



The Renovation News

The First Presbyterian Church
Bergen, New York

Issue Number 4
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Progress: The big news this month is that our new facility was ready for Vacation Bible School when it kicked off on Monday, August 12th! One of the large groups of kids was able to use the new basement for their activities. It was exciting to see the new space put to good use in the work of the Lord so soon after the project was begun just a couple of months ago.

The Spinks completed their masonry work in the basement, and construction has begun on the basement walls. As one can see by looking at the metal studs now in place, there are two large rooms (one under the front area of the Fellowship Hall and one under the old kitchen area). Both will eventