SANCTUARY IN A STORM

Built to offer its worshipers a spiritual sanctuary, Trinity United Methodist Church towers above the Texas skyline. But these 70-foot Insulated Concrete Form walls offer the community much more safety than they planned on. Even before its completion, the church became a refuge for city residents when tornado-force winds pummeled the area. According to testing done by the Wind Science and Engineering Center at Texas Tech, the ICF framework is able to withstand the equivalent of a 15-foot 2\(\times\)4 hitting it at 100 mph.

01. **Feat of engineering.**
The unique ICF load-bearing walls are dotted with dozens of windows and soar to 70 feet without intermediate floors.

02. **Soaring heights.**
To strengthen the cathedral-style tower, engineers designed pilasters to support the structure, which were made by stripping the foam off one face of the ICF and forming the pilaster with plywood.

03. **On-the-job training.**
The construction site was visited by teams of designers and contractors who wanted to study ICF installation and methodology for use in the building of Texas public schools.

04. **Architectural details.**
The ICF structural system was used to mold an intricate architectural façade, as well as provide the backing for the exterior finish system.