
Plumb Line

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PROGRESS SO FAR



Basement Walls Are Up!

Take a walk out to the construction site, and you'll notice some low concrete walls peeping up out of the big hole on the west side. Get a little closer, and you'll realize that these 'low walls' are really the top edges of a huge concrete box that is set nine feet down into the earth for the new church basement! After many days of hard work and careful measurements, our work crews set up a maze of concrete forms and poured 100 tons of wet cement to build this part of the building.

Preparation for 'The Pour' took quite a while, due mainly to the fact that the walls and corner columns of the basement had to be poured all at once. 100 tons of wet cement is no joke; the construction industry is filled with tales of disaster that occur when forms fail under the strain of holding all the cement in place long enough for the cement to 'set'. If the forms fail during the pour, you experience what's called a 'blowout,' that is, the boards separate and the wet cement gushes through the gap, making a horrible mess that takes forever to clean up. We experienced one minor 'blowout' during 'The Pour,' but quick action sealed the gap and saved the day.

WHAT'S NEXT?

How Firm A Foundation?

Once the forms were removed from the basement walls, the next phase of the project began immediately. All around the outside edge of the building, concrete forms have been erected to make a low wall that will serve as a foundation. The foundation walls, like the basement walls, will be poured all at once so that the end result will be a seamless, sturdy foundation for further construction. Progress on this stage is often measured in 'feet per day' of completed forms, but this is quite understandable -- it's awfully difficult to correct a mistake after tons of wet cement have hardened!

Pillars Of Samson

As the foundation forms are going up, the work crews are preparing the support columns in the basement area. After reinforcing rods have been set up, large tubes are placed over the rods and stood up straight to make up the forms. This saves a lot of time spent building forms, but accurate placement of the tubes is critical. These columns have to support the weight of a concrete floor above them, and we want to get every ounce of strength from them.

Backfill and Drains

So far, all the concrete work has been done out in the open or in a big hole. Now, it's time to fill in the holes! The hole outside of the basement has to be filled, but that effort takes second place to the volume of dirt that goes inside the foundation. Once the walls are up, the whole building must be filled in with dirt to bring ground level up near the top of the foundation walls.

Before the earthmovers start shoving dirt around, a lot of drainage work has to be done down in the hole. The black goop painted on the outside of the basement will keep water from seeping through the walls, but that water has to go somewhere! A network of perforated pipes and gravel beds will be set up along the bottom edge of the basement walls so that water moving through the ground will be drained away from the building.

Help Needed!

Don't let all the talk about "pilasters," "re-bar," and "forms" scare you off -- although there's a lot of head-scratching and complicated measurement work going on, most of the real progress on the site is made by regular folks who are willing to show up and work hard. Once the measurements have been made and the game plan has been agreed upon, we rely on groups of volunteers to get out there and get the work done. It doesn't take a lot of skill to grab a shovel and start moving gravel; it just takes people who are willing to put in some time on the job. This phase of construction looks a little weird because it deals mainly with site preparation, but the work still has to be done -- before we can get on to the 'cut boards and drive nails' phase, we have to get the underground work done and establish a firm foundation.

Attention, Women!

"Man's work?"

Phooey!

Men have this 'thing' about construction work. You know what I mean -- get two or three guys together at the water cooler, and they'll start waving their arms, sketching plans in the air and throwing out technical terms. It's great fun, but it can be a little intimidating. The truth is, there's nothing particularly 'male' about dragging boards around and shoveling gravel. If we get to a point where we need Hercules to shove stuff around, we're in trouble - - in case you haven't noticed, we haven't got any linebackers on the construction team. What we need now is warm bodies who can help get the job done; we can't afford to turn away half the potential volunteer corps just because they are the 'wrong' gender.

What about the kids?

If your kids are old enough to help out, bring 'em on! Do be careful, though -- all construction sites are dangerous to some degree, and everyone out there has to pay attention and keep out of trouble.

We haven't really come up with a solution for the care of small children on the job site; if any of you would like to help in this area, we'd appreciate it very much. Please get in touch with DeeDee Minne (665-0382) if you can help out. If we could come up with a plan for child care, we could help out those people who would like to come and work but cannot because of small children in their care.

Working Hours

The work schedule varies with the weather, occasional hold-ups experienced while waiting for material, and other reasons, but here are some general guidelines:

* Work is normally done from about 8 A.M. to about 2 P.M. on weekdays, and most Saturdays.

* Work continues on most weekday evenings, starting in the mid to late afternoon after things cool off.

For specific dates and times, ask around -- DeeDee Minne is helping Pastor Bill coordinate the volunteer effort, and you can also grab someone on the construction team to find out about day-to-day operations on the site. Once we get out of this phase of construction, the work will get easier to forecast and schedule, and we hope to provide more detailed information here in **Plumb Line** to help you find dates and times to help out.

Question and Answer

Q. What are the big round holes in the basement wall? They look like portholes!

A. They do look like portholes! Really, though, they are there for heating ducts. The heating system for the whole complex will go in the basement, and big air ducts will pass through those holes in the walls to circulate air throughout the building.

Back Talk!

Got a question? Want to make an announcement? Want to recognize someone for a job well done? Get it in the paper! The **Plumb Line** is here for construction news, announcements, and project updates. Help us make this paper better and more useful; get in touch with me.

Philippe Nave 469-8327 (home) 538-3150 (work)

(or e-mail me at pnave@lucent.com at work!)

Contact Information

Here are some names and numbers you may need for project information and coordination:

DeeDee Minne 665-0382

Volunteer coordination (construction, child care, etc.)

Dorothy Sorenson 469-4905

Coordination of meals and work breaks