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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 8, 2021

The completion of the first phase of a community effort to restore Chico's oldest church, Bethel AME, will be celebrated at the church on Saturday, March 13.

The ceremony is planned for 10 a.m. at Bethel AME, 821 Linden St. The celebration will thank the many donors, sponsors, contractors and volunteers who have played a role in the restoration, and also will include a dedication of the bell, a gift from Trinity United Methodist Church.

The Bethel AME Church Restoration Project Fund at North Valley Community Foundation raised more than \$100,000. The project was more complicated than originally envisioned, as typically happens with restorations of historic buildings. However, with the significant help of building industry professionals donating their time and materials, the building was fully restored and painted, a new roof and flooring were installed.

The church was built in 1867, originally on Main Street between Fifth and Sixth streets. The church has moved two times and lost the bell tower and steeple during that time. The church has been on Linden Street since 1956.

To learn more about the fund and to donate to improvements for a second restoration phase, go to: <https://www.nvcf.org/funds/Bethel-AME-Church-Restoration-Project-Fund>

