



July 20, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of the Hills Church,

The Phase 1B HVAC and fire protection projects are well underway, and both the Sanctuary and Chapel buildings are actively under construction. So far, around 6 weeks into the project, there have been no major unexpected issues, which is always a wild card in any renovation project in an older building.

This week we heard back from the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board about the variances we requested. They granted virtually all of them, although we will have to do some work including installing some compliant handrails and extra signage. One major concession to us was their granting us a variance to leave the South Mezzanine in the Assembly Room as is. Making this area fully accessible would have entailed installing a lift which would have been very expensive.

Early in the project, some of the more decorative and fragile elements of the Sanctuary and Wallace Chapel were protected. The two photographs to the right and immediately below show the protective shrouding protecting the mural in the West End of the Sanctuary, as well as the stained glass windows, pews and organ. The copper piping for the sprinkler system in the Sanctuary is shown in the photo below and to the right.



In the Sanctuary, we had a couple of options for installing the horizontal water mains for the sprinkler system in the back (West) bays. One option called for leaving these 2" diameter copper pipes exposed running just under the light valences with a frieze board placed behind them. (See photo to right.) The copper pipes will eventually develop a soft brown patina which will blend well with the existing woodwork and the frieze board.



The second option entails boxing in the horizontal sections of pipe and staining the boxes to match the woodwork. (See photo left.) Note that in both options, the sprinkler 'risers' will be visible as they run along the trusses. A number of people weighed in on these two options (and several earlier versions) including the design and construction teams, the clergy and staff, members of the Property Maintenance Committee, and Church Council before deciding on the second (boxed in) option, primarily for aesthetic reasons, although it was the more costly of the two.

The installation of the water mains, valves and other piping for the sprinkler system has begun in both buildings. This photo is a view of the South Mezzanine area of the Assembly Room ...





... and this photo shows the space behind the organ, which is very small but full of mechanicals. As you would expect, the contractors worked closely with John Finney and Foley-Baker, our organ maintenance company, to protect the organ from damage while construction is underway. The fire protection work around the organ is almost complete.

We will be updating you again in a few weeks. These construction updates will also be appearing on the church's website in case you should miss one: <https://www.hillschurch.org/news/> Meanwhile, should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact any of the Moderators individually or by email: officeofthemoderator@hillschurch.org.

In service and faith,

Christopher Stowell, Sarah Pedersen, Mary Hill Canavan
Office of the Moderator