

# A New Direction for St. Michael's

As was announced at the Christmas Mass at Midnight, the St. Michael Church project will be taking a different direction. Instead of building a new church, the existing building will be repaired and updated. This new direction has come about as a result of feedback provided by the recent Planning Study for the Capital Campaign and an investigation into possible alternatives to building a new church.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Planning Study Survey for the Capital Campaign. Your responses have been helpful in not only gauging the enthusiasm for the project, but also in setting a fundraising goal for the upcoming Capital Campaign. The survey results indicate a high level of commitment to St. Michael's and the efforts to rebuild the church. They also indicate that parishioners are eager to commence with the project.

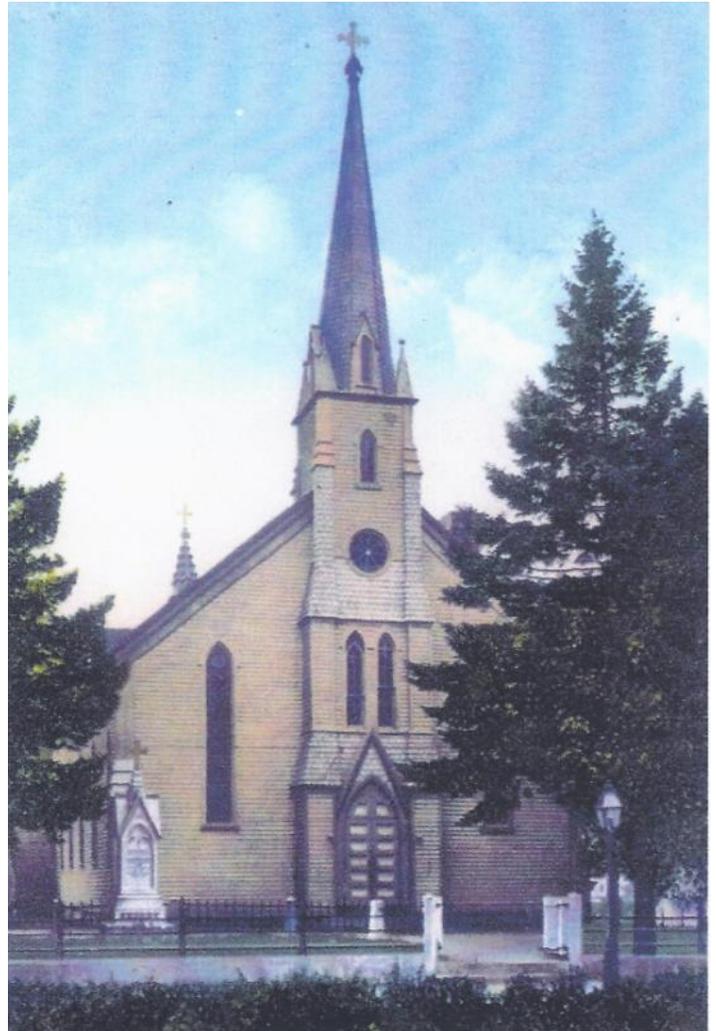
In the responses, a number of parishioners raised some concern regarding the scope of the project and whether St. Michael's would be able to raise enough money to build a \$9 million church. Additionally, based on the overall response to the survey, Changing Our World, the fundraising company selected to assist with the upcoming Capital Campaign, counseled us that a Capital Campaign of that magnitude might not be realistic for St. Michael's. Changing Our World does, however, believe that a \$2-3 million Capital Campaign is very achievable.

Looking back two years, we made the decision to build a new church based on the information available to us, and it seemed to be the more desirable option. At the time, it appeared to be about the same price as an estimated repair, and a new building would eliminate potential problems that often lurk in rehabilitating old structures. The repair that had been proposed involved installing an interior steel structure, which was not very appealing from an aesthetic point of view.

As the process of designing a new church unfolded, we were all taken aback by how expensive this option really was. The estimate for the first design which was presented in June 2013 was \$12 million. In response, the building committee worked with the architect to find ways to reduce the cost. The result of that effort was the design presented this past April, which was a drastically scaled-back version of the first design and estimated to cost \$9 million.

## A New Direction

In early November, given the significant costs associated with building a new church and the feedback we started to receive from the Planning Study Survey, we began to look at an alternate solution for St. Michael's. We contacted Vermont Timber



Works to see if they could offer an alternative ([www.vermonttimberworks.com](http://www.vermonttimberworks.com)). They build heavy timber trusses which are used in homes, commercial buildings and churches. After reviewing the engineer's report on St. Michael's, they proposed a conceptual design for a new roof structure. The heavy timber trusses will be made of Douglas Fir and spaced 20 feet apart. The trusses will be visible and consistent with the architecture of St. Michael's. In this approach, the old roof structure would be taken out, and the new trusses installed.

