

Grace Episcopal Church Roof Committee Update
Week of September 10, 2023

I'm Deb Anken-Dyer, chair of the Roof Committee created by the Vestry in early 2021 to investigate the condition of the slate roof and determine whether it could be repaired or needed to be replaced, as well as determine and implement steps to bring the project to completion. It is my hope that our extensive report in June 2022, our report at the annual meeting in November 2022 and periodic reports in Grace Notes have kept you informed of our progress. However, I want to briefly recap and bring you up to date on recent developments over the past few months.

For the past two years the Committee has met every other month, done historical and records research, interviewed parishioners and experts and hired experts to do condition assessments on the entire slate roof system. Over the past several months condition assessments have been completed as follows:

- the entire exterior façade of Grace Church, including all of the masonry by GRAEF engineering;
- the overall condition of the slate roof tiles and underlayment by Millen Roofing, the company who has been repairing the slate roof over the past 44 years;
- the wood trusses and ceiling trusses by Fred Groth, an engineer who is a parishioner at Grace and General Manager of the roof project, John Wood, and Chris DeMarco, with additional assistance; and
- recent assessments of the gutters, cornice, soffits, dentil moulding and flashing by Dan Maki of Facilities Engineering, Tony Schrenckenthaler of Madison Sheet Metal and Bachmann Construction.

The good news is that the nave wood trusses and ceiling trusses are in excellent condition and need only minor repairs. All of the other components of the roof need to be repaired or replaced. Most significantly is the conclusion from Millen Roofing in May 2023:

“The overall condition of the [slate] roof of Grace Episcopal in Madison, WI is very poor. The interlayment which prevents rain and snow from getting underneath the slate roof is deteriorating rapidly. At this time, the only thing preventing the roof from leaking is the asphalt felt underlayment. The roof should be replaced as soon as possible to avoid any serious problems.”

This explains the what. The simple why is that the technique used to install the current slate roof in 1980 did not provide sufficient overlapping of slate tiles. This was a newer and cost-saving technique at the time and, unfortunately, it has not performed well over time.

Based on all work done to date, the Roof Committee voted on September 5, 2023, to recommend to the Vestry that the slate roof system on the Nave be replaced. Bachmann Construction has worked with all of the experts mentioned above, including Charlie Quagliana, a historic preservation architect also hired as a consultant, and the current estimate based on 2024 figures is that the cost of the project will be \$1.5 million for a natural slate roof system projected to last 80+ years. The consultant team was also asked to do a life cycle cost analysis to compare three different roofing materials: natural slate, composite shingle and steel. Because we are on the National Register of Historic Places and a Madison City Landmark, either composite shingle or steel tiles would need to meet historic standards. This analysis (for materials and installation only) showed over a 90-year period that it is substantially more cost effective to put on a natural slate roof than either of the other two options. The reason is because a composite slate roof would need to be replaced twice over 90 years, and a steel roof would need to be replaced once. Natural slate would not need to be replaced. This results in substantial savings in labor costs.

While the cost of the project is large, our committee is optimistic that we have the capacity to do this project. First, the Roof Committee has applied to the Fund for Sacred Places for a grant of \$250,000. We are proud to say that we made the first cut from several hundred applicants to 31 finalists. We submitted our final extensive application on July 14. A decision of the final 15 or so awardees will be announced in early October. We submitted what we believe is a strong application, so we are cautiously optimistic.

A \$500,000 match is required should we receive this grant and we are forming a separate fundraising committee at this time to not only raise these matching funds but to raise funds from the congregation and the larger Madison community. Over the past month, the Church has hired Tracy Harris as a marketing consultant and she has provided some exciting mock-ups and ideas over the past week for consideration, including catchy names for the fundraising campaign.

We hope you and eventually the larger community will be as enthusiastic about this project as we are. This magnificent building and Grace Church members have played a significant role in the history and cultural life of Madison and the State of Wisconsin since the middle 1800s. Situated as we are across from the state Capitol, we are known throughout WI as the center for faith-based witness on issues of the day. We are also a treasured venue for local, regional and international musicians. Our commitments to outreach include our food pantry and advocacy for racial and social justice. Being a part of this roof raising project connects each of us to this rich history, our current mission and outreach and also to a promised future: a future where this building continues to provide physical and spiritual sanctuary to all of us and generations to come and continues to inspire us to create a more loving and just world.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Roof Committee: Joe Bartol; Barbara (Suzy) Buenger; Fr. Jonathan Grieser, Rector; Fred Groth, Grace General Manager for the Roof Project; Jane Hamblen, Senior Warden; David Lyon, and Deb Anken-Dyer.