



PATRONATO

Mission San Xavier del Bac Spring 2026

Project Updates

It may be winter, but this is the busiest season of the year for preservation work at San Xavier. Four specialized teams have been at work on projects at the Mission this season.

Since scaffolding was erected across the retablo façade at the end of October, the primary conservation team has continued the work begun last year, stabilizing sections of original plaster on the façade.

This season, the scope has expanded to address areas with major repairs carried out during restoration efforts nearly 70 years ago. At that time, damaged sections were reconstructed using chicken-wire lath and inches-thick concrete plaster, which often obscured original plaster and decorative ornamentation. The current team is carefully removing these invasive materials and, using traditional materials, carefully recreating elements that follow, where possible, the original lines and curves of the façade's decorative features.

Consultant architects and engineers conducted a site visit in October and confirmed the local team's opinion that the reproduction estípito columns on the façade should be replaced with more accurate replicas.

In January, a second architectural engineering team began a comprehensive conditions assessment of the ancillary buildings, the Convento and Granjon wings. These historic structures also require significant attention. Foundations need reinforcement, original adobe walls require rehabilitation, and aging infrastructure (water and electrical systems) must be upgraded or replaced. In some sections, there is no heating or cooling, prompting consideration of climate control solutions. In the Convento wing, elegant mesquite beams require conservation treatment to halt years of insect damage. Elsewhere, hazardous material has been discovered and will require professional abatement to ensure the safety of these spaces.

Another team has begun developing a new lighting plan for the church interior. Once an initial design is formulated, implementation will likely proceed in phases, coordinated with other interior conservation work.

Lastly, a new study has been commissioned to consider options for improving heating and cooling within the church without introducing systems that would dramatically alter the interior environment. Such changes would endanger the artwork and the delicate historic plasters, lessons learned from similar efforts at other mission churches.

Together, these projects represent a comprehensive and thoughtful approach to preservation, addressing urgent needs while planning for the Mission's long-term future. Each project reflects a commitment to protecting San Xavier's history and role as a living place of cultural and spiritual importance.





TICRAT 2024, Mud Plastering (left), Adobe wall building (right), Hubble Gutierrez House, images by George Dworin

PATRONATO'S EXPANDING INFLUENCE:

Missions Initiative and 2026 TICRAT Workshop

We are proud to share that Patronato San Xavier has assumed stewardship of the Missions Initiative, a collaborative effort dedicated to documenting, preserving, connecting, and sharing the rich history of mission churches across individual sites and communities and cultural heritage institutions in Mexico and the United States. Begun in 2002 as a collaboration between the National Park Service and University of Arizona, the Missions Initiative brings together decades of research, conservation methods, and cultural knowledge related to these historic sites, many of which face similar challenges in preservation, funding, and public awareness. The work will include conducting surveys, creating an information hub, and providing training workshops, conferences, research projects, and symposia to exchange knowledge and develop best practices.

This role positions Patronato San Xavier as a leader in the field, strengthening our ability to advocate for mission sites, support collaborative partnerships, and ensure that information is accessible to scholars, preservation professionals, and communities. It also reflects a natural evolution of Patronato's work, expanding to support broader mission heritage in the region and ensure the continuity of traditional methods with the next generation of preservation professionals.

One of the first activities in this role is the planning of a TICRAT 2026 workshop (*Taller Internacional de Conservación y Restauración de Arquitectura de Tierra/International Workshop on the Conservation and Restoration of Earthen Architecture*), taking place this March. This four-day workshop at Mission San Xavier del Bac, Tumacácori National Historical Park, and Historic Canoa Ranch, will bring together preservation experts, students, and indigenous and other community members from the U.S. and Mexico. The workshop will center traditional and culturally grounded practices which support the stewardship of historic mission sites while offering participants the opportunity for hands-on experiences in the preservation and building techniques of earthen architecture.

Patronato San Xavier was awarded a Partners in Training grant from the Historic Preservation Education Foundation (HPEF) to support TICRAT 2026 for the participation of Indigenous instructors and to provide scholarships for students, tribal members, and young professionals. This support helps ensure that traditional knowledge bearers are centered in the work and that emerging practitioners have access to field-based training. Patronato is seeking additional funding to expand scholarship opportunities for this and future workshops which strengthen the preservation workforce and the long-term care of mission sites.

Community Engagement at Wa:k

Patronato San Xavier continues our commitment to deepen our engagement with the Wa:k community, strengthening relationships that are intrinsic to the past, present, and future of Mission San Xavier del Bac.

Over the summer, Patronato staff and conservation team members had the pleasure of hosting a workshop day at the church for the San Xavier District Summer Youth Employment Program. In the fall, Patronato staff and docents were honored to participate in the San Xavier District's cemetery clean-up effort, and for the first time, Patronato joined the San Xavier District Day Parade, a joyful opportunity to show up in community spaces beyond the Mission grounds.

This year, as part of Patronato's "Christmas at San Xavier" series, a special concert was included for the Wa:k community. For more than 25 years, the community has watched as tents were raised and hundreds of visitors filled the church for an event that was not fully understood or accessible to much of the community. While there were efforts over the years to broaden participation, it was listening to the community and offering a concert especially for them that ultimately created a deeper sense of comfort and connection.

Following cookies and cider on the patio, where the community's own carol singers performed, community members filled the church to enjoy the performances by Tucson's boys and girls choirs. A special treat was 1st and 2nd graders from the Mission school beginning the concert with a rendition of Silent Night, performed in the O'dham language. Special thanks to Desert Diamond Casinos for underwriting this and other parts of the concert series.

