



WORDS | ANGIE ISHAK PHOTOGRAPHY | EDMUND ARCEO

The next time you go to a concert or arts event at St. Hilda's, look up. You can't help but notice the new sanctuary's three beautiful steel supports, each unified by a burnished circle. They are minimal yet industrial, expressing the simple modernity of the space. They also serve a symbolic purpose: representing how members of the community came together to rebuild this historical and cultural hub.

Over its 32-year lifespan, St. Hilda's sanctuary has been a prime venue for concerts and cultural events. The room's large, airy windows let in tranquil woodland views—for church- and concert-goers alike. High ceilings contribute to lovely, resonant acoustics. But two years ago, an inspection for a minor wall repair revealed that the sanctuary walls were leaning out, having, over time, been pushed out by a roof that lacked proper supports. Further inspection revealed inferior building materials. The sanctuary would need rebuilding.

Mobius Architecture and Spani Developments took great care to honour the church's Christian tradition and its values of inclusion and community. With every generation, St. Hilda's strives to further these values. "This new space was designed to represent our vision," explains Reverend Li. "The architecture and building teams understood that this is not only a church but a community sacred space." Overhead, the roof supports reflect the Christian trinity and circular themes, and they were designed to not obstruct the verdant views through the windows. A requirement to provide further structural stabilization resulted in a new "west transept," a side extension of the sanctuary that offers both structural support and a new extra space for community groups to meet.

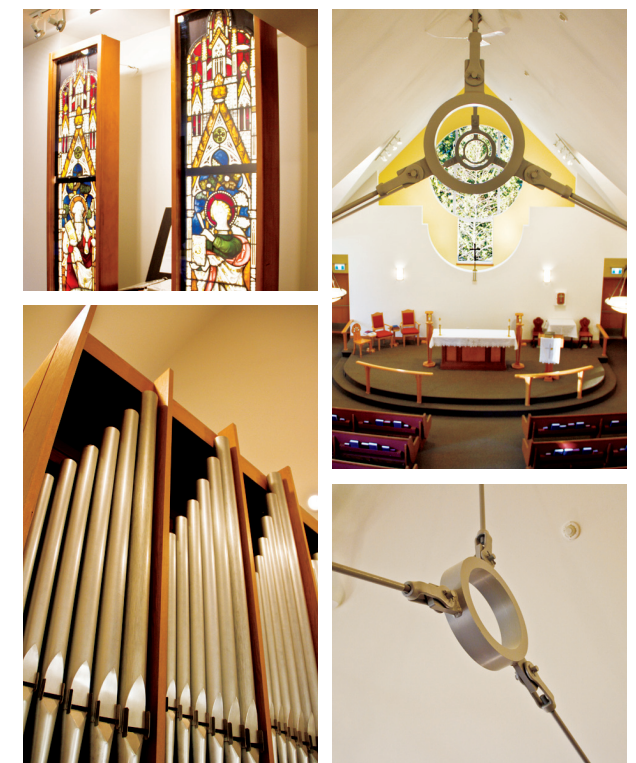
Reverend Clarence Li has felt blessed by the community's response and participation. "Usually projects like these are supported only by the members of the church, which, to some extent, is our case as well. But what was particularly wonderful here was receiving affirmation from the wider community when we let them know this was happening." The church's Restoration Capital Campaign book records the countless companies, their staff, subcontractors, the public, and church members who contributed effort, skill, and financial support. Several contributions made by the project's subcontractors were free or donated in-kind.



## THE ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDING TEAMS UNDERSTOOD THAT **THIS IS NOT ONLY A CHURCH BUT A COMMUNITY SACRED SPACE.**

Though there has been much generosity, the project is still short of raising the entire \$1.3 million cost. A gala fundraising event will take place March 10 and feature community musicians and friends.

The 16-month-long restoration process is one that Reverend Li and the congregation of St. Hilda's will treasure. "It was a very powerful experience of learning to examine the essentials of who we are as a community, to watch the resilience, and also see the outpouring of support from the wider community," he says. Inspired, the church has begun a feasibility study to determine options for redeveloping the rest of the property to better uplift and serve the Sunshine Coast.



ST. HILDA'S ANGLICAN CHURCH IS LOCATED AT 5838 BARNACLE STREET IN SECHLT. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR RESTORATION CAPITAL CAMPAIGN AND ONGOING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, VISIT [STHILDA.CA](http://STHILDA.CA).