

101 Year Old Church Put Back Together After Hurricane Harvey Clegg Services, Victoria, Texas - “Most Unusual Move” 2017

Aug. 26, 2017

101-year-old historic McFaddin church gets blown about 15 feet off its foundation, making the church lean at about a 30-degree angle during Hurricane Harvey.

Oct. 9, 2017

Clegg Services and Galveston-based McMillan Building Movers crew's pulled the church with cables attached to a truck to straighten it out as much as possible and wrapped a chain around the structure to secure it together.

Oct. 10, 2017

The crew slowly lifted the structure inch by inch with pump jacks and air bags. When the church was about 4 feet off the ground, the crews started doing enough structural repairs so the church could be moved. The floors and walls were reinforced.

Oct. 30, 2017

Crews with Clegg Services and McMillan Building Movers pulled the church back onto its foundation with construction vehicles chained to the structure. Crews put steel beams under the structure with Ivory soap between them so the church would slide back into position.

Early Nov. 2017

The crew then worked on more structural repairs and strapping the structure to its foundation.

The next step for the church is to hire a construction crew to do exterior finishing and interior repairs.



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John Clegg monitors the McFaddin church move as its being pulled back into its proper position.

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Clegg Services, Victoria, Texas - "Most Unusual Move" 2017
McFaddin church In it's final position.



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Clegg Services & McMillan Building Movers' Crew



Local News Paper Coverage of The Move

Recently restored church toppled
Nicolas Galindo By Nicolas Galindo
Sept. 4, 2017 at 6:24 p.m.
Updated Sept. 5, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.

After seeing the Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church in McFaddin, Gilbert Ramon was heartbroken.

Ramon, 46, grew up in McFaddin but lives in Decatur. He heard about the church being destroyed from a friend who sent him a text message.

He came down shortly after Hurricane Harvey passed to check on family members who still live in Victoria and had to stop to see the church for himself. He also brought his father, who is now 94 and was baptized in the church.

"He was pretty upset," Ramon said about his father.

Despite the damage to the church, the town of McFaddin is relatively unscathed, resident David Schulte, 58, said.

"Most of the houses out here have water damage from either shingles blowing off or just leaking," Schulte said. "We have a lot of trees down but not that many on houses."

The biggest concern with residents has been with the mosquito population, which has flourished in the wake of the storm and flooding from Hurricane Harvey. However, the county is starting mosquito control programs.

While power companies were out reconnecting lines through the onslaught of pests, the tentative date to have the town fully restored is as late as Friday, Sept. 8, Schulte said.

Despite the delays in getting services back, the community of McFaddin has come together to make sure no one is left out.

"Everybody out here kind of takes care of each other," Schulte said. "We're not going to let anybody go hungry or thirsty or not have shelter."

There's still a lot of cleanup to be done in the community, including fixing the old church, which was moved off its foundation by about 25 feet. The entryway steeple fell off the front.

Out of all the damage in the community - from the grain silos with ruined grain to the homes with leaky roofs - the church is the worst damaged, Schulte said.

Hurricane Claudette badly damaged the church in 2003, and it closed later that year. The church was renovated and reopened in July 2015.

After Harvey, the fate of the church is unknown. Catholic church officials could not be reached for comment Tuesday.



The Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church, recently restored, lies in a wrecked state in McFaddin after Hurricane Harvey pounded the Crossroads.



The interior of the Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church lies in a wrecked state.

The Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church, McFaddin, Texas - Historical Timeline

- December 1915 - Built of lumber purchased from the Anchor Lumber Company, of Victoria. Construction is completed January 1916. The church is built through the generosity of James A. and A. M. McFaddin and begins as a mission of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Victoria.
- January 1916 - A cross painted by W. Carroll is put in place Jan. 11, and the church building is painted Jan. 25. Benches built by Victoria Plan Mills for \$99 are delivered Jan. 14. More fixtures, such as lamps and a bell, are delivered during the following months.
- February 1916 - The first service is conducted.
- May 1986 - Evening services by the Rev. David Collela end, and for the next 15 months, only special services, baptisms, funerals and weddings are conducted.
- October 1987 - The Rev. Miguel Cerda begins conducting Sunday services at the church and continues every Sunday thereafter until April 1988, when the Rev. Antonio Perez replaces him.
- 1990 - The church is recorded as a Texas historical landmark.
- Mid-1980s - Regular Saturday evening services ends.
- July 2003 - The church sustains structural and surface damage during Hurricane Claudette. A few months later, the church loses its padre, the Rev. Timothy John Kinast, and the doors are locked and the building deemed unsafe for use after serving its tiny town of ranchhands for the better part of a century.
- February 2014 - Restoration of the church begins.
- July 26, 2015 - The church is blessed and reopens.
- August 26, 2017 - The church again sustains structural and surface damage during Hurricane Harvey, moving it about 15 feet off it's foundation and making it lean at about a 30 degree angle.
- October 30, 2017 - Crews with Clegg Services and McMillan Building Movers completed structural repairs and the process of moving the church back onto its foundation.

