

Los Angeles Times

RELIGION

Shaken but Not Deterred

By STEVEN K. WAGNER
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

When the Rev. Richard J. Anderson arrived at Sierra Madre Congregational Church the morning of Jan. 17, he entered the 66-year-old sanctuary to find fallen plaster and damaged stained-glass windows.

He was relieved.

Through the years, Anderson has learned to expect the worst from earthquakes.

In 1987, the church put off expansion plans when the Whittier Narrows quake damaged plaster and concrete. The plans were back on again three years ago, but the Sierra Madre quake severely damaged the bell tower and choir room. Repairs cost \$350,000; the church postponed expansion again.

The congregation was about to again submit pledges on the \$2.3-million expansion and renovation project when the Northridge quake hit.

After the Whittier Narrows quake, church members pledged the funds needed to repair the damage and to retrofit the church, a \$140,000 project that was completed eight months before the 1991 quake struck.

"We have a long history of earthquake-related damage," Anderson said. "This is really not something new for us."

This time, the pledge drive is proceeding.