



St. John's renovation project reaches new heights

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UTICA — A \$1.5 million renovation project to update the exterior of **Historic Old St. John's Roman Catholic Church** went to new heights this week as workers began the task of cleaning and recoating the church's two spires and making repairs to the roof.

Employees of Massachusetts-based Skyline Engineering could not be reached for comment Tuesday, but could be seen climbing Tuesday to the top of the towering spires with assistance from a cherry picker and a series of ropes.

Church board member Jim Salerno said the overall project began about five weeks ago with painting and masonry work on the main portion of the building, and is expected to be completed altogether within two months.

It's the first major facelift for the building in several decades, he added.

"Nothing's been done for 35 years," Salerno said. "It needed painting. ... It's just worn off after the years, so it's a rejuvenation."

Located at 240 Bleecker St., the church conducted a multi-year capital campaign recently with a stated goal of \$1.2 million to help raise money for the improvements, according to its website.

Masonry work is all but completed, and painting of the church's wood trim is about half done, Salerno said. The project also will include reapplying gold leaf to the statue of St. John above the main entrance on John Street, and roof repair by Utica-based Padula Roofing.

The 141-year-old building was featured on a collectible ornament released by the Landmarks Society of Greater Utica last year. It opened its doors in 1869, but has a congregation dating back to at least 1820.

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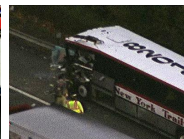
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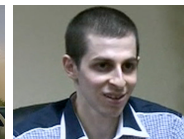
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