Crews begin repair work on historic McFaddin church

Kathryn Cargo By Kathryn Cargo

Oct. 10, 2017 at 10 p.m.

Updated Oct. 10, 2017 at 10:25 p.m.

MCFADDIN - Seeing the 101-year-old historic McFaddin church leaning sideways and inches from collapsing broke Mitchell Morrissey's heart.

With the help of Clegg Services and Galveston-based McMillan Building Movers, the McFaddin Ranch family is ensuring the church will survive.

"I feel optimism for the first time since this storm," said Morrissey, whose great-great-great grandfather, James Alfred McFaddin, built the church in December 1915. "Now I see the windows squaring back up and the cracks filling back in as the building shifts back into the position its supposed to be in - first real glimpse of hope we've had out here."

Monday, the crew pulled the church with cables attached to a truck to straighten it out as much as possible and wrapped a chain around the structure to secure it together. Tuesday, they worked to stabilize the church and lifted it a few inches at a time.

Hurricane Harvey's winds pushed the Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church about 15 feet from where it originally stood off its foundation, pushed one side of the building into the ground, sloped the floor and left cracks and gaps in the walls, said John Clegg, owner of Clegg Services. The church was not attached to its foundation - concrete blocks - which is one reason it moved, he said.

"When we move it back, we're going to put hurricane straps on it so it won't ever do that again," he said.

Harvey hit the McFaddin Ranch hard, taking out all of its barns and damaging its historic buildings with the church faring the worse, Morrissey said.

"Coming around the corner and seeing the church down - out of every building in this town - was surreal because of the amount of time and effort we had put into getting it back into good shape," he said. "I thought this building out of all the buildings would have made it."

Morrissey is executive director of Marianna-McFaddin Preservation Foundation, a nonprofit made up of family members that is raising money for the project. The nonprofit previously restored the church, which was blessed and reopened in summer 2015 after its doors were locked for 12 years.

The church served families in the area until regular services ended in the 1980s and later on became a mission of Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Victoria, which held weekly services until the mid-1990s. In 2003, the structure was deemed unsafe after Hurricane Claudette hit.

Tuesday, the crew slowly lifted up the walls of the church to match the middle of the floor to help level it, said Devon Dioguardi, Clegg Services manager. After the walls are lifted, the crew will figure out how to straighten out the joists that bolted up under the floor. The crew is also reinforcing the floor and walls with lumber as they raise them.

"For being as messed up as it is, it's actually pretty sturdy, which surprised me," Dioguardi said. "Honestly, I thought it was going to be a crazy ordeal, but it's turned out simpler than I imagined."

Once the crew lifts the church a few feet, they'll go under it and make major structure repairs so the building can be safely moved to its original spot, Dioguardi said. The crew will then use two steel devices along with soap underneath the church to slide it back into place.

"It's looking like it's going to happen, and we're past the scary part - hooking up those winch lines and pulling, trying to straighten it back out and close it up," he said. "The walls were probably leaning at a 25-degree angle."

In the future, a construction crew will refinish the church.

Morrissey's grandmother, Sue Cannon, is the backbone of this project because it was her idea, Morrissey said. Cannon is also the nonprofit's president.

"The nonprofit wouldn't exist without her," he said. "She's the moving force for all of this."

Cannon called Clegg about the church to see whether it could be repaired, a call that started the project.

"None of this would have happened if it wasn't for Sue Cannon, I guarantee you," Clegg said. "It's to her credit that she's saving the building because most people would just demolish it."



Clegg Services owner John Clegg, center, speaks with Mitchell Morrissey, right, while crews work to level the Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church in McFaddin.



Mitchell Morrissey, 27, stands on the slumped floor of the Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church in McFaddin and looks at a cable wire strung through the walls. The cable is attached to a truck that helped level the church.



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Damaged McFaddin church to be strengthened

Oct. 24, 2017 at 9:36 p.m.

