

Babette G. Augustin-Staff photographer
St. Lawrence Church's new altar, with its smooth top, rough underside, and graceful wooden base, reflects the elements of hope and sacrifice.



St. Lawrence Church
Bishop Matthew H. Clark dedicated the new church Dec. 16, 1989.

Church embodies hope

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

GREECE — Father Frank J. Falletta can breathe a little more easily now that his new facilities offer more elbow room than those at his previous church.

As the pastor will tell you, St. Lawrence is one of the fastest growing parishes in the diocese. Since 1986, 584 new families have moved into the parish. To meet the increased need for space, the community decided to tear down its old church, built in the late 1950s, and replace it with a new one.

Parishioner Phillip Wegman chaired the

building committee for the project, which included plans to erect a new parish center, completed in 1988 for a cost of \$550,000. Construction of the new church, which cost \$1.2 million, began in March of last year, and is currently in its final phase.

The new church can seat about 300 more people than the old building, which housed a maximum of 500 people for services. Bishop Matthew H. Clark dedicated the new church at a service Dec. 16, 1989.

Parishioners pledged most of the money to erect the church, according to the building committee's program coordinator, Marilyn Strauss. Starting in May, 1987, parishioners donated money to the building committee over the next three years. Strauss noted that 90-95 percent of the money pledged by parishioners has been collected.

Wegman, whose construction firm, Lissow/Wegman, Inc., built the church, remarked that for the most part, the parish bypassed such traditional fundraising activities as bake sales and fairs to support the effort. "We had enough faith in the parish that we would see a large pledge system," he said.

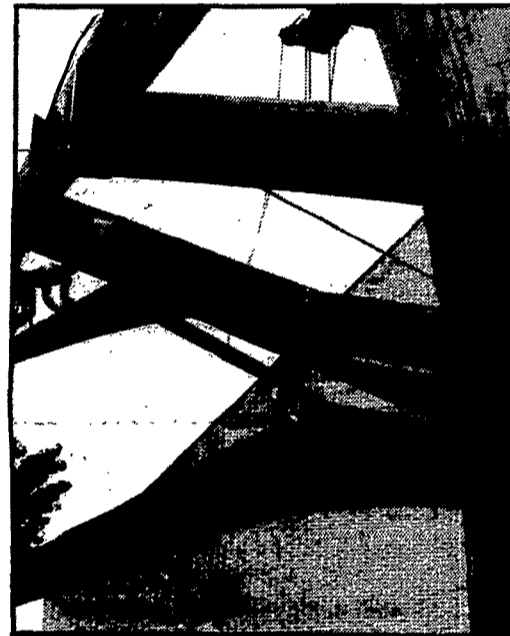
Although the church's exterior has been completed, work remains to be done on the altar, according to Bill Keyser, a professor of woodworking and furniture design at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Keyser noted that his design for the altar reflected the wishes of the building committee.

"They wanted an altar of sacrifice, but also an altar of hope," he said, noting that the top of the altar table is smooth to convey hope, whereas the altar's granite underside is rough to reflect sacrifice.

He also said that the lines in the altar's wooden base curve upward. "It gives a feeling of lightness and grace that will give a feeling of hope," he commented.

The new church has already been a source of hope in Strauss' life. Wegman was so impressed by her organizational skills as the building committee's program coordinator that he offered her a full-time job in the summer of 1987.

Today, she is Wegman's secretary. "I'm very happy to be working here," she said.



St. Lawrence Church
Still being constructed are the church's distinctive vaulted ceilings.



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Jennifer Ellis, 15 months, takes a break from services inside the Greece parish's new church building.



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The church includes art from Italy.