

Grass Valley United Methodist Church
236 S. Church Street
“Grass Valley’s First Church”

Bell Tower Project Narrative
Overview

The Grass Valley United Methodist Church as it exists today was built in 1937 after a fire destroyed the original Church built on this location. In 1997, the Church was expanded with a three-story structure that includes a kitchen and large gathering space (“Wesley Hall”), class rooms, offices and general purpose rooms.

A major component of the Church was its famous Bell Tower. Over the years, the tower became weathered and fell into disrepair. Remedial repairs were performed as funds became available. But as attendance waned so did the funds to repair the Tower.

Finally, with attendance slowly increasing, a major push to bring the Tower back to its full glory began in earnest in February 2024. The Church performed fund raising, both internally and externally, wrote articles about the effort in local newspapers, began the “Church Street Concert Series” and applied for grants to fund the project. Also, during this time, the Church Trustees met with contractors to vet them for the project ahead.

To verify the extent of the damage, we employed a general contractor and a structural engineer. From those surveys, an estimate for the restoration of the Tower was generated. Once the project started, more and more issues were found with the structure, in particular, severe water and termite damage. The cost for complete restoration was now out of the reach of the Church. Unfortunately, with the costs soaring and the Church’s ability to raise funds exhausted, the decision to demolish the Tower was a difficult, but necessary, one.

Obviously, if we had unlimited funds, our desire was to bring the Tower back to its original condition. The Church is now faced with limited remaining funds to “complete” the project. It is our intention to finish the repairs (see Proposed Work Scope) still required to make the structure whole including, but not limited to, termite damage repairs, concrete work, new hand rails, and stucco work. Then, if funds allow, we wish to re-install the Cross at a different location on the School Street side.

Bell Tower Project Narrative Proposed Work Scope

The following proposed work scope entails the repairs, tasks and objectives that, to the best of our knowledge, will be required to complete the project.

Remaining Demolition

- 1) Remove two existing concrete columns and replace or refinish existing concrete foundation.
- 2) Remove existing "pony" wall down to roof line over the arcade walkway on the School Street side of the Church.
- 3) Remove existing stucco on south and west walls at the patio formerly covered by the Tower.
- 4) Some exterior stucco will need to be removed on the east wall of the existing stairwell and north wall of the Sanctuary to inspect for termite and water damage. The actual amount is TBD.

Framing and concrete

- 1) Remove existing pilaster wood/ground contact and replace with concrete stem wall at northwest corner of existing patio.
- 2) Replace up to four former column locations at patio with compacted material and fill with concrete.
- 3) Extend two existing plinths at patio to provide finished look.
- 4) Frame new awning/shed roof at double door exit.
- 5) Frame and sheetrock existing abandoned door at second floor.

Roofing

- 1) Repair roofing at several locations where scaffolding was mounted during Tower demolition.
- 2) Install new roofing material to match existing at new awning/shed roof.
- 3) Install new roofing material at existing "secondary" Tower where Cross is to be relocated.

Stucco

- 1) Install new stucco as needed to replace demo'd or damaged stucco at various locations. Will match existing as best as possible.
- 2) Stucco new awning/shed roof support structure at double doors.

Paint

- 1) Paint new/existing stucco and woodwork to match existing colors as best as possible at various locations.

New hand and guardrails

- 1) Install new handrails at existing steps to match existing handrails. New guardrails MAY need to be installed at wheelchair ramp.

Rain gutter repair and new

- 1) Repair existing rain gutters as necessary at various locations.
- 2) Install new rain gutters at new awning/shed roof.

Fire sprinkler repair and installation

- 1) Complete sprinkler repairs at former Church/Tower interface.
- 2) Install (if required) new sprinkler at new awning/shed roof.

Electrical

- 1) Repair as necessary electrical wiring at former Church/Tower interface.

Termite and/or Water damage repair

- 1) Explore and repair termite and water damage as necessary at north and east facing walls at former Tower site and existing Sanctuary.

Cross

- 1) Relocate and reinstall historical Tower Cross at new location on secondary tower on School Street side of the Church. (See Proposed Photo).