

Cathedral Ceiling Repair Update #9, November 22

We have made great progress over the past 2 weeks, both with the ceiling repair and with the fundraising effort.

The last update reported the discovery of a ceiling joist that had completely cracked through, therefore no longer supporting the ceiling or dome. The engineering company (WJE) specified a repair design and NIKO Contracting executed this repair. Since the broken joint was not in accordance with good design practice, WJE requested an inspection of all the remaining similar connections (north and south sides of the dome). This inspection could be performed from the attic, so NIKO Contracting removed the attic flooring and insulation to provide access. WJE's inspection revealed 7 additional joists with cracks, though none had cracked entirely through. NIKO Contracting has already completed the repair of these additional joints and has re-attached the flooring and insulation. The repair specified by WJE was robust and resulted in attaching new joists across the entire 12-foot span of the ceiling, essentially replacing the old joists with new ones with improved connections. This problem with the joists can be traced to a marginal structural design when the dome was cut into the ceiling 60 years ago. But now the structure has been repaired, using modern structural analysis, to a state better than original.



New joists being installed at the location where the original joist had cracked through. The ceiling needed to be jacked into place to line up with the beam because the ceiling area had significantly sagged

While the repair was being completed, the plasterers continued their work at other locations in the ceiling. To date, the areas needing new plaster have been replastered (except for the one with the cracked joist), all the other cracks have been repaired, and application of the skim coat of plaster is in work in areas away from the joist repairs. The skim coat will provide a smooth surface to cover the plaster washers and any irregularities in the ceiling surface.



A portion of ceiling next to the dome showing the new skim coat of plaster. Also note the surface repairs on the dome molding in preparation for paint. Most of the spackling for paint prep on the molding and coffers has been completed.



Portion of new ceiling that has been skim coated and test painted (including inspection by maintenance committee member extraordinaire, Van Paras). Petrinis Painting matched the paint color by removing chips of the 4 colors in the ceiling and tested the match and application prior to the paint crews arriving next week

Although uncovering and fixing the cracked joists was a setback, the impact on the project will not be large. Work on other portions of the ceiling was continued to proceed while the joists were being repaired, so schedule delay will be minimal. As to the cost, the actual cost of plaster repair is turning out to be much less than estimated, so the original estimate of around \$360,000 to \$370,000 still looks good even with the addition of the joist repair.

Fundraising Efforts

We kicked off both the capital campaign and the fundraising committee. The initial response to the donation appeal letter has been great with \$55,000 donated or pledged to date. The donor form is attached. Our on-line donation website has been updated to include a selection for donating to the ceiling restoration project.

The construction board will be available this Sunday to start getting donor signatures. The board will be a memento of this ceiling project, with donors to the project and all their family members adding their names to the board. This board will be installed in a non-visible location on the new ceiling. It will act as a permanent connection between your family and your St. Nicholas Cathedral.

Also, for those who wish, engraved pavers can be installed in the existing circle in the parklet along Forbes Ave. Pavers are available at the \$1,250, \$2,500, \$5,000, and \$25,000 level. A pledged donation can be paid over a two-year period.

A committee has met and generated a number of ideas for potential fundraising activities. In the short term, the following events are scheduled, so save the dates.

- Raise the Roof Glendi – January 7 – a young adult oriented dance with a Greek band, mezethes, bar, and lots of Greek dancing.
- Greek2Go – January 21 - Resurrecting the event that got the Cathedral finances through the pandemic with on-line takeout orders.
- Popcorn with a Prize – popcorn to be sold at the St. Nicholas Bazaar with proceeds to go toward the ceiling restoration.

Cathedral Ceiling Restoration Project

Donation and Pledge Form

Donor Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Total Amount Pledged _____

Today's Date _____

Payment Options

Paid in Full _____

Initial Payment _____ Your plan for additional payments _____

Donations can be by check or made on-line with credit/debit card. From the St. Nicholas web site, www.stnickspgh.org, go to the "Giving" tab and click "Donate" from the pull-down. Indicate on the form that the donation is for the ceiling project.

A construction board with signatures of all donors will be installed as part of the new ceiling. All donor family members can sign it. The board will be available at the church from mid-November through the end of December.

Engraved commemorative pavers are also available at the sizes below. These pavers will be added to the granite circle in our green space. Please indicate if you are interested in a paver and you will be provided with additional information.

____ 8" x 4" Paver at \$1,250

____ 8" x 8" Paver at \$2,500

____ 12" x 12" Granite at \$5,000 (pieces that make up the center cross)

____ 42" x 15" Exterior Granite Ring at \$25,000 (pieces on either side of the Bible verse)