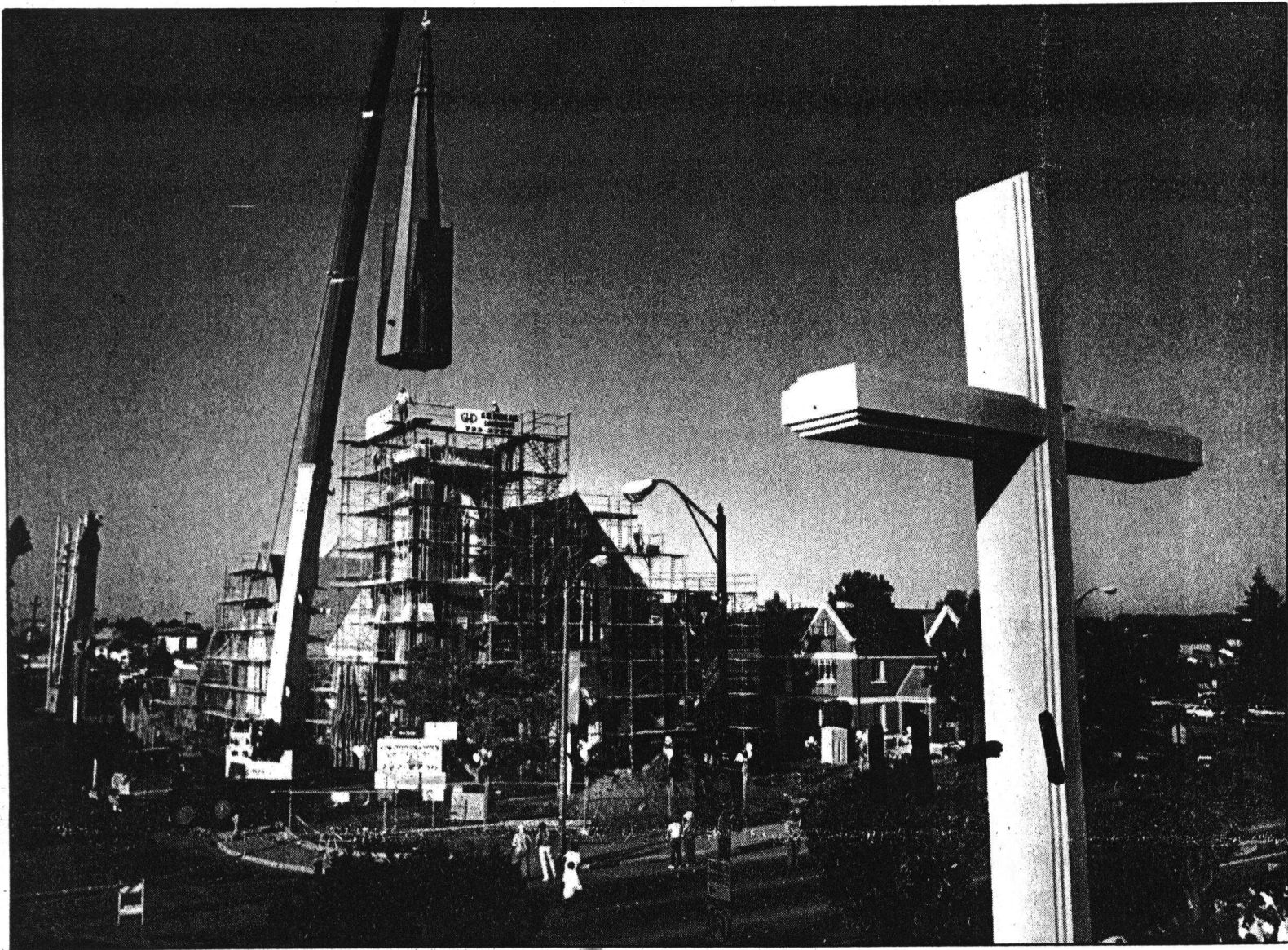


✓CF Churches 1990-

# Easy does it

RP p.1  
NOV 1 1993



Mike McCollum

Workmen gingerly guide 8-ton St. Patrick's steeple into place atop church being rebuilt on Main Street.

## New St. Patrick's steeple in place

By JUDY BRILL  
STAFF WRITER

Scaffolding still crisscrosses the brick and much work remains on rebuilding St. Patrick's Church, damaged beyond repair in the earthquake four years ago. But a major step was taken today toward completing the edifice, originally built in 1902 and considered a cornerstone of downtown and an emotional symbol of the spirit and determination of the people of Watsonville.

On schedule at 8:15 a.m., the new 70-foot steeple was hoisted into place on top of the church. Hundreds of parishioners, current and former mayors, elected officials, clergy from many denominations, and Watsonville residents young and old watched from Notre Dame School across the street.

The Rev. Mike Miller, who came to St. Patrick's "just nine months before it came tumbling down," said of the occasion, "It's great to put something beautiful

back up in town. For people, especially poor people who have to live with a lot of ugliness, it's great to have something beautiful they can relate to.

