

N-Circle Railroad Update 40 – August 9, 2026

Building a Styrene Plastic Church Kit

The wood Old South Church kit described in Update 26 came out okay, but it was not really what I was looking for to complete the envisioned scene for the layout. I purchased the kit a few years ago with no particular plan in mind.

Therefore, I purchased the Walther's Brick Church kit, which resembles the church where my wife and I were married and we still attend now. It is a new kit, released by Walther's in 2024. The package cover is shown here for reference.

[N-Circle_26-07-05_BrickChurch](#)



The “prototype” Holy Family Church in Essex, Vermont is shown here. The kit is a reasonable approximation, I did not attempt kit-bashing to more closely replicate the prototype.

[HolyFamilyChurch_Essex](#)



After building many laser-cut wood kits as described in N-Circle Updates 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 38 and 39, I think I have practiced the art enough, and it was refreshing to do a plastic styrene kit again!

The instructions for the kit are simple and clear, with well-labelled diagrams. They only guide the assembly of the kit; they do not address how to paint the brick walls or other details.

Removing the pieces from the sprues using plastic sprue cutters was very easy and only minor filing was required to smooth off the nubs at the connection points.

I painted the brick walls before beginning the assembly of inserting windows and doors, etc. The walls were molded in a light brown color, I repainted them with Polly Scale “Boxcar Red,” a darker brick color I have used on most of the brick structures on the N-Circle layout. After it was dry, I applied a watery wash of Polly Scale “Reefer White” with a brush to fill in the mortar lines. With a light touch, it was possible to remove most of the white from the brick faces, though it did lighten the bricks some. After the paint was mostly dry, I was able to remove some of it off the brick faces with firm rubbing with a cotton swab. I touched up sections multiple times, the end results were “okay” – clean, crisp mortar lines in some areas, too much white smudged on the brick faces in other areas.

There are many articles in the modeling literature about how to do the mortar on brick walls. I recommend exploring some of them and determining which technique you prefer, based on your available tools and materials.

(Attitude alert: after the past year of building laser-cut wood kits, it was great to be able to paint a wall panel and not have it warp!)

The window and door trim pieces were molded in very white plastic. I painted them with a quick coat of Polly Scale “Reefer White” while still on the sprues to reduce the shine and give them a “painted” look. Being a church, I did not try to make the trim look weathered like on my previous laser-cut wood kit builds, I figured the congregation was putting up the money to keep their church looking good!

The roof panels were molded in dark grey plastic, but again I applied a coat of Tamiya “NATO Black” to reduce their plastic shine and used Tamiya “Medium Grey” on the steeple roof.

I wanted gold for the cross on the top of the steeple and the panel inserts in the base of the steeple. But I was not going to buy a bottle of gold paint for maybe ten square millimeters of work, given I don’t really know where I would use it in the future. Therefore, I added a couple of drops of Tamiya “Flat Earth” brown to a few drops of Tamiya “Flat Yellow” to create a tarnished gold.

It was very challenging to paint the tiny crosses on the steeple panels, even using the sharpest wood toothpick as a “brush.” The end results can be seen close-up here, after a touchup of white paint around the “gold.”

[N-Circle_26-07-31_BrickChurch_1](#)



Note that when gluing these cross panels into the steeple later, the styrene cement dissolved some of the darker paint on the steeple, resulting in smudges on the white panels that had to be touched up again. So be very careful to use a small wood toothpick to press these panels into place, not your fingers.

The cross for the top of the steeple was flat and dull. To make it shinier, I applied a coat of Kristal Klear thinned with water – this improved the look.

There are two styles of front doors included in the kit: one with arched windows, the other with rectangular windows. I went with the rectangular windows to more closely resemble Holy Family Church, though not trying to replicate the prototype in detail.

Attaching the doors and window frames to the walls was very easy, using liquid styrene cement. There are indentations on the insides of the walls that these pieces align into perfectly.

I filled small gaps between the steeple roof panels with white glue before repainting with Tamiya “Medium Grey.”

The kit instructions say to attach clear acetate to the inside of the windows. There was none in the parts in my kit, but I had plenty left over from previous kits. I chose to use a partially cloudy tint acetate, as the stained-glass window inserts provided in the kit were very bright, more than would be realistic, so I thought this would mute the colors a bit. I used Micro-Scale Kristal Klear to attach the acetate to the inside of the window frames, and then to attach the paper stained-glass window prints to the inside of the acetate. There are two sets of stained-glass window panels in the kit – I chose to use the more brightly colored ones with yellows and reds.

