

Our Savior's Lutheran Gets Repairs And Face Lift In 2020

By: Karen Carpenter

Everyone is aware that 2020 was fraught with problems and changes in how church services could be held. For the congregation at Our Savior's Lutheran Church (OSL) in Barnesville, being able to make needed improvements was easier.

Had it been a normal year, staff and church leaders would have found a way to hold church services through the remodel process. But, having no in-person services for several months allowed for the work to progress without changing the flow of traffic in the building.

Church leaders had been aware for several years that there were water stains present on the ceiling of the sanctuary. The ceiling rises to 27 feet at the highest point in the sanctuary.

"Earlier attempts to fix the problem by reshingling the roof had not solved the problem," stated Dennis Carlblom. He is currently servicing as chairman of the property board at OSL.

"The problem was determined to be a condensation issue within the ceiling. Since the construction would not allow ventilation improvement, the solution was to provide a vapor barrier and additional insulation through the installation of spray foam," continued Carlblom.

The process to get the needed work done was not short or easy.

First steps were to get estimates and bids for the work that was needed. Those were received late in 2019.

"Because the old ceiling had to be removed and replaced, the decision was made to update all of the electrical and audio/visual



Members of the property board and the pastor at Our Savior's Lutheran are proud of the new look of the sanctuary, balcony, overflow and side rooms of the church. Extensive remodeling and repair work was completed at the church during the pandemic when attendance was restricted. Members of the board are, left to right, Chairman Dennis Carlblom, Larry Plath, Pastor Chris Leach, Jared Peterson and Corey Stuvland. Duane Morey was unavailable for the picture.

wiring. The carpet would have to be replaced and the walls repainted," said Carlblom.

The entire project was brought to the church council and then the congregation in January 2020 for approval.

The vote to budget \$95,000.00 toward the demolition of the old ceiling and install the new, the electrical and audio/visual work, the installation of foam insulation, and new carpet for the sanctuary and the overflow area was affirmative.

The work was scheduled to be completed by the summer of 2020.

Pastor Chris Leach and church staff had already started planning how they would continue to offer church services and programs without the sanctuary area.

As things transpired with the pandemic and the imposed attendance restrictions, this became a moot point.

Contracts for the work were signed and interim construction financing was arranged. Storage was arranged for the pews and other furniture as well as musical and audio/visual equipment.

"The general contracting was done by the church property board members with the assistance of Randy Thune of RM Thune LLC," stated Carlblom. Other contractors who worked on the various components of the project included

Foam Solutions Inc., Evanson Electric, Tricorne Audio, Carpet World, Peterson Painting & Staining and RM Thune LLC.

Members of the congregation volunteered to help move the pews and other equipment.

"The church staff and the music and worship committee removed the sound and camera equipment, all of the alter area pieces, music equipment, and sanctuary decorations," said Carlblom.

"Duane Morey and his family moved hymnals, removed the screws securing the pews, and arranged storage for the pews and other furniture. Another group of volunteers moved the pews to storage. These same groups brought everything back into place once the contracted work was completed," continued Carlblom.

Randy Thune furnished the moveable scaffolding which was used by all contractors to reach the high ceiling and walls.

It was a good time to get the work finished as in-service attendance for the congregation was suspended from March through August, 2020. In September a number of services were held in the park. In October and November the congregation came together for six in-person services with the attendance limited to 60 people. Services have now resumed during the Easter and Lenten season on a limited basis.

The working, however, was just like at home, when one begins to repair or update a project but often it leads to other items that need repairing. The job can end up being larger than first expected.

This was no different for the property board members as they endeavored to complete the work on the sanctuary. As they dug deeper into fixing the ceiling other areas of need began to surface.

"Once the two layers of ceiling tiles and the original mineral wool insulation batt were removed, we discovered that there was water damage to the roof boards and rafters," stated Carlblom.

"The damaged rafters were strengthened by nailing new rafters onto the damaged ones giving them more load bearing strength than they had originally. The four inches of spray foam that was installed also gave the roof greater strength than it had before.

"The second unforeseen issue found, was that there were several side areas in both the front and rear of the church that had neither roof or wall insulation. This added to the cost of insulating," said Carlblom.

While that may have added to the expense of the construction, no doubt the cost will be recouped by requiring less heating costs.

When the work was complete the main sanctuary, including the balcony, had been given four inches of spray foam insulation. The electrical and audio/visual wiring was added along with new ceiling tile, trim and new carpet. Fresh paint was applied to the walls.

New electrical and audio/visual wiring, new carpet and paint was completed in the overflow room.

