

SPOTLIGHT ON THE CATHEDRAL

In times of need, the faithful have always come through for the Cathedral of St. Peter-In-Chains and, thanks to the faithful, the badly needed restoration of the exterior stonework is underway and should be completed by this fall.

After withstanding the rigors of Canadian weather for nearly two centuries, parts of the limestone steeple and three chimneys have deteriorated. The same is true for the stones of the gables, although they date from a 1931 expansion of the Cathedral.

Donors have pledged \$1.2 million to cover the stone work, but the Cathedral also needs a new roof as well in order to ensure that the exterior of the building is secure. That project is slated for 2023 and expected to cost upwards of \$1 million.

“The money isn’t there yet,” says Jim Lynch, a long time parishioner who sits on the Cathedral’s six-member building and property committee. “That’s where faith comes in. People have always come through for the Cathedral.”

A crew from Robertson Restoration Inc. of Brantford, a company that specializes in rehabilitating historic buildings, is currently at work on the Cathedral. Stephen Lewis, a master mason and the project manager, is supervising a five-member crew that includes two apprentices and three labourers.



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They have erected scaffolds to a height of 46 to 47 feet adjacent to the steeple and the gable on the east side of the Cathedral. Lewis says that the three chimneys have to be taken down to the roofline and rebuilt.

As for the gables, the flat coping stones that seal the peak of the structures have to be removed and replaced. "Some of the stone is pretty bad," says Lewis. "It's breaking in our hands as we take it out. It's no different from any building that's nearly 200 years old. It's Canada. We get lots of weather."

The original stone used to build and, later expand the Cathedral, mostly came from locally quarries. The stone for the restoration has been imported from Kansas and was selected from several samples on the recommendation of a consulting engineer. In order to complete the work, the company has purchased 400 pieces, each weighing 150 to 300 pounds, most of which have to be cut to size.

Working with stone, Lewis says, is labour intensive and expensive and much more challenging than laying brick. "You've got a big pile of stone," he adds. "You pick a piece and put it in the wall. You hope it all works at the end of the day."

With the stone work underway, Lynch and the other members of the building and property committee have turned their attention to raising the money necessary to do the roof. They are looking at replacing the asphalt shingles with metal panels.



"We want the Cathedral to be good for another 50 to 100 years when this is all done," he says. "We have to get it done, but it's difficult times raising money for churches."

If you would like to make a donation to assist with this project, please visit our website [Giving page](#) or place a donation in the collection basket and mark it "Restoration Fund".

Thank you to our resident writer, D'Arcy Jenish, for this latest edition of the Spotlight on the Cathedral. If you have an idea for a future Spotlight, please contact Catherine in the office.