

The New London Day, March 27, 2017

and southbound I-95 that will allow cars merging in and out of the main line a longer distance to change lanes, she said.

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Associated Press

The Republican Party of "no" for Democrat Barack Obama's eight years is having a hard time getting to "yes" in the early Donald Trump era.

ington, they are pitted against one another and struggling for a way to govern.

The divisions cost the party its best chance to fulfill a seven-year

at the end of next month, raising the nation's borrowing authority later this year and passing the 12 spending bills for federal agencies and departments.

on other promises.

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inside: Trump signals a new openness to working with Democrats. A3

St. Michael parishioners sign on for their future church

New roof beams collect dozens of signatures before structure rebuilt

By **MARTHA SHANAHAN**
Day Staff Writer

Stonington — When the parishioners of St. Michael the Archangel walk into their new home in a few years, they'll walk into a "a new church on the original foundation."

The foundation, the Rev. Dennis Perkins said Sunday, was built there in the 1860s. It held the church up through a century and a half of worship and will be there as long as people keep coming to that spot.

But the new parts — the iron beams, wooden trusses, walls and roof — are the exciting part. And now those trusses will bear the names of the church members who have stuck with Perkins, and St. Michael, through almost six years already without a building and another two or three to go.

More than 100 worshippers came to the church on Liberty Street on



DANA JENSEN/THE DAY

Andrew McCauley of Pawcatuck takes his turn Sunday signing the wooden beams that will form the ceiling of St. Michael the Archangel Church in Pawcatuck.

Sunday, though it still looks more like a construction site than a church, to scribble their names in silver permanent marker on the the arched beams that will hold up the roof of the church.

A light rain fell on the site through most of Sunday afternoon, and volunteers wiped the beams with cloths so the visitors would have a dry place to write.

Perkins said he thought of the

event as a way to involve people in the slow but steady process of rebuilding the church since structural problems forced it to close in 2012.

It would remind people, he thought, that soon enough they'll have a church to walk into again.

Joe Martin, who has been a member of the church since the 1990s, had that vision in his head Sunday.

"I'm looking forward to that first midnight Mass on Christmas Eve," Martin said.

He had just stood up from writing his own message on the wood: "Our faith + works helped renew our church."

Then his name: Joseph T. Martin, and the date, 3. 26. 17, and the names of two friends who have moved away.

"We have to have the patience to get things done," he said, admiring his work.

Some people wrote messages of encouragement, welcoming or patience. Most of the messages were lists of names, like just a reminder for later that they had been there.

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500 neighbors protest Groton street closure

Petition seeks to keep Vergennes Court open

By **DEBORAH STRASZHEIM**
Day Staff Writer

Groton — More than 500 people have signed a petition opposing closure of Vergennes Court, a street off Fort Hill Road that lead the Fort Hill neighborhood.

The town is considering the measure to improve traffic flow and safety in the area, particularly on Route 1.

In December 2011, 51-year-old Anthony McClellan was killed as he walked in the crosswalk at the intersection of Fort Hill Road and Vergennes Court.

But neighbors said closing small street won't help, because that's not the problem.

"Route 1 itself is just very dangerous. It's not lit. At night, you can even see the crosswalks," said Joe Mills, who lives on nearby Johnson Street.

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WEATHER

Today, cloudy, with rain, drizzle and fog. High 48. Tuesday, cloudy, chance of a shower. High 54. B8

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U.S.-BACKED FORCES CAPTURE SYRIAN AIR BASE FROM IS

Beirut — U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish forces captured a strategically important air base from Islamic State militants in north Syria on Sunday in the first major victory for the group since the U.S. airlifted the forces behind enemy lines four days ago.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces announced they had captured the Tabqa air base, 28 miles west of Raqqa, the Islamic State group's de facto capital in Syria.

KUSHNER TO LEAD EFFORT TO OVERHAUL BUREAUCRACY

Washington — President Donald Trump plans to unveil a new White House office today with sweeping authority to overhaul the federal bureaucracy and fulfill key campaign promises — such as reforming care for veterans and fighting opioid addiction — by harvesting ideas from the business world and, potentially, privatizing some government functions.

