

# Spring Lake's Church of the Holy Trinity get new roof, finishes 25-year restoration.

**Dan Radel** staff reporter. **Asbury Park Press- December 16, 2011**

SPRING LAKE — Workers finished installing a new slate roof this week, concluding a 25-year restoration project on the Church of the Holy Trinity, the borough's oldest house of prayer. The church is on the Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory, the New Jersey Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Sites of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The church has been a part of the borough for 130 years. A small group of summer vacationers in need of a place of prayer purchased two adjacent lots in 1878 and brought the church into existence. Ground was broken on Sept. 17, 1880, and the first service was held on July 3, 1881.



**Craftsman holds a piece of slate**

During that time, the church has witnessed the borough grow up around it. During a windy March evening in 1956, the cross that adorns the top of the belfry toppled over.

The Holy Trinity is an Episcopal denomination and has acted as a summer chapel, open from the first of June until Labor Day, throughout its history and to the present day. Along with the summer sermons, the church also offers weddings during the year. The restoration project was started in the early 1980s, after the church was being considered for sale because attendance was down. However, a visit from the bishop of the diocese in 1982 provided a new course for the church. "We filled the house for the bishop and he informed us we could stay open if we could support ourselves and be a part of St. Uriel's," church trustee Dawson Smith said.

St. Uriel's is a year-round Episcopal church located in neighboring Sea Girt and had always supplied

the Holy Trinity with a priest and members of their vestry for Sunday services.

The architectural design for the Church of the Holy Trinity incorporated both Gothic and Stick-style influences — a hybrid style that was typical of New Jersey seaside resorts of the 1880s. It had fallen into some disrepair and the restoration project began shortly after the visit from the bishop. Through cocktail party-style fundraisers and the generosity of the community, small projects were begun. The first was the painting of the outside clapboard. After that they restored Cooke cottage in the back of the church, which once functioned as an outhouse. It is named after Peter Cooke, who was a longtime priest for the chapel.

Another one of the major restoration projects were the Tiffany and Lamb stained-glass windows, which Smith said are valued at over \$900,000.

"Conrad Hall, of Hall Construction, told us if we lose them they

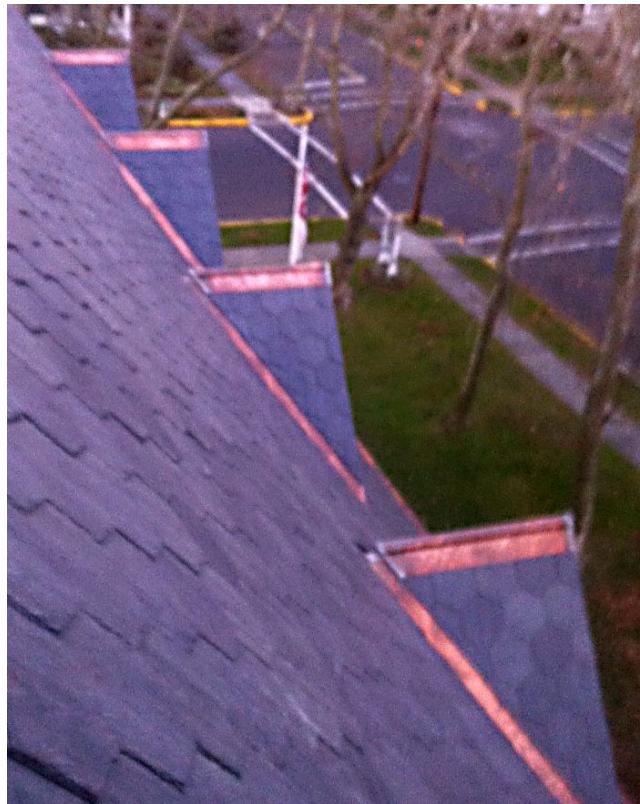


**Holy Trinity Church, Spring Lake, NJ**

can't be replaced. He then protected them with a heavy glass on the outside," Smith said. One of the unique tales of the restoration was the return of the original gas-and-electric chandelier that hangs over the altar. The chandelier had been removed from the church years back and was found in an antique shop in Brielle and returned to the Trinity. The trustees then had replica chandeliers built and hung from the ceiling.

The last of the major projects was the new roof, which cost \$200,000 and was completed this week by Hopewell-based Bregenzer Broth-

ers, a roofing company that does historic restorations. They put down approximately 17,000 slate tiles from Evergreen Slate Co. in Vermont. "They did the right thing by this building. You can't cut corners. Otherwise, you won't do it justice," said Michael Bregenzer, the CEO of the third-generation family-owned company. The roofers also made another discovery in the church while they were working inside the belfry. "The belfry was dedicated to the church by the Roebling family, who built the Brooklyn Bridge," said Nancy Carson, the president of the church's board of trustees.



**View from above, workmen take photos of the roofs with their phone cameras.**