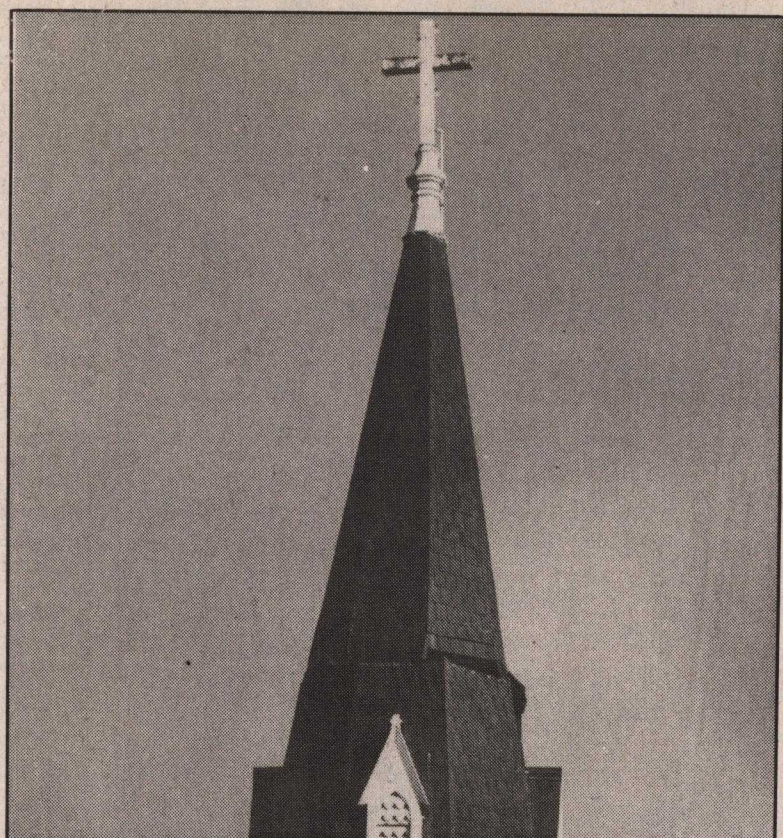


Churches

A new steeple for the church

8/27/92



The steeple of Holy Cross Church stands cracked beyond repair, left, a day after the Loma Prieta quake. Below, Stan Mierzwa works Wednesday to provide support for a new bell tower.

Shmuel Thaler/
Sentinel photos

The drive is on at city's oldest place of worship

By GREG BEEBE
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Here is the church, here are the people, now Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church needs a new steeple.

The city's oldest place of worship, founded in 1791, launched a fund-raising drive Wednesday for the \$250,000 it needs to replace the landmark steeple damaged in the 1989 earthquake.

With the skeleton of the steeple in three pieces in the background, church leaders, a local historian and others explained why the Holy Cross steeple is important — and how they hope to bring it back.

"This is not a religious issue here: This is very much a Santa Cruz historical landmark issue," said historian Sandy Lydon.

"When the steeple came off it was like part of Santa Cruz was missing," Lydon said.

The 1989 Loma Prieta earth-

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Steeple for a church

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quake was not the first — or last — setback for the church. "It's always had its challenges," said Lydon.

When earthquake damage rendered the church unsafe to occupy — and its shaky steeple and bell tower a hazard — the steeple and tower were removed and services relocated to the church's Parish Hall.

The Parish Hall burned to the ground in June 1990, and worshippers were forced into the outdoor quad at nearby Holy Cross School. A temporary pavilion — cold in the winter and hot in the summer — was

opened next door to the church as autumn approached in 1990.

A Campbell-based construction firm, VSL, is doing a seismic retrofit on the main church, and the Rev. Mike Marini, the pastor at Holy Cross, said he "optimistically" hopes the steeple, tower and the church — a \$1.4 million job altogether — will be ready for Easter services next year. Meanwhile, said Marini, the parishioners are hanging in there, buoyed by the sight of progress.

"It's really encouraging to see the tower and the steeple go up," said Marini, whose reli-

gious life — baptism, first communion, confirmation, and ordainment as a priest — is intertwined with Holy Cross.

The decision to rebuild was easy to make, said Marini, but raising money for the retrofit and steeple replacement has been time-consuming. The steeple effort — Lydon said project supporters should be called "Steeple People" — received a shot in the arm Wednesday via a \$25,000 gift from the Sentinel's earthquake relief fund, which has raised more than \$400,000 through the sale of its book, "5:04 p.m.: The Great Quake of '89."