

Dunkirk Church Structural Repairs Nearly Complete

Posted by [Mandie](#) On 03/30/2015

It is all in God's perfect timing – Dunkirk Baptist Church has seen it first hand.

In early December, church members Bill Murphy and Chuck Stotz were repairing the steeple lighting on the main campus building when they discovered bowed roof trusses in the attic– a discovery that could only be summed up as divine intervention.

"I praise God for broken lights and faithful followers of Jesus Christ," DBC Pastor Rick Hancock explained. "We may not have discovered the truss failure before it was too late."

These serious structural issues were discovered during any church's most significant and busy times: Christmas and Easter.

On Dec. 16 an inspector deemed the building unsafe for large gatherings, such as worship and Sunday school. Dunkirk was left with use of only the main office and a classroom in the building, and the Connect Center, another campus building. Since Dec. 21, DBC has been operating two worship services on Sunday in the Connect Center.

DBC office manager Donna Murphy said the transition to the Connect Center for services wasn't chaotic or frantic. "We all simply worked together as the body of Christ to all do our part in moving over to the Connect Center," Murphy said. "Most of the church family actually said that they enjoyed the more casual and cozy atmosphere of the Connect Center (of course the fact that it was short term helped). All of the moving parts actually fell in line surprisingly smoothly."

Janet Allen, member of the praise team and mother of two young children, said her family has enjoyed the more "intimate" services in the Connect Center. "You can feel the energy with the shorter bridge from the platform to the congregation," she said. "The true family atmosphere of worship with the children in the service has not been an inconvenience but rather an unexpected gift from God."

Due to the lack of space, Sunday school classes and children's worship were suspended. But that didn't stop Bonnie Pritchett from interacting with her students each week through weekly letters and activities.

Although this has been an inconvenience and a challenge to not only DBC staff but its church members as well, the entire DBC family gives thanks to the Lord that these issues were discovered before anyone was injured or the building collapsed.

Over these last three months, engineers and Keen Construction have been assessing and repairing the sanctuary truss and girder system. Plans to move the church family to Northern High School, where DBC began in March 1993, were taking shape – Dunkirk would return to its beginnings.

Just when it started to look as though Dunkirk Baptist Church would be temporarily relocated for the next two to four months, the Lord blessed Dunkirk with swift and smooth repairs in about three to five weeks.

"The trusses were bowed so badly that once the repairs were made, it raised the structure up by 1.5 inches," Matt Keen, owner of Keen Construction in Lusby, said. "Thankfully, the repairs went smoothly and the engineer was very impressed. The damage was dire and it could have been very bad if it hadn't been detected in His timing."

And now, as Dunkirk Baptist celebrates the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ this Easter, DBC will be worshipping on their own campus. Though it may not be their familiar pews in the church sanctuary, it's still wonderful to be on the home campus. Good Friday services will begin at 7 p.m. in the Connect Center. "Sonrise" services will begin at 6:30 a.m. on Easter Sunday on the church grounds and Easter morning services will be held at 8, 9:15 and 10:30 a.m. in the Connect Center.

Hancock said, "I have been so impressed with the spirit of cooperation and understanding from the DBC family" through the entire situation. "This experience has not been an easy journey. We have been reminded that it is not where we worship, but who we worship. Jesus Christ is to be exalted and praised. I am thrilled that we will celebrate the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus no matter where we might be."

More information, photos and a schedule of upcoming events are available online at www.dunkirkbaptistchurch.org/.

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