This solution will require a significant amount of work done to the rest of the building:

- In the basement, footings and cement piers will be installed to carry the load from the new trusses.
- The walls on the perimeter of the church will need to be upgraded to meet building codes for lateral loads (high winds).
- Other work will need to be completed, such as new wiring,

fire alarm, sprinklers, heating and cooling system, insulation, reinstallation of organ and stained glass, painting, etc.

A preliminary investigation has already been made into the perimeter walls in order to determine what must be done to upgrade them to meet code requirements.

The cost estimate for all the work to be done to the church indicates that the total cost is roughly half that of a new church building.

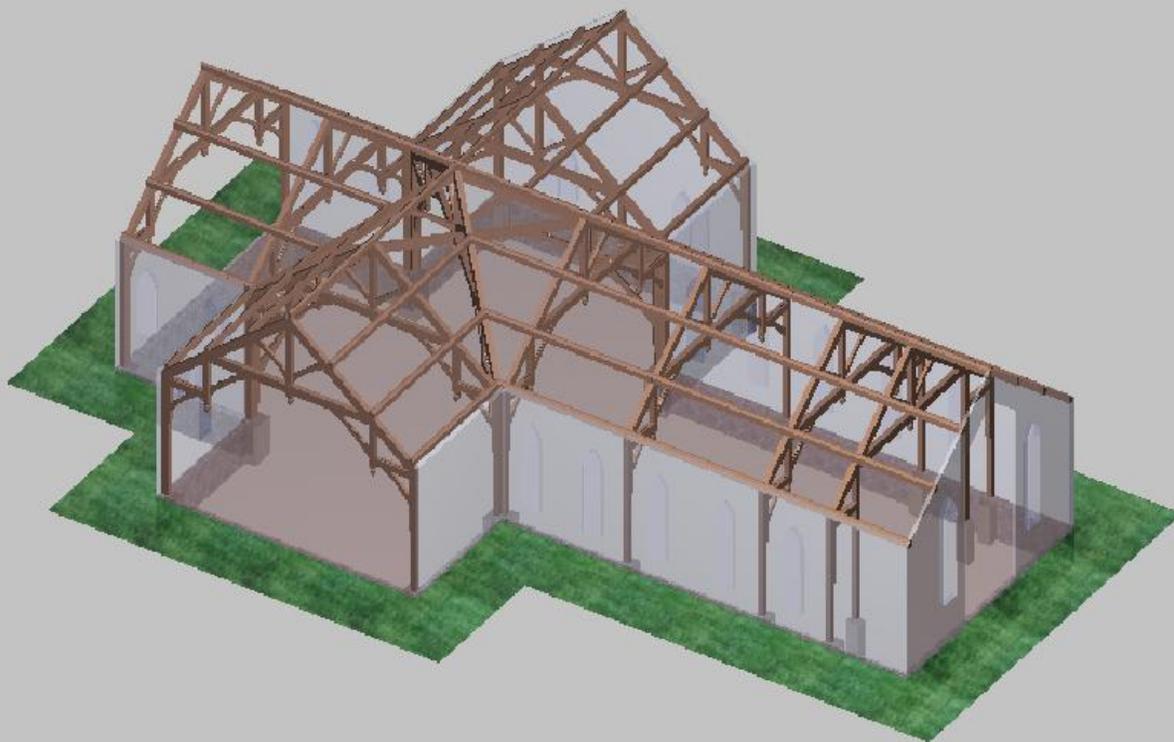
The opinion of many people in the community was sought regarding this new direction for St. Michael's, including the finance council, parish trustees and others with engineering and building experience, all of whom eagerly support this plan.

Looking back at the time and effort spent on designing a new church building should not now be regarded as a waste, but rather seen as confirmation that the path we are embarking on now is the right one. St. Michael Church is a beautiful building, rich in history and a gift to the parish from ancestors in faith that believed in the community over 150 years ago. By God's will, it will continue to be a home to parishioners for many generations to come.

## Summary

- New approach to dealing with St. Michael's involving the installation heavy timber trusses and other upgrade, which all totaled will be roughly half the cost of a new church building.
- A successful capital campaign to commence in the New Year, combined with the \$2 million already in the bank, will provide the necessary funds to do the work.
- If all goes according to plan, St. Michael's should be re-opened within about two years.

Look for updates on the project in the bulletin, *The Anchor* newsletter, and on the parish website at [www.stmichaelpawcatuck.com](http://www.stmichaelpawcatuck.com).



3d Model | Click to Activate (Requires Adobe Reader 9) | Use Scroll Wheel to Zoom | Menus for Lighting and Views | "Spin" Works Better than "Rotate"

### Saint Michael Church

Vermont Timber Works, Inc. | 802-886-1917

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Project Description  
Location  
Drawing Date  
Plot Date:

Heavy Timber Trusses  
Pawcatuck, CT  
11-10-14  
11/07/2014