Building and sustaining these relationships is fundamental to our work. The O'dham people have safeguarded the Mission across generations, and Patronato is committed to approaching preservation with respect for this living history.



Children from the Mission School perform during a concert for the Wa:k community.



2027 Calendar Photo Contest

We are calling on photographers of all skill levels, ages 18+, to submit their most inspiring images of Mission San Xavier del Bac for a 2027 calendar. Winning photographs will be featured in a high quality 2027 Patronato San Xavier wall calendar, with proceeds supporting Patronato's mission. Twelve images will be selected to represent each month, along with a cover image. The contest is an opportunity to engage our creative communities and celebrate the beauty and history of San Xavier while directly supporting its preservation.

Submissions Open through July 15, 2026

Contest rules and more information can be found at:
www.patronatosanxavier.org/photo-contest

Sponsorship Opportunities for Local Businesses

We are also inviting local businesses and community partners to support the calendar through sponsorships. Sponsors will receive recognition in the calendar itself, with the option to sponsor individual monthly pages, or recognition on a community supporters page.

\$450 Monthly Sponsor
\$200 Community Supporter





Children perform at the



San Xavier District Summer Youth Employment Program 2025, plaster painting workshop at San Xavier Mission




A Resource for You and Your Future

As we look toward the future for the preservation of San Xavier Mission, we invite you to plan for your own future through our new partnership with FreeWill. Using this online estate planning tool, you can create a will or revocable living trust completely free and protect the people, communities, and causes you care about.

Create Your Free Plan 



Should you choose to include a planned gift to Patronato, or if Patronato is already in your estate plan, let us know 



Shop New Patronato Swag

This winter we added a fun new item to Patronato's retail shop... San Xavier cookie cutters. They were a hit this year at our pop up shop during Patronato's Christmas at San Xavier concerts. We think they make thoughtful gifts and even better cookies.



Annual Report

Graphs providing information about income and expenditure across Patronato's last fiscal year (2024 - 2025) are available at our website. Use this QR code to take you there.

We also provide a listing of current donors across the last fiscal year. Check to see that we have captured your information accurately.



Renew Your Support

Your generosity fuels our ability to bring in national and international experts to consult and contract with our Conservation Team on our priority projects, support our dedicated staff, and plan for the next stages of preservation work.

If you haven't made a donation since July 1st 2024, there's still time before our fiscal year ends on June 30.

We are set up to take sustaining gifts. Consider shifting your support to monthly giving.

patronatosanxavier.org/donate

Board of Directors Update

New Board Member Spotlight: LINDA MAYRO



With more than 35 years of public service with Pima County, Linda has dedicated her career to protecting and conserving the natural, cultural, and historic places that define our region. Her work has supported the heritage and cultural traditions of the Tohono O'odham Nation, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Spanish Colonial and Mexican settlers, and American Territorial pioneers.

Among her proudest achievements with Pima County is helping to develop and implement the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, which has resulted in the preservation of more than 250,000 acres of natural habitat, riparian areas, wildlife corridors, ranchlands, and culturally significant sites. She also played a role in the Congressional designation of the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area, recognizing the Valley's unique history and living traditions.

"I am very honored to serve as a Patronato board member in helping to preserve the iconic Mission San Xavier del Bac - a National Historic Landmark that has witnessed our multi-storied history for more than 300 years and continues to serve the enduring Tohono O'odham community of Wa:K and our region."

Patronato's Executive Director to Retire

After serving eleven years with the Patronato, Miles Green has announced his intent to retire at the end of the current fiscal year (June 30).

Miles joined the Patronato as its Executive Director in May 2015. Newly retired at the time, he was initially attracted to the advertised 30-hour-per-week, part-time role. He quickly recognized that for the organization to truly thrive, the position required more than fundraising alone, and needed to be full-time.



He has overseen several critical changes during his leadership; the organization has doubled its annual revenue, almost tripled its permanent endowment and, most importantly, evolved into a true preservation organization. Today, an architectural conservator oversees conservation and preservation projects at San Xavier, replacing what had previously been a committee of the Board.

Miles looks forward to spending the coming years traveling and spending time in his homeland of New Zealand.

The Board of Directors is conducting a search for the next Executive Director, working in partnership with a local consulting firm and assigning a search committee composed of Patronato board members and staff. With a strong board and staff, clear strategic priorities, and a solid financial foundation in place, the organization is well positioned for a seamless transition.

(above) Miles chats with Director of Preservation Starr Herr-Cardillo during last months Open House.

Patronato San Xavier Board of Directors

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Deanna Dillard, *Associate Director*
Susie Moreno, *Preventive Maintenance
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Kathy Baily, *Scheduling Coordinator*



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The 2025 Christmas Concerts

Thank you to all who made Patronato's Christmas at San Xavier concert series such a stunning success again this year. A special thanks to our family and corporate underwriters.

The Tucson Girls Chorus and Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus performed beautifully again as did our featured soloists. This year we were honored to feature Tucson's grammy nominated professional choir, *True Concord*, as special guests at our Signature concert.

If you or your business might be interested in becoming an underwriter for the concert series, please call Deanna at 520-409-0025 and discuss the variety of options. This is a special opportunity to have your company name associated with one of southern Arizona's most beloved events.

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Donald Rollings, Elizabeth and Doug Friman, in memory of Nancy Bell Rollings

**Patronato
San Xavier is seeking
additional docents
to help share the history, art,
and living traditions of
San Xavier del Bac Mission.**



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