

Truss-raising Monday at St. Michael's



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STONINGTON — The St. Michael's community and Bishop Michael R. Cote from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Norwich will join together Monday morning as the timber trusses are blessed and the first truss is raised for the parish's new church.

Vermont Timber Works has been on site assembling the trusses, which will support the roof, for the last couple weeks in preparation for Monday's 8:30 a.m. event, which is a significant step in the reconstruction. Aside from the steel framing for the

steeple, so far the work has mostly been in the cellar of the previous building, which was deconstructed.

"This marks a milestone in the reconstruction of St. Michael's, as the construction work now rises above the granite foundation built in the 1860s," said the Rev. Dennis Perkins, pastor. "We arrive at this day by God's grace along with the faith and generosity of countless parishioners and friends of St. Michael's. This will certainly be an extraordinary event."

Along with the blessing and raising of the first truss, Perkins said he is giving parishioners and friends

an opportunity to sign the trusses on Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.

The reconstruction project has been a long time coming as the parishioners and church leadership voluntarily vacated the building five years ago after learning it was structurally unsafe. Since then, the congregation has worshiped at St. Mary's Church in Stonington Borough.

At the moment, Perkins said, the church is about halfway to its goal of raising nearly \$8 million for the reconstruction project.

The landmark building, located at 60-62 Liberty St., was built in 1861. Six years later

an addition was put on. The roof, which was put together in a piecemeal manner, was problematic since the beginning. Columns were installed from the basement to the ceiling to stabilize it in 1872.

The first phase of the reconstruction project, which began last summer, included dismantling the walls and roof. The new church will include a 745-square-foot addition to allow for an elevator and restrooms that are handicapped-accessible.

The interior will not be completed until all funding has been pledged for Phase 2 of the project.

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