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JULIANA REBAGLIATI, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

## CONGREGATION OUTGROWS ITS CHURCH



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel photos

Members gather for Sunday service at St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church on Depot Hill in Capitola.

## After historic building is sold, members will move to new sanctuary

By **SORAYA GUTIERREZ**  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

CAPITOLA — The church on Depot Hill where Charles Greenleaf and his wife Karen were married in 1969 is up for sale.

"We have lots of heritage in it," said Karen Greenleaf, who has been involved with St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church since the mid-1960s, "but life moves on."

The couple are among 300 members excited about fulfilling a long-time dream of having a new and bigger church in the Seacliff section of Aptos.

The congregation plans to move after their current property sells and a new church, three times the size of the present one, is built.

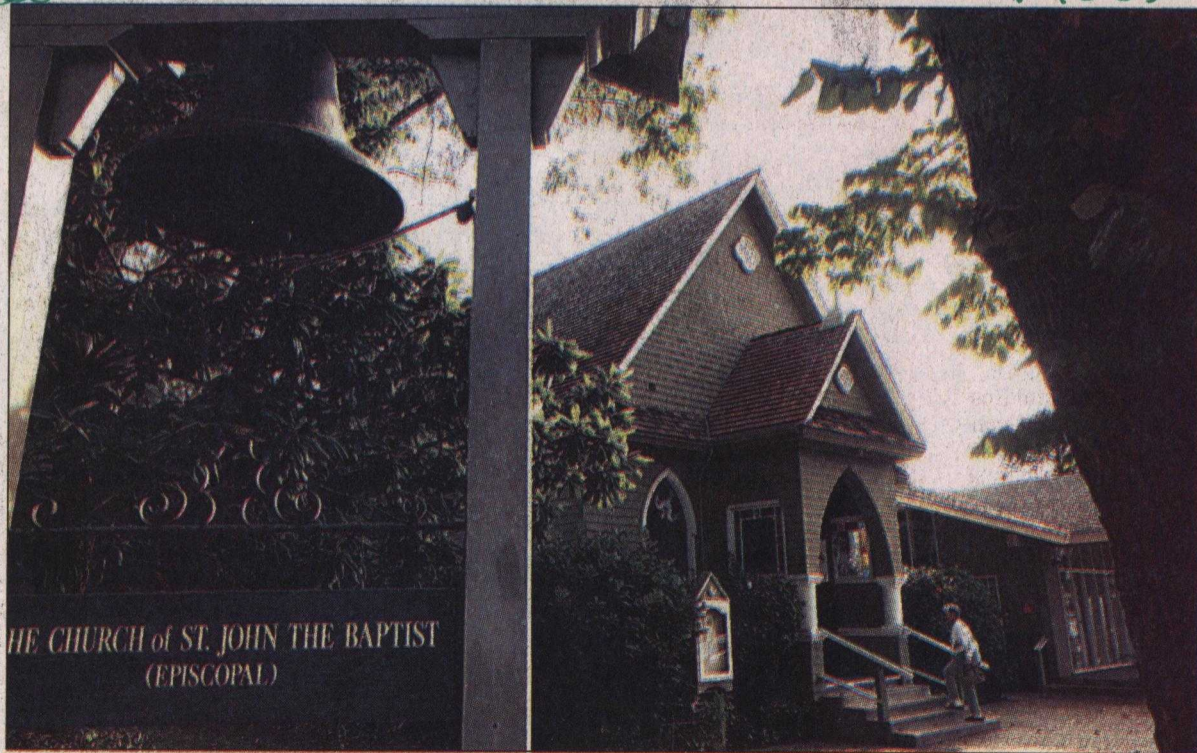
The small, English-style redwood church on Oakland Avenue was built in 1898 on two lots donated by Frederick Hihn, an early developer of much of Capitola.

The church is the second oldest building in the city, after the Hihn "superintendent's building" at Monterey and Capitola avenues, historian Carolyn Swift said.

"It's really a community treasure, and that is a compliment to the congregation," she said.

The property is selling for \$3.2 million. It includes three separate parcels: the church, the parish hall and the cottage, Coldwell Banker real estate agent Laura Grenyo said.

The property is zoned residential, but because of its historical value, it can't be torn down.



The St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church on Depot Hill in Capitola is for sale.

Ideally, Grenyo said, the buyer will turn the unique church into a home. Any alterations made to its exterior must be approved by the city.

"Certainly we want to protect the building and any historical integrity it has," said Juliana Rebagliati, community development director.

It is a strong sentiment among the congregation that the church keep

growing, Charles Greenleaf said.

For 20 years, members have mulled their options, including moving the structure to a different spot.

It was decided that the best thing to do was build a new church.

In 1992, the church purchased 2.5 acres of a 9-acre site at Sea Ridge Road and McGregor Drive in Aptos.

An affordable housing complex

broke ground at the site in late October, and the church is looking to break ground in 18 months.

It's being built using funds from the sale of the old church.

Present rector Steve Ellis said it was difficult to let go of the idea that they would gather at Depot Hill for-

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# Church

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ever, but it became obvious to everybody that they needed to move.

“This site which we have so enjoyed for the past 100 years is inadequate in so many ways for our numbers,” Ellis said. “We just don’t fit.”

Longtime church member Bill Kell said Bay Area architect Warren Callister is designing a new church that will be “totally different.”

It will have a semicircle shape, with individual seats instead of pews, arranged so people can face one another. Plenty of parking spaces will surround the building, Kell said, in contrast to the lack of parking available at the old church.

“I think it will be a real nice thing for Mid-County,” he said.

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