Updated Oct. 24, 2017 at 10:20 p.m.

Mitchell Morrissey, of the McFaddin family, operates a pneumatic pressure lift to raise the Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church at the McFaddin ranch a few inches so steel beams can be soaped down with crumbled Ivory soap.

Once the soap has been spread around, the shorter beams will be lowered back into place and the building will be pulled back onto its original foundation.

Hurricane Harvey pushed the structure off its foundation by about 15 feet. Clegg Services and McMillan Building Movers crews have lifted the structure by 4 feet to repair and strengthen the building so it stays intact when moved.

On Tuesday, crews replaced the front wall with new wood. Crews plan to move the church onto its foundation next week.



Mitchell Morrissey, of the McFaddin family, operates a pneumatic pressure lift to raise the Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church at the McFaddin ranch. Contributed by Gary Dunnam for The Victoria Advocate

McFaddin church again on solid ground (w/video)

Kathryn Cargo By Kathryn Cargo

Nov. 5, 2017 at 4:57 p.m.

Updated Nov. 5, 2017 at 5:04 p.m.

MCFADDIN - Ten weeks after Hurricane Harvey struck, the iconic McFaddin Church stands on its foundation once again.

The storm blew the Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church about 15 feet off its foundation, making the church lean at a 30-degree angle.

"There was a lot of thinking it wasn't going to work, but that's not a question anymore, and it's coming together the way that we always imagined or hoped that it would," said Mitchell Morrissey, whose great-great-great grandfather, James Alfred McFaddin, built the church in December 1915. "This is really like best-case scenario out of what we were imagining."

Monday, crews with Clegg Services and Galveston-based McMillan Building Movers pulled the church back onto its foundation with construction vehicles chained to the structure. Crews put steel beams under the structure with Ivory soap between them so the church would slide back into position.

The rest of the week, the crew worked on structural repairs and strapping the structure to its foundation. They will work into next week.

The next step for the church is to hire a construction crew to do finishing exterior and interior repairs, Morrissey said.

Besides the 101-year-old church, most of the other historic buildings in McFaddin also were damaged. The church fared the worst.

"This recovery from after Hurricane Harvey, (the church) was our main focus. The building got so damaged structurally, we had to do something right away and put our other projects on the back burner a little bit," Morrissey said. "If we hadn't done something and acted right away, we would have lost the building completely."

Now that the church has returned to its foundation, the McFaddin Ranch family, as well as the Marianna-McFaddin Preservation Foundation, which Morrissey is executive director of, can focus on other projects, he said.

The nonprofit previously restored the church, which was blessed and reopened in summer 2015 after its doors were locked for 12 years.

The church served families in the area until regular services ended in the 1980s and later became a mission of Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Victoria, which held weekly services until the mid-1990s. In 2003, the structure was deemed unsafe after Hurricane Claudette hit.

About two weeks ago crews slowly lifted the structure inch by inch with pump jacks and air bags. When the church was about 4 feet off the ground, the crews started doing enough structural repairs so the church could be moved. The floors and walls were reinforced.

"We've really gotten past the first big hurdle of getting the structure back to where it needs to be," Morrissey said. "As we're progressing, we can sort of see this is now going to definitely work."

Morrissey's grandmother and president of the nonprofit, Sue Cannon, said she was delighted the church is now back in its right place, which shows hope for the town. When she saw the aftermath Harvey left in McFaddin, she felt awful, she said.

"The whole town looked terrible," she said. "Everything was battered."

Everyone who's been involved with repairing the church is impressed with the work that Clegg Services has done, Morrissey said.

"I know our nonprofit was amazed that this is going so well," he said.

John Clegg, owner of Clegg Services, said he was proud to have helped save a Crossroads historic building.

"It's interesting, and I like this kind of work," he said. "We have a bunch of good guys, and they all enjoy doing it, so it's satisfying that (the church is) back where it belongs."



John Clegg, owner of Clegg Services, watches the McFaddin church move as its being pulled back onto its foundation.



The Clegg Services crew lifted the church inch by inch with pump jacks and air bags until it was about 4 feet off the ground to do structural repairs underneath.



Clegg Services pulled the iconic McFaddin Church back onto its foundation. Hurricane Harvey blew the church about 15 feet of its foundation and caused the structure to lean at about a 30 degree angle.



Gilbert Rodriguez with Clegg Services puts ivory soap on metal beams underneath the McFaddin church. Crews used the soap to help the church slide back onto its foundation.