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Church of the Good Shepherd



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Church holds leak-free services for first time in years after re-roofing with MetroShake II stone-coated steel

By Randy Franz
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For 18 months, committee members struggled with what to do about the decrepit roof at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Arcadia, CA. They considered reroofing with concrete tile or asphalt shingle, but "we weren't real crazy" about either choice, said the pastor, Phil Wood.

A few church members had steel roofing on their homes, but the committee figured the metal didn't look nice enough and was too expensive for more than 800 squares of church roofing. What they weren't at the time familiar with was the stone-coated steel roofing from Metro Roof Systems, Oceanside, CA. The company's MetroShake II roof system proved not only to satisfy the congregation's aesthetic concerns, but it met other critical requirements as well.

What gave steel the nod

- **Weight:** Built in 1947, the church's main sanctuary is a complex series of steep-slope A-frames. A school building and four other office structures were built starting in 1957, all in a modified Tudor style with steep-slope roofing. All originally were roofed with wood shake. The chapel was reroofed with wood shake 15 years ago. Committee members were concerned about adding up to six times the weight if they used concrete tile. Even doubling the weight with asphalt shingle worried them.

Upon investigating stone-coated steel, they were "astounded" it would weigh slightly less than wood shake when installed.

- **Aesthetics:** When Matt Fisher of Anaheim, CA-based Western Roofing Systems met with church members to give a bid, he learned their image of steel roofing was that of a drab, unappealing, dome-shaped, World War II Quonset Hut. Not until they saw nearby homes that Fisher's crew had re-roofed in recent years did the committee members believe steel roofing looked beautiful.

"The congregation wanted to stay with the same style," Wood said. "If this (roofing) wasn't close to the same look, it would stick out like a sore thumb. People would make assumptions about this congregation, such as it was 'done on the cheap.' We didn't ever expect it to look this good."

- **Price:** Committee members factored in the low maintenance and long lifespan of the MetroShake II stone-coated steel, especially when compared with asphalt shingle, and concluded it was their most economical choice. "We said, 'Gee, most of us won't be around to worry about this ever again,'" Wood said.

Timing is everything



Church reroofs require a contractor with a special degree of sensitivity. The Church of the Good Shepherd reroof project took about eight weeks to complete and during that time, the church campus was the site of several funerals and a saw an almost daily parade of school children.

John Popa, who directed Western's crews, scheduled work on the school building during Easter Vacation when school was out. And when school resumed, Popa's crews worked on that section of the project only after the children had left for the day.

During funerals, work stopped so the noise would not interfere with the services. "They were extra sensitive to that," Wood said. "That's admirable. It reflects on their management."

Another step that impressed church staff was the assigning of one crew member to focus solely on picking up and discarding stray nails. The use of a magnet to find hard-to-see nails was the key to being thorough.



Tough crowd

Pressure to perform permeated the job from the start. First, the church is in a highly visible location near the front of the property on a busy street. The sanctuary is a local landmark in the affluent city of Arcadia, which borders Pasadena. During installation, traffic stopped occasionally to see installers working in precarious positions.

In addition, the contractor had to please the church committee and face the scrutiny of about a dozen contractors among the congregation. Plus, there were unofficial weekly assessments.

"They had 500 to 600 'inspectors' each Sunday," Wood said, referring to churchgoers. "That had to be tough."

So, how many complaints?

"Not one," he said. "During the process or after. All of the contractors in our congregation gave Matt and John and their crew very high marks."

Bring it on

For 18 months, the Church of the Good Shepherd was marked by a massive blue tarp that struggled to cover the cracking, aging wood roof. The silver lining was the state's prolonged drought—no rain meant no leakage.

Once the roof was replaced, so were church members' fears. "We are kind of wishing for a big rain," Wood said. "We are finally ready for it."

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