The White House Office of American Innovation, to be led by Jared Kushner, the

Through the Lens



Parishioners look forward to new church

FROM A1

"God bless this house," one person wrote.

Others scrawled names of people who would never see the new church built.

Jacob Freeman, a high school senior who graduated from the St. Michael parish school across the street, signed his name in memory of, simply, "madame."

Madame was Sylvie Morton, who taught French at St. Michael School for almost 20 years, including all nine years that Freeman was a student there.

Morton died last week of leukemia. Signing her name seemed like a fitting tribute, Freeman said.

"She definitely had a big impact," he said. "This is all about community ... and she was a big part of the St. Michael community."



Andrew McCauley, left, holds an umbrella Sunday over his father, Kevin Oliveira, as they sign the wooden beams that will form the ceiling of St. Michael the Archangel Church.

DANA JENSEN/THE DAY

If all goes according to plan, no one will ever see the signatures. They'll be on the side of the truss that faces up, where they'll be a secret only the signers will know for as long as the church is standing.

"People will know, and they can tell their children and grandchildren they signed it," Perkins said.

At first, the parishioners thought they could just repair the old building, but when an engineering firm found that the walls were not straight they decided to spend \$6.5 million to rebuild it with a new steel-beamed structure that would restore some of the design of the original church that had been hidden by renovations.

The old walls and roof came down last summer, and workers spent the fall getting the foundation ready to hold the new walls and beams. The

original stained glass windows will be reinstalled after getting restored in Iowa.

The steel bones of the steeple are up now, and on Monday, April 3 the wooden trusses — made in Vermont by a company founded by a man baptized at St. Michael — will be lifted into place with the blessing of the Most Rev. Michael Cote, bishop of Norwich.

There's more work, and more fundraising, to do. The St. Michael congregation has scattered in the years since the structural problems in the church's roof and walls were discovered. Many followed Perkins to St. Mary church in Stonington, others joined Catholic parishes in Westerly or North Stonington.

But if the dozens of signatures are any indication, the whole St. Michael community will be ready for that first Christmas mass under the wooden trusses, whenever it comes.

"They'll come back," Perkins said.

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Trump signals new openness to working with Democrats

By HOPE YEN
Associated Press

Washington — President Donald Trump on Sunday attacked conservative lawmakers for the failure of the Republican bill to replace former President Barack Obama's health care law, as aides signaled a greater willingness to work with moderate Democrats on upcoming legislative battles from the

Friday in a humiliating political defeat for the president, having lacked support from either the conservative Republicans or Democrats.

In additional fallout from Friday's jarring setback, Rep. Ted Poe, R-Texas, said he was leaving the caucus. Poe tweeted Friday that some lawmakers "would've voted against the 10 Commandments"

White House chief of staff Reince Priebus scolded conservative Republicans, explaining that Trump had felt "disappointed" that a "number of people he thought were loyal to him that weren't."

"It's time for the party to start governing," Priebus said. "I think it's time for our folks to come together, and I also think it's time to potentially get a few moderate Democrats

wants to ensure "people don't get left behind."

"I don't think the president is closing the door on anything," he said.

Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., said Democrats stood ready to work with Trump to fix Obamacare if he is willing to drop attempts to repeal the law and not undermine it. He warned that Trump is destined

subtle and not-so subtle. On Saturday, Trump urged Americans in a tweet to watch Judge Jeanine Pirro's program on Fox that night. She led her show by calling for House Speaker Paul Ryan to resign, blaming him for defeat of the bill in the Republican-controlled chamber.

Priebus described the two events as "coincidental," insisting that Trump was helping out a friend by plugging

day conversation, Trump "was clear his tweet had nothing to do with the speaker," Strong said.

The White House faces a tall task in gaining support for its congressional agenda. Trump, for instance, now lacks the savings anticipated from the health care bill to help pay for tax cuts, while expected legislation to invest \$1 trillion in roads and infrastructure and