"For the parish, it's much more. For us, there's a powerful symbol in putting a cross way up. It's our mission statement put up there to let the people know there's a community here trying to be Christ and also to remind us that that's what we're supposed to be doing."

Once the steeple was in place,

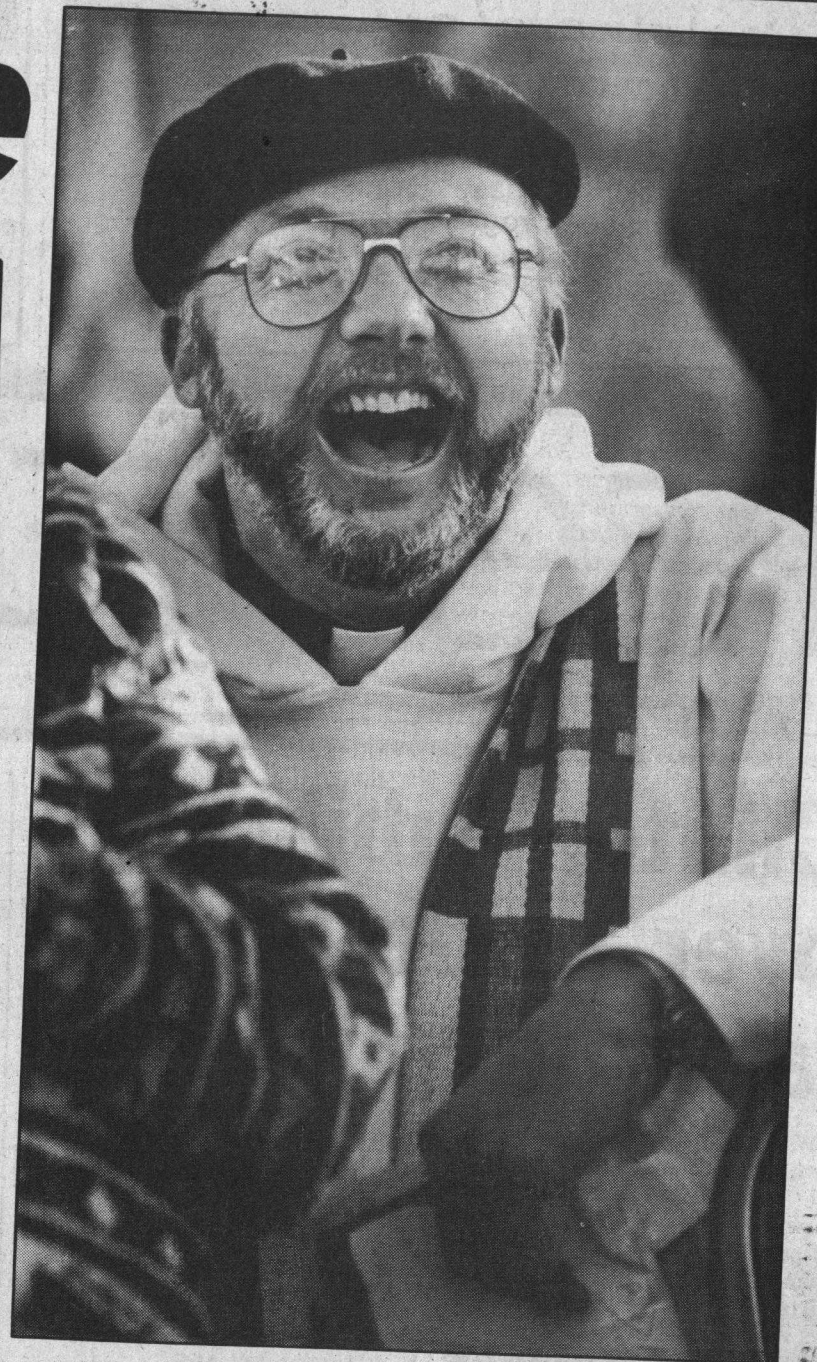
Bishop Sylvester Ryan, of the Monterey Diocese, addressed the gathering.

"For those of you who remember the day of the earthquake and had the occasion to walk ... by this particular corner and see the destruction of that beautiful and traditional church of St. Patrick's, and to have felt the heartache of seeing it destroyed this is truly a day in which we can say, 'send forth the holy

