

Terrazzo Triumph: Award-Winning Renovation of Historic Church

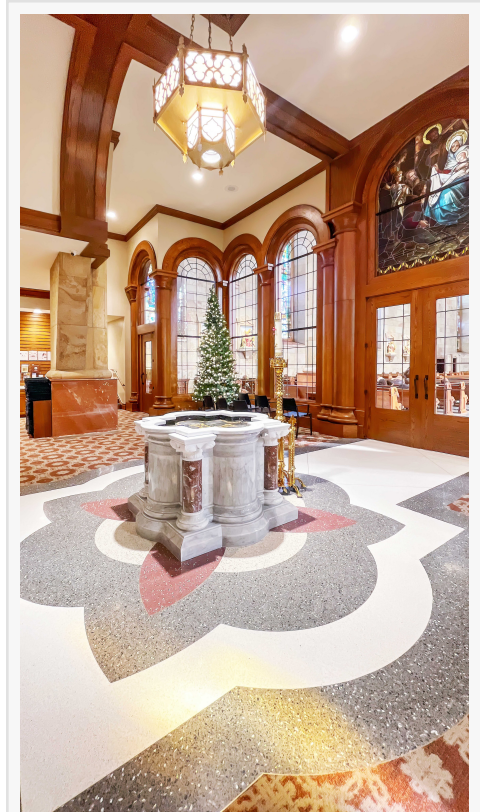
Trade association honors Midwest Terrazzo for outstanding achievement.

JASPER, INDIANA, USA, May 8, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The goal of renovating St. Joseph Catholic Church in Jasper, Indiana, built in 1880, was to preserve its rich heritage with a classic interior design. The Romanesque Revival-style church, constructed of solid sandstone blocks, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It now boasts an award-winning, hand-crafted terrazzo floor.

[Midwest Terrazzo](#), based in Evansville, Indiana, was the terrazzo contractor for the project and was honored with a 2024 [National Terrazzo & Mosaic Association](#) (NTMA) Honor Award for exceptional work in the church. The award ceremony was held in Tucson on April 17 at the NTMA's annual convention.

Initially, Midwest Terrazzo was tasked with installing a small section of sand-cushion terrazzo for the church's renovation. The old terrazzo floor in the nave was to be restored. However, structural issues were discovered under the nave during the refurbishment, necessitating excavation. The terrazzo contractor then worked with the project team for two years to design an epoxy terrazzo system suitable for installation on the new concrete subfloor. The floor, thoughtfully tailored to the space and expertly executed, complements the church's structure and enhances the cohesive interior design, reported the NTMA's judges.

Michael Eagan, Director of Faith-Based Design at [Browning Day](#) in Indianapolis, led the design effort with the firm he previously owned. The community takes great pride in the historic church building, he explained. Initially, there was a strong desire to preserve the church exactly as it was without making any changes, so having to remove the floor felt like a setback. However,



A RENOVATION of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Jasper, Indiana, included an award-winning terrazzo floor. The 1880 church is on the National Register of Historic Places. Photos: Benjamin Norton Photography

replacing the floor provided an opportunity to enhance the interior design, enrich the color scheme, reinforce the architecture, and create a sense of rhythm throughout the space.

Mr. Eagan added that the renovated floor has become a highlight of the renovation. "What they thought was a liability is now an asset. The community now takes as much pride in the floor as they do in the entire building," he said.

Mr. Eagan designed a quatrefoil medallion motif inspired by images from the stained glass windows, which were also restored as part of the renovation. Additionally, he incorporated a flower he had discovered in the old terrazzo, hidden under a mat in the vestibule. By adjusting the scale and complexity of the patterns, he defined areas and established a visual connection from the entry through the baptismal font and up to the altar.

The five-color terrazzo was artisan-crafted and poured in place in a geometric pattern. The epoxy was blended with glass, marble, and mother-of-pearl aggregates with brass divider strips.

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Michael Eagan, Director of Faith-Based Design, Browning Day

Mr. Eagan, whose grandfather immigrated from Italy and installed terrazzo locally, associates terrazzo with historical buildings. He appreciated the freedom of design and intricate detail possible with terrazzo on this project, as well as its longevity. "It lasts forever; if it shows age or wear or gets waxed, and you can always revive it so that it looks close to new if not new," he noted.

For church designs, Mr. Eagan focuses on integrating materials that are "timeless and noble." He often finds himself removing carpets installed in churches, a trend

that started in the 1950s. "It's a commercial material that doesn't last, while terrazzo feels hand-



TERRAZZO was a central feature in St. Joseph's enhanced interior.



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hewn," he remarked.

The restoration project honored historic building techniques and materials while implementing modern technology and practices. A digital layout tool guided strip placement with perfect accuracy on 90-degree intersections and emblems along the 150-foot central aisle and 95-foot side aisles. The 10,000-square-foot installation was completed in November 2022, and the restored sanctuary was dedicated the following month.

The NTMA's annual Honor Award program recognizes outstanding terrazzo projects its members submit. It promotes member contractors as the sole qualified resource for terrazzo installations meeting industry standards. Terrazzo veterans and design professionals evaluate the submissions.

The NTMA, a full-service nonprofit trade association headquartered in Fredericksburg, Texas, was founded in 1923. It establishes national standards for terrazzo systems for floor and vertical applications, aiming to promote quality craftsmanship and creativity in terrazzo while supporting its 152 members in their trade and service to the construction industry.

The NTMA provides free services to architects, interior designers, artists, general contractors, maintenance professionals, and property owners. From helping the design community write specifications to providing technical assistance, the NTMA's goal is to ensure quality terrazzo installations.

Terrazzo is a composite material that originated in 15th-century Italy, evolving from the mosaic artistry of Ancient Rome. It became a sustainable building system as resourceful Venetian marble workers discovered a creative way to reuse discarded stone chips. Terrazzo artisans still pour terrazzo by hand on the construction site, with options for precast and waterjet-cut elements. Stone, recycled glass, or other aggregates, often sourced locally, are embedded in a cement or epoxy base and polished to reveal the chips. Terrazzo combines design flexibility with ease of maintenance and durability to last the life of the building.

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