

Date: February 15, 2022

TV DOCUMENTARY OF MAINE CHURCH RESTORATION TO PROCEED THIS SUMMER

The fundraising and planning for the restoration of the First Congregational Church of East Machias has met its initial goal with great success. A final decision has been made to proceed with the TV documentary filming of the church's restoration this summer.

According to Michael Henry, spokesperson for Friends of First Congregational Church of East Machias: "There is still more fundraising to do, but our results to date give us confidence that we will be successful. We are grateful to the overwhelming support and generosity of our many donors. We now have several months to raise the balance. This is shaping up to be a special project for the entire community. Engineering will proceed immediately. We have made commitments for construction and restoration work to start in late Spring. We are looking forward to the work ahead."



Erica Famous, volunteer fundraising coordinator for the Friends group, reported: "Since starting this very fast paced project less than three weeks ago, we already have over 125 donations for 2/3 of our restoration budget. The amount of community support for this project has been incredible."

The First Congregational Church of East Machias has long been recognized as a special Maine building in peril. 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 has resulted in a dangerous level of instability, and if immediate action is not taken it will soon be beyond repair."

This project went into high gear in January when a national cable company expressed interest in filming the restoration of this landmark for a one hour television special. The filming contract could only be agreed to if the community could immediately line up construction finances and qualified tradespeople to complete the work by the end of August, 2022. With the successful community effort now well advanced, the parties made the final decision on February 14 to move forward. The film production company plans ten or more filming days spread over this spring and summer. The production

project will bring significant positive attention to Washington County, with millions of views across America.

Over \$75,000 is still needed to complete the fundraising effort.

Media Contact: Michael Henry 207-217-5362

HOW TO HELP

TO MAKE TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION:

- • GOFUNDME charitable donation page: "East Machias Church Steeple Rescue" <https://gofund.me/04346821>
- • Donations can 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