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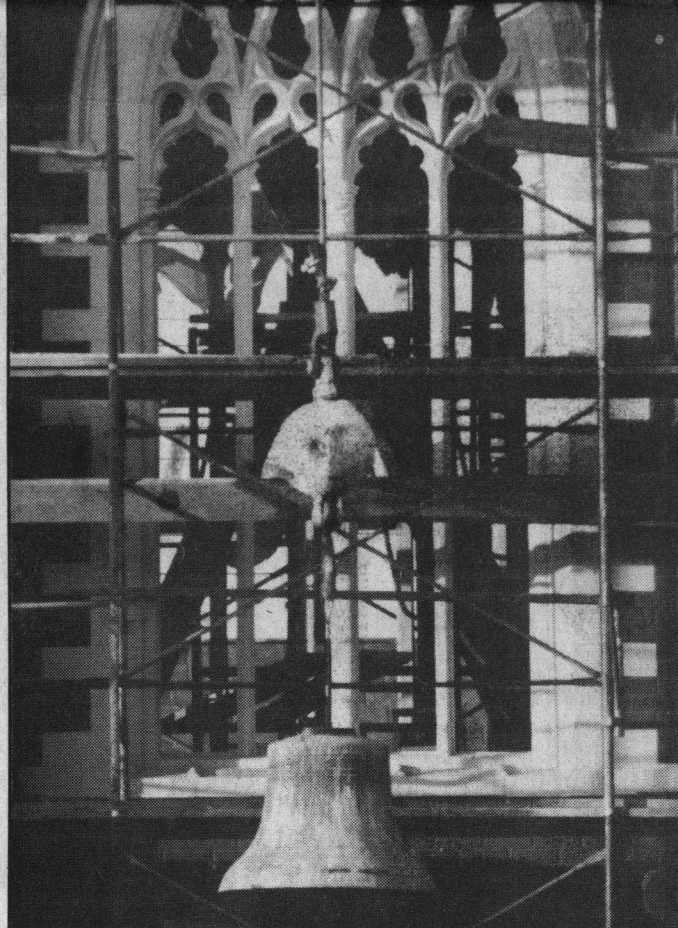
# Back in place



Clockwise from left, church bell proceeds steeple on trip to rooftop; Bishop Sylvester Ryan and Mayor Lowell Hurst in the festive spirit; the happiest person in town may have been the Rev. Mike Miller, pastor of St. Patrick's; a large crowd watched the proceedings from across the street in front of Notre Dame School.

MORELAND





Photos above and top left by Mike McCollum  
Photos at right and top right by Kurt Ellison

## STEEPLE

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spirit and remake the face of the earth," he said. "It's day of hope, it's a sacramental day, it expresses who we are as a Christian people who understand there is dying and rising."

With arms outstretched toward the steeple's gold-leaf cross shining in the morning sun, the crowd then joined Ryan in a blessing.

The steeple is not only a symbol for the community, but a reflection of it. It is being paid for by donations, many from people with little to spare. It was built by a three-man team headed by Fred "Spook" Evans,

a Watsonville native. And around the structure will be placed four spires, salvaged from the old church. The spires are riddled with bullet holes, the marks of past, untraditional New Year's Eve and other celebrations.

Among those in the early-morning crowd was Lowell Hurst, newly elected mayor of Watsonville.

"This is certainly a historic occasion," he said. "It's an uplifting of feelings, not only for the parishioners of St. Patrick's, but for all the people of Watsonville. It's a symbol of the rebirth and the regrowth of Watsonville, and we're really proud."

Vice Mayor Parr Eves was also on hand.

"I think this is the one thing that probably touches all the people in the valley," he said. "In the Pajaro Valley, Watsonville, even in North Monterey County, this is the one thing after the earthquake that will really thrill people to see go back up. I don't think there's a man, woman or child that isn't pleased about this."

"St. Patrick's has always been a symbol of the city. No matter where you are in the city, you can see it."

Betty Murphy, Watsonville mayor when the earthquake struck, was unable to attend this morning, but she did drive by as the church bell, cast in 1902, was lifted to the roof.

"It sure was a sight," she said.

"Outside of the fact that it's a church, we always got so many compliments on the entrance to town," she said. "It's such a pretty church. I'm just so glad it's coming up. Psychologically, it will be a great boost for the community."

J.J. Crosetti, owner of the Crosetti Co., went to school at Notre Dame, was an altar boy at St. Patrick's and is on the church rebuilding committee.

"I think it's a very historic occasion ... I'm very excited about it," he said. "It's another one of the steps in the right direction toward the rebuilding of downtown, and certainly the church is a big part of the whole area itself."

Crosetti thought the raising of the new steeple would generate

renewed enthusiasm for donations to the fund-raising drive, still about \$1 million short of the \$3.8 million need for the project.

"It's a remarkable thing for a small town like this to put this thing together," Crosetti said. "It wasn't just Catholics that raised the money for this. Many of the Protestant denominations came in, the Buddhists came in, the whole community came in and helped us do this. It's the cornerstone of downtown it's the first thing you see when you come into downtown."

A.L. Resetar, an altar boy at St. Patrick's when Father Hasset held the pulpit, and one of the church rebuilding fund's greatest contributors, said, "It's a wonderful occasion. It's a

beautiful church ... more so than it ever has been, I think."

The feelings of many in the crowd were expressed by Manny Gutierrez, who has lived in Watsonville for 40 years.

"We've been saving a lot of money, the church has been saving a lot of money, for the last four years," he said. "It hasn't been the same, going to services in the (Notre Dame) gym."

"But the faithful, the ones that have always been there, they didn't go to another church. They keep on going to the gym...."

"The church has special meaning to me because wherever I went, I've always come back to this church. St. Patrick's means home."