As seen in this photo, I did not cut the acetate to exactly fit the window frames but just cut rectangles to span the largest dimensions. These pieces on the inside will not be visible on the completed model.

[N-Circle_26-07-31_BrickChurch_2_Cropped](#)



The same can be done with the paper stained-glass windows – just cut them to rectangles to extend beyond the dimensions of the window openings. However, be careful with the large inserts for the rear window and the front door. I mistakenly put the panel for the front door on

the rear window first but fortunately saw the error and was able to remove it before the glue dried. They number the plastic parts on the sprues and in the assembly diagrams – seems like they should do the same with these prints.

It was easy to assemble the four main walls; there are tabs and ridges on the foundation base and the wall edges which align everything precisely. I used the magnets on the steel sheet to hold things, but they probably were not necessary. The joints seemed stable after holding them a minute or so with “the human clamp.”

[N-Circle_26-08-02_BrickChurch_1](#)



Adding the front bell tower walls was much more difficult. While the edges have alignment tabs like the main walls, these tower walls are tall and top-heavy. I could not get all three to stay in place at once, so I just did the two sidewalls first and let them dry, then added the front wall later. For the front wall attachment, I first tried placing the structure on end, so the wall would lay in place flat. But this did not hold the corner joints tight, so I ended up standing it back upright and holding the corner joints tight using a clamp, as seen here.



Note on the left side, above the clamp bar, an over-run of the styrene cement on the outside wall surface has removed the acrylic mortar paint. This occurred in multiple places, requiring more touchup painting after the assembly was complete. Perhaps it would have been better to paint the walls after assembly, but then you have the usual challenge of painting around the window and door trim.

At the base of the tower you can see gaps between the bottom of the walls and the foundation. The alignment of the front main wall may have been off a bit, so when the bell tower side walls were aligned to it, the outer edges came out high. I later filled these gaps with white glue to disguise them. These kinds of imperfections will not be noticeable when the structure is incorporated into a layout scene, but they are annoying when you are trying to build a kit correctly. In the final placement, I will add a couple of bushes at the base of the bell tower...

The roof panels have alignment ridges on the bottom and alignment pegs on the top, so they went on easily. There was still a small gap under the front right panel, I suspect because the front wall is not perfectly square.

I did not add interior details, as they would not be visible with the stained-glass panels in all the windows.

I was not going to use the brick chimney provided in the kit, but the roof panel already had a mounting plate molded into it, so rather than try to disguise that, I assembled and glued on the chimney. Gluing together the five sections of the chimney was fairly easy, using the usual magnets to hold everything square.

[N-Circle_26-07-29_BrickChurch_1](#)



When everything was assembled and dry, there were some gaps at the peak of the roof and around the bell tower which I filled with white glue, then painted over with grey to look like “flashing” added to these roof joints. At least that’s what I call it...

As a final touch, I added some weathering chalks on the roof and steeple and steps, then protected the acetate windows with blue painters tape before spraying the structure with Testors Dullcote, as seen here.

[N-Circle_26-08-08_BrickChurch_1_Cropped](#)

