

Church showcases 150-year history

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Calvary Episcopal Church to put on tours throughout weekend

By Calvin Men

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SANTA CRUZ » Though many see Calvary Episcopal Church as the little red church at Center and Cedar streets in downtown Santa Cruz as quaint, Dana Bagshaw said she sees it as a historical treasure in the county.

"You have to put the history of the church in the history of the

times," said Bagshaw, a historian for the church.

Built in 1865, the church's main building has endured earthquakes, survived floods, outlasted economic depressions and seen all four presidential assassinations.

The church plans to kick off its 150-year anniversary Friday with a historical tour as a part of the First Friday events in downtown Santa Cruz. The official anniversary isn't until 2015, but church

officials are getting started with the celebration.

Friday's historical tour runs from 6-8:15 p.m. and will also have a choral music performance at 9 p.m.

When the church was built, officials were given a donation of near 2 acres of land and redwood trees for construction supplies, according to Bagshaw. The wood went to the construction of

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Church historian Carol Walker looks for the date on this 1902 cross inside Calvary Episcopal Church in downtown Santa Cruz, celebrating 150 years.

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Calvary

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the parish hall and pews of the church, which still stand today.

"It's very much a lived-in church," said Chris Perrin, a member of the church's planning committee.

When the church was completed, California had been a state for only 15 years, she said.

"I think because Calvary is a big part of Santa Cruz and has been for many, many years," she said. "We're right in the heart of downtown Santa Cruz. We have been in a sea of activities."

Even some of the church's early leaders had a history. Eliza and Joseph Boston, leaders and strong financial supporters of the church, were also abolitionists, Bagshaw said.

"I'm thinking maybe that's how they met," she said. "I've got a historical novel going on in my head. You know, you start to fill in these blanks."

When President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated April 1865, the church halted preparation for Good Friday services to hold a eulogy for the slain president.

The eulogy was presented by the Rev. C.F. Loop, a personal friend of Lincoln's who happened to be the pastor of the church at the time. Loop gave a long and personal eulogy about the president, said Bagshaw, who researched the church's history.

The architecture of the church is simple, said Carol Walker, an archivist for the church.

Services at the church still use the original gas lamps installed to provide light, creating a beautiful ambiance.

"We use them all the time for evening service," Walker said. "It's beautiful in there."

More than the archi-



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The church grew slowly and gained a 175 bell, on the left, which is now mounted on the roof.

CALVARY EPISCOPAL CHURCH HISTORICAL CELEBRATION

What: The church is celebrating its 150 year history with tours and historical presentations.

Where: Calvary Episcopal Church, 532 Center St. in Santa Cruz.

When: 6-8:15 p.m., Friday for tours and 9 p.m. for Compline service.

Further dates: Saturday at 1 p.m. for a walking tour; Sunday at 6:30 p.m. for tours, 7 p.m. for a carol sing-along; Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. for church concert.

Details: For information, visit www.calvarysantacruz.org.

ture are the church's stained glass windows, most of which are almost as old as the church and still very much intact. Walker spoke fondly of the redwood pews that still look pristine and fit 270 people.

Since the church was built, it added a foyer, a Sunday school, administrative offices and other attachments.

"It's got a lot of history and most people don't know its history," Walker



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The original baptismal font at Calvary Episcopal Church.

said. "Hopefully the people who put this together will help shed some light on this interesting history. What this church and the community has been through in the past 150 years."