the annual non-profit fund-raiser called **Giving Tuesday**, which has become an enormous worldwide movement drawing attention to non-profit groups like SCRFI. We have been blessed to receive your generous donations over the years. Always on the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving, this year it falls on December 2nd. We'll send you an email and post it on our Facebook page. Take a look here at the restoration projects you've helped over the years.



2019



2020



2022

A second activity will be **Wreaths Across America**, a national event honoring veterans by placing wreaths at local cemeteries. We always finish the day in Smartsville with a memorial wreath placed upon the redwood tree at the church, which will be open for viewing. You may [sponsor a wreath](#) and are welcome to join us that day, beginning at noon on Saturday, December 13.



Enjoy this reprint of Kit Burton's first article "From the Big S", published in the former Penn Valley Courier.

PV-1 SMARTSVILLE CHURCH RESTORATION

"From the Big S" PV Courier column, February, 2007

By Kit Burton, SCRFI President

In my opinion, restoration of the historic Church of the Immaculate Conception is the most important public project in Smartsville and Big Oak Valley. Not only is it the center-piece of the town, it is directly connected to the town's fascinating past, and ultimately will be used for community functions. More than 40 years have passed since the church was regularly maintained and the neglect is visible.

But in 1998, local resident Bill Ross had an idea. He convinced the Sacramento Diocese to donate the building and land to a group of concerned citizens. Thus SCRFI (Smartsville Church Restoration Fund, Inc.) was formed with non-profit status to save and restore the historic structure. I joined the group two years later.

At that time the roof was decayed to the point that it offered little resistance to winter rain. A very noticeable slumping of the east wall suggested structural problems and, sure enough, when the interior siding was removed the heavy timber sill plate and the bottom ends of most of the studs were found to be damaged. Before a new roof could be installed the building would have to be straightened, and we had only a few thousand dollars in the bank. This was a low point for SCRFI.

Garry Laughlin, a Yuba City engineer, established structural requirements for the restoration work. Holdrege and Kull in Nevada City verified that while the original stone foundation was adequate for the weight of the building it was not capable of resisting lateral loads. After a lot of head scratching, we came upon the idea to replace the damaged timber sill plate with a continuous concrete beam, cast directly on top of the existing stone foundation.

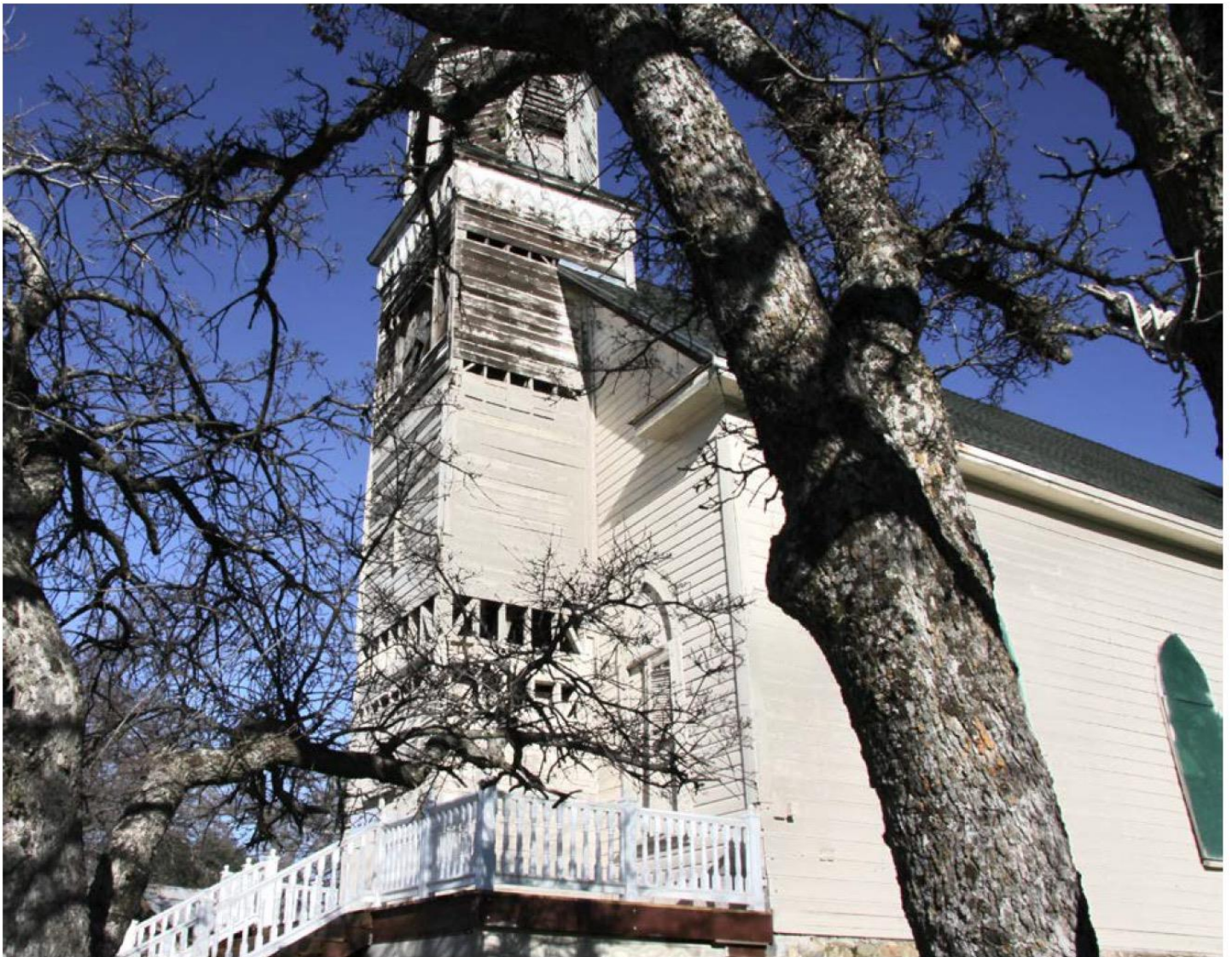
Rice Brothers house movers jacked up the building's east wall, straightening the building and leaving space for us to work without disturbing the jacks. Meanwhile, we received donations from a private foundation, from the Sacramento Diocese and from numerous individuals. A new roof was installed in the summer of 2003.

Then we started work on the foundation. By designing the concrete beam to be constructed in 16-foot sections, we were able to do some of the work ourselves, but as of last summer only two sections had been poured.

Since all of the foundation work had to be accomplished while the wall was jacked up off of the original foundation, the Rice Brothers had not yet been able to remove their jacks, beams, and cribbing. In the summer of 2006, Ted Holmes, a Yuba City contractor, found some spare

time between his regular jobs, finished the foundation beam as requested and, in addition, was able to splice and re-connect most of the studs. Rodney Ivie, working with Steve Winchell, a local remodeling contractor, finished the stud re-attachments so that the east wall of the building is now structurally sound and is resting on the foundation once again. The Rice Brothers, finally, are happy.

Although much has been accomplished, and the building appears to be temporarily safe, we still have a long way to go. Our bank account is almost dry and we currently have only four board members. Our short-term plans are for foundation rehabilitation on the other three sides of the building, straightening the bell tower, and installing a new floor. The ultimate goal is to make the building suitable for community functions.



Smartsville's Church of the Immaculate Conception under restoration