

Church seeks donations for repair debt

Church capital campaign ongoing

By ASHLEY SAARI

Monadnock Ledger-Transcript

The New Ipswich Congregational Church is doubling down on a capital campaign to pay back a major loan taken out in 2008 to repair the church's sanctuary.

The current church dates back to the early 1900s, built after the previous building was destroyed in a fire, but as an organization the church goes back to the founding of New Ipswich in 1770.

Parishioners were faced with making significant repairs to the church in 2007, when it was deemed to be unsafe due to widespread structural issues.

The majority of the work was done in the church sanctuary, including jacking up the sanctuary roof, reversing the room's layout and adding a balcony, straightening the walls and redoing the supports, Church Trustee Bob Romeril said.

The building as a whole also got an upgrade, with the roof being re-done, a new drainage system installed, and the building made more accessible with additional handicapped bathrooms on both levels, and an elevator installed. The church also installed a new hot water tank and updated the kitchen.

A \$470,000 loan was secured in 2008, and repairs were completed. But after ten years of making payments on the loan, the organization still owes nearly the original amount of the loan because of the interest payments.

Carol Romeril, the church treasurer, said she knew after their loan rate was reset in 2018, and the church still owed a principal of \$315,000 and interest of \$145,000, that it was time they took a different approach.

The church launched a capital campaign and after about a year of requesting funds, they've been able to raise \$40,000 to contribute

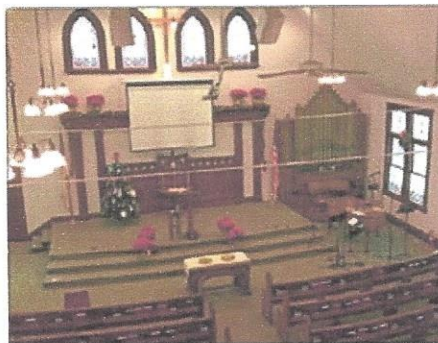
to the principal payment. Though only a fraction of the total amount they need, Carol Romeril said it's enough to have knocked two years off their repayment schedule.

Carol Romeril said she knows how many little donations can add up. A member of the 100+ Women Who Care Monadnock chapter, she said she's seen first hand the good that can be done when the many give a little.

"I know \$250,000 sounds like a lot still to pay, but if 500 people gave \$500, it would be paid in full," she said.

The church will be continuing its capital campaign,

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The New Ipswich Congregational Church sanctuary underwent major repairs in 2008.

COURTESY PHOTO

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with a goal of paying off the full loan in five years.

The church is currently on an upswing in its membership, according to Bob Romeril, but the church is also reaching out to the wider community for donations. The church is one of the few large meeting spaces available in town, Carol Romeril said, as New Ipswich does not have a functional Town Hall or other public buildings aside from the schools.

Thus, the Congregational Church has been home to Boy Scout meetings, the church's weekly Community Supper, a weekly

Church at P.O. Box 141, New Ipswich, or through the church website at www.nicc.church. For further information, contact Pastor Ken Whitson at 878-1327.

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The New Ipswich Congregational Church is undergoing a capital campaign to pay down debt the church took on to fix structural issues in 2008.

playgroup, blood drives, and the annual Children's Fair.

"Obviously it's a place of worship and we'd love if everyone came on a Sunday, but it's also one of the few places people can gather," Carol Romeril said. "We do receive requests regularly to use it, and we're open to it being used."

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Donations can be mailed to the New Ipswich Congregational