

PRESS RELEASE

Date: January 28, 2022



The First Congregational Church of East Machias has an unexpected opportunity to be saved. A national television production company wants to film its restoration this summer if money can be raised to cover the costs of repairs. The filming of this television show could attract significant attention to the community and this project.

This historically important church, built in 1836, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The church was recently named to Maine Preservation Society's 2022 List of Maine's Most Endangered Buildings.

"Today it is among the most critically threatened architectural resources in the State of Maine," said Tara Kelly, executive director of Maine Preservation. ***"Structural damage to steeple timbers have resulted in a dangerous level***

of instability and if immediate action is not taken it will soon be beyond repair."

<https://www.maine Preservation.org/most-endangered-2021-1/2021/10/4/first-congregational-church-east-machias>

Steeple restoration expert, Belden Morse of Steeple People, Inc. in Jonesboro, stated: *"This work needed on the East Machias church is critical, and the condition of the building has become dangerous, this project should be addressed as soon as possible."*

The restoration effort has been accelerated by the commitment of a major television production company to film a one-hour special that will appear on a major cable network in 52 million homes and a streaming platform available in over 400 million homes worldwide. The community group and the television production company have agreed to move forward if adequate fundraising success can be secured by February 14, 2022. This show will have millions of views.

Church trustees and the community restoration group, Friends of First Congregational Church of East Machias, are finalizing an agreement for shared use of the building following the restoration. Community activities will include concerts, other public performances, and meeting space for community groups.

Expert contractors for this restoration have already committed to the required work scope, budget, and timeline.

The missing ingredient is funding. The fundraising timeline is short and the Friends of First Congregational Church of East Machias is urgently seeking financial support.

The budget is approximately \$250,000, and 1/3 of that sum is already near at hand if the balance can be secured.

HOW TO HELP

TO MAKE TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION:

- GOFUNDME charitable donation page: "Church Steeple Rescue"
<https://gofund.me/04346821>
- Donations can please be made payable to: First Congregational Church of East Machias Restoration Fund
- Mail should be directed to: Friends of the First Congregational Church of East Machias P.O. Box 68, East Machias, Maine 04630
- Funds may be directly deposited at Machias Savings Bank made payable to the First Congregational Church of East Machias Restoration Fund.

To volunteer with the fundraising effort please email: EastMachiasFriends@gmail.com

For further information please email volunteer board member Erica Famous at EastMachiasFriends@gmail.com or call Kim & Tom McClure, board secretary/project manager, at 207.271.0527

SUPPLEMENTAL PHOTOS FOLLOW:



1920



1996 (*)



2022



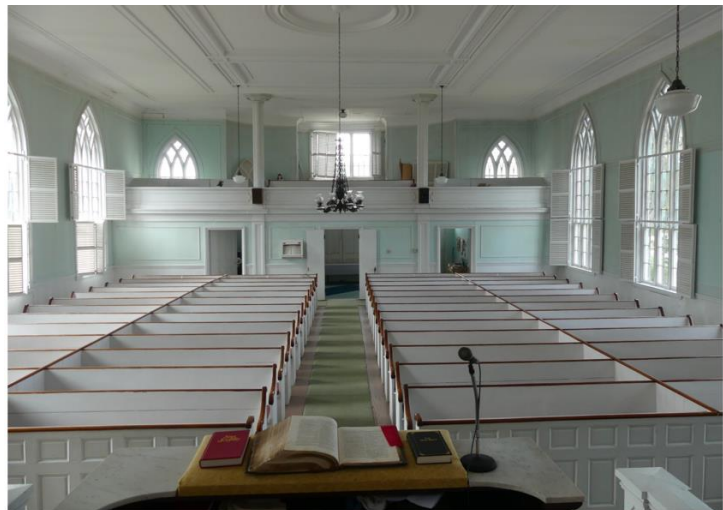
Depth of decay at northwest corner post, ground floor



Northeast corner post of tower at ground floor



Northeast corner post of tower at gallery level



Auditorium looking westward to gallery

(Captioned photos credit to: Brian Pfeiffer, Architectural Historian)

(*)Photo of First Congregational Church of East Machias, from American Country Churches, Jill Caravan, 1996