

# HOLY CROSS Mass at Holy Cross — four years later

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Marilyn Parker had gone there as a child and couldn't wait to see the restoration. Hong Sheng Tong and Hong Lin were passing through Santa Cruz on their way to San Francisco and found themselves drawn inside by the steeple.

Others were just happy — finally — to be out of the tent.

It was a Christmas that many of the faithful at Holy Cross Church in Santa Cruz would not forget.

For the first time since the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake forced its doors to close, the church on the hill was open for worship again, just in time for the holidays.

"It's really special that it's opening on Christmas, and I thought it was important that we come and celebrate," said Cindy

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build our own community.'**

— Lillian Pinheiro

Mori, who sat in the back of Holy Cross Church with her sons, Brett, 6, and Derek, 3, on either side and 1-year-old Dillon on her lap.

Besides, she said, "it's a lot warmer than the tent."

For much of the four years since the earthquake caused the front and rear walls of the church to pull away from the side walls, services had been held in a drafty, mildewy canvas tent just across the way. Some people called it a pavilion; most people called it "the tent."

"It all depended on where you sat in the tent," said Kilian Jack-

son, 80, who was among those attending the 10:30 a.m. Mass on Christmas Day.

"If you sat in the back, it was drafty," she said. "If you sat in the middle, underneath the heaters, it was hot! But it really shouldn't make any difference what building you go to as long as you're a religious person."

Hong Sheng Tong and Hong Lin stopped in Santa Cruz late Friday night on their way to San Francisco from Los Angeles and noticed the church right away. They walked inside to look, liked what they saw and stayed for the service. "It seemed to me like a central place," Tong said.

The 104-year-old church sits on the site of an adobe mission, one of 21 in California built by Spanish missionaries.

The congregation had just cele-

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# Santa Cruz church, damaged in quake, reopens for Christmas

## ■ CHURCH

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brated the church's centennial in September 1989, shortly before the devastating Loma Prieta earthquake. Much of the interior had been refurbished for that milestone when the earthquake struck.

Four years and \$1.4 million later, the church was as good as new — almost.

"I attended this church for nine years as a child, and I remember the way it used to be," said Park-

er, who arrived early so she could get a seat in front with her friend, Diane de Fremery.

"It used to have carved shelves, and I remember the way it was before they took out the statues, so today is quite an experience for me," she said.

The celebration for the reopening began on Christmas Eve, when the first Mass was held at 4 p.m. An estimated 725 people crammed into the 550-seat church for that service. The number dropped to about 575 for a midnight Mass on Christmas Eve.

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— Kilian Jackson

"The pastor came over here to the pavilion and we toasted the church reopening after the midnight Mass," said Lillian Pinheiro of the church's hospitality ministry, who was busily getting the

glasses and bottles ready for another toast after the 10:30 a.m. Mass on Christmas Day. Sparkling cider was available for children and non-drinkers.

But the champagne seemed to

go well with the large sheet cake, baked by a church member in honor of the reopening. "Lift High the Cross" was inscribed on the cake.

Pinheiro, who has attended Holy Cross since 1950, when she moved to Santa Cruz from San Rafael, is one of the faithful who will miss the closeness of the tent.

Even though water seeped inside when it rained and the rackety heaters had to be turned off sometimes during the service, church members were brought closer together in the tent/pavil-

ion, she said.

"I really feel the Lord let us stay here so we could build our own community," added Pinheiro, who already had sung in the adult choir for the 8:30 a.m. Mass Saturday and planned to be back today.

Still, the murals on the ceiling and the new beveled glass doors of the church looked pretty special on Christmas Day, several church members said.

"It feels good," conceded Jackson, who has attended Holy Cross since 1930.

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LUCI S. WILLIAMS — MERCURY NEWS

Three-year-old Derek Mori pushes the doors open after a 10:30 a.m. Mass on Christmas Day in celebration of the reopening of Holy Cross Church. Santa Cruz artist Susan Wagner created the flowing water design etched in the mahogany doors. The 104-year-old Santa Cruz land-

mark was damaged in the Loma Prieta quake, and the 1,200 families in the parish have spent four years worshipping in a cold, dimly lighted tent. They turned out to rejoice at the midnight Mass and four services Saturday. For more on Christmas in the Bay Area, see Page 1B.