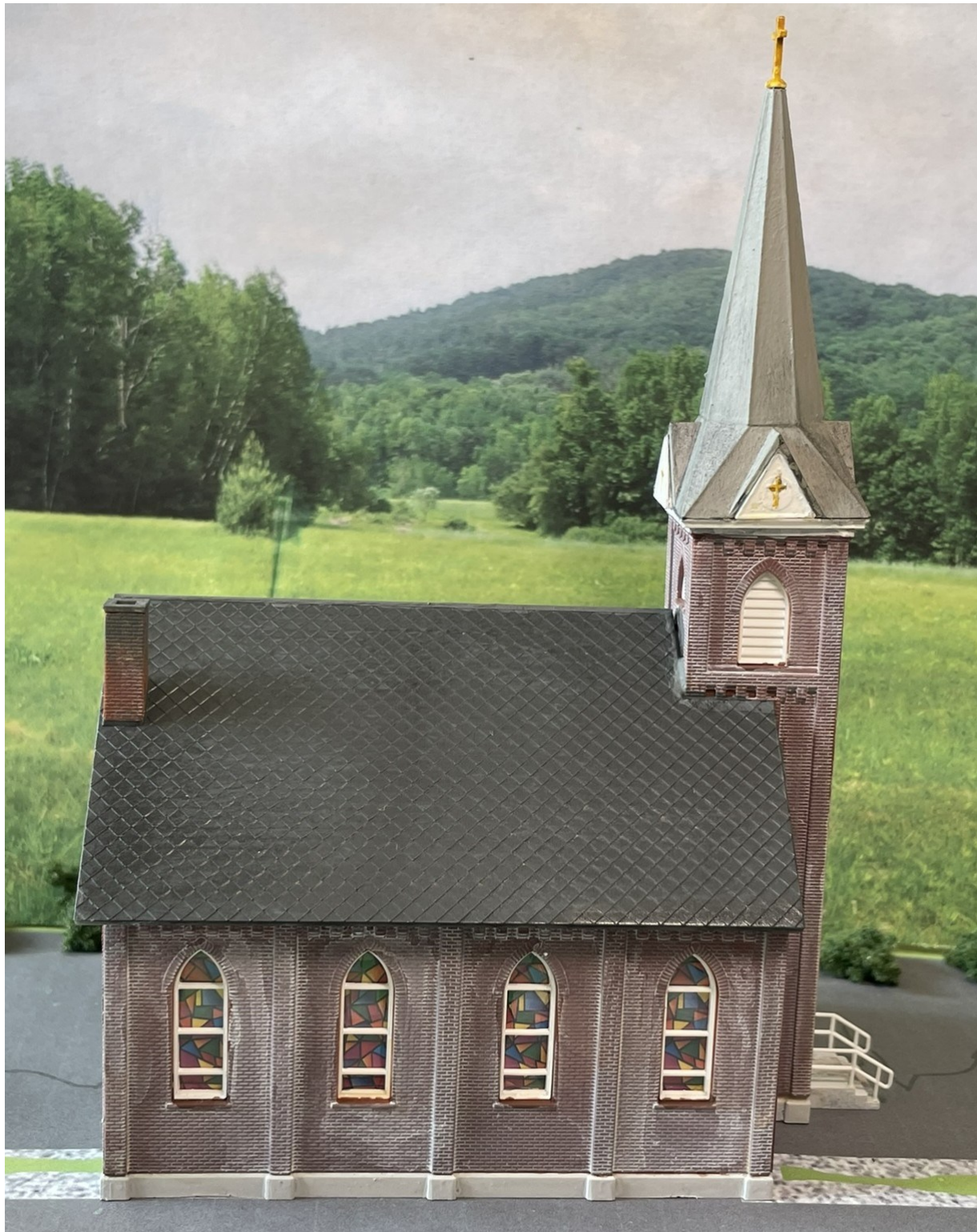


Here we see the finished structure from all sides. In the final editing of this report, I realized that I should have painted the louvers in the top of the brick bell tower dark green to be closer to the prototype – oh well, if it wasn't obvious to me, it probably will not be to others...

[N-Circle_26-08-08_BrickChurch_2](#)