This area is to the right of the sanctuary and is used to seat people during large services.

The entry, side rooms, and stairs to the balcony were spruced up with new carpet. In the side storage areas four inches of spray foam to the ceilings and walls was added.

When members of the congregation are able to resume in-person services, they will notice a significant difference in the appearance of the church.

"Fresh white ceiling, bright new carpet, and new paint gives the sanctuary, overflow, balcony and side rooms a clean, lively appearance," said Carlblom.

There had been a ceiling memorial fund established several years ago when it first became apparent that repairs would be needed. Another fund was begun just a couple of years ago. This money allowed for a smaller amount needed to be borrowed for the construction project.

With all of the work completed, it is now time to monitor the heating bills to see how they were affected by the added insulation.

"The savings were about \$400 in December but that was also a warmer month than December of 2019," said Carlblom winter figures were not complete yet.

"We did notice a tremendous comfort difference last summer with the air conditioning running," stated Carlblom.

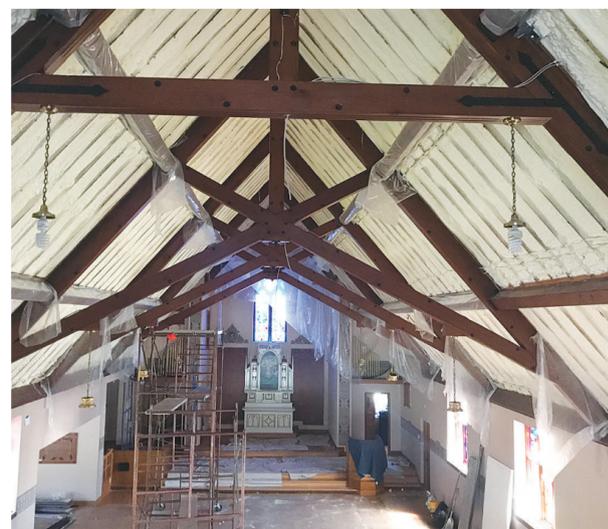
While 2020 was not a good year for many things, the lack of people on the Our Savior's Lutheran Church building surely helped the repair and remodel project move along more efficiently.



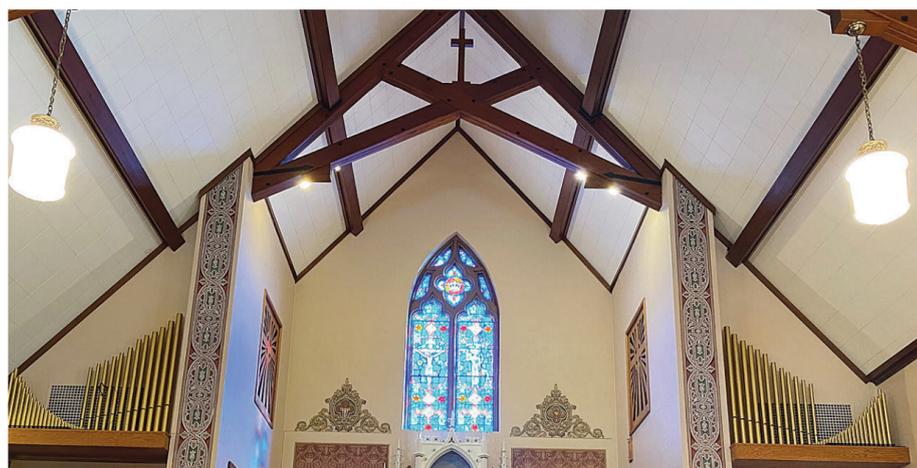
All of the pews were removed from the sanctuary of Our Savior's Lutheran Church building to repair the ceiling, paint, rewire and carpet. This view looks toward the balcony and was taken prior to installing carpet.



The stone church buildings went into service in 1936 about four years after it was initially planned. The 1932 proposal to build a new church was postponed due to the financial conditions related to the Great Depression. There was another stone addition incorporated into the original church in 1960. Until this latest remodel, there have been several smaller projects done on the church, including routine maintenance, the addition of an elevator and creation of office space at the church.



Movable scaffolding was used by all of the various contractors to reach the ceiling of Our Savior's Lutheran Church sanctuary. The peak rises to 27 feet at the highest point. Water marks alerted the property board of the church that there was a condensation problem in the ceiling.



The ceiling in the sanctuary at Our Savior's Lutheran Church has been repaired. The ceiling and walls were given a fresh coat of paint. The work gave the sanctuary a bright and fresh look. The ceiling is 27 feet high at the peak. Randy Thune furnished the moveable scaffolding to enable the high ceiling to be reached for repairs.