

Church
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drove by, I didn't know if I wanted to go there," she said. "I didn't know if it was open."

But upon entering, Spears said she immediately felt the building's inner beauty.

"I wanted the outside to match the inside," she said.

Last October, Spears and her nieces went to work scraping the church walls with nothing more than putty knives.

It wasn't long before they were noticed.

A passing logger stopped by to ask what they were doing and soon after loaned them a pressure washer to wash down the church. Following that, the logger's sister, who happened to own a painting company, offered assistance as well and hired spray painters while offering her cost-ly primer at a large discount. Before long, others began joining in as passers-by would voice their support.

"It just was a stir," Spears said. "And lo and behold the church got painted pure white."

To get the old bell tower down, however, was another thing. It would require some funds.

One day, as Spears was helping prune the church's old holly bush, she had an idea.

"I looked at that holly and thought, 'This is solid gold,'" she said.

Soon, she and congregates were making holly wreathes to sell to the community.

While Spears was hoping for a few hundred dollars to go toward the project, sales and donation wound up exceeding expectations.

"We ended up making close to \$5,000," said Spears. "The spirit of it -- it was just wonderful."

While the next step of the project was being considered, however, the sudden snow storm this year made supply of contractors sparse and church members were afraid they wouldn't have the bell tower ready for their July 4 event.

Again, though, an appeal to a couple community members and Spears' own husband put the project back on track, complete with a line truck to install the newly constructed tower.

Spears and other church members are grateful for the way events unfolded.

"As it turns out, those flies were a blessing," Spears said. "When we were painting the church,



The completed Church at London bell tower, silent for more than a decade, will ring again tomorrow thanks to community efforts.

we found out that bell tower was totally rotten and that bell weighs 345 pounds. ... If it wasn't for those flies, they might've continued to ring that bell and that bell could've come crashing down."

Congregate Paul Tullar was moved by the spirit of community harmony.

"God motivated the people," he said. "Just about everything here is volunteer."

Spears appreciated being part of the church's story.

"There is a history that goes back and back and back that everybody can remember," she said. "I know the windows were broken out by some hooligans way back when. I know Paul's dad went and found glass and hand-cut the new windows."

Spears expressed her gratitude that the church retains so much history and warmth.

"The love that's in that church is exceedingly

rare and that's why that church is so special," she said.

As the congregation is mainly made up of elderly members, Smith was also thankful for Spears' energy for the project.

"I call her God's spark plug," he said.

The effort has attracted attention from many in the community and beyond.

"We've gotten significant donations from as far away as Klamath Falls," he said. "So lots of people have taken an interest and donated much-needed resources."

In all, Smith estimates about 15 or 20 people have made the project possible through volunteering.

"God's been doing the work -- not just on the church and on the bell tower, but on the hearts of people to revive the building," Smith said. "At the same time I believe he's reviving all of us in our faith."



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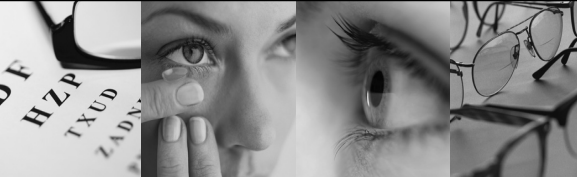
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