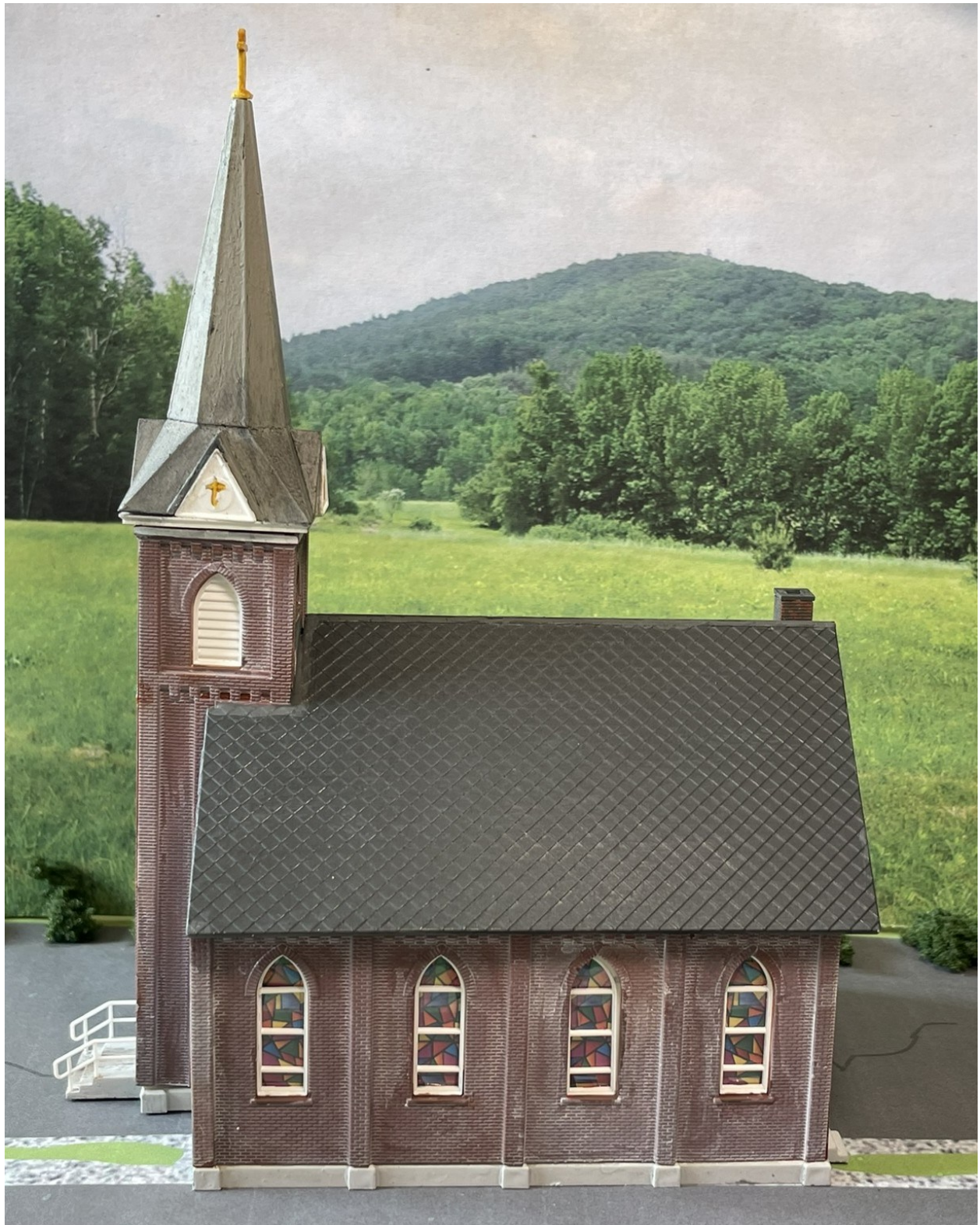
N-Circle_26-08-08_BrickChurch_4_Cropped



N-Circle_26-08-08_BrickChurch_5



N-Circle_26-08-08_BrickChurch_6_Cropped



N-Circle_26-08-08_BrickChurch_7_Cropped



Finally, we see this new brick church replacing the Old South Church from Update 26 on Church Street.

[N-Circle_26-08-08_BrickChurch_8](#)



[N-Circle_26-08-08_BrickChurch_9](#)



Meanwhile, Old South Church has been moved to a temporary location on Home Avenue. Not a realistic positioning on the current scenery panels, but I couldn't bear removing it from the layout! And note that you cannot do these kinds of quick swaps if you glue everything down!!

[N-Circle_26-08-08_OldSouthChurch_1_Cropped](#)



[N-Circle_26-08-08_OldSouthChurch_2_Cropped](#)



This kit took about 9.5 hours to complete over 16 work sessions. Building the Old South Church kit from Update 26 required about 11 hours, not including adding the interior details. So while it was a fairly easy kit that I would recommend for a beginning modeler, the painting of the bricks mortar and assembly of the multiple sections of the structure did require quite a bit of time, with many sessions required to allow glue and paints to dry.

I did not use their sign for the front but will build one later when I incorporate this church into a micro-scene for this area for a future Update. I plan to develop a micro-scene panel with a wedding scene in front of the church and the rectory house and garage incorporated into the surrounding scenery.

Styrene Plastic Kit Perspectives

And now a follow-on to my perspectives on building styrene plastic kits versus the laser-cut wood structure kits in N-Circle Update 32 and 3-D printed plastic kits in Update 33.

The older plastic kits from AHM, Con-Cor, Faller, Heljan, Kibri, Life-Like, Model Power, Piko, and Pola were a bit clunky, with oversized parts for windows, etc. The newer kits from Atlas and Walthers have finer detail but are still fairly easy to assemble - reference my Atlas Passenger Station and Yard Tower builds in Updates 9 and 21. Unlike wood kits, it is easy to paint the detail parts while still on the sprues – much easier to hold them while painting and keep them away from a surface while drying. And the parts don't warp when exposed to acrylic paints!

I have a number of the older style styrene kits on the N-Circle layout, described in many of the earlier N-Circle Updates, and when carefully painted, they look fine at a typical viewing distance. So, while they may not win a prize in a contest of close-up photos, they fill in a scene nicely.

And of course, plastic styrene kits are generally less expensive than the higher-end laser-cut wood kits, possibly a factor if you have many city blocks to fill! Most of the old kits still come up on eBay regularly at reasonable prices. And they typically require less time to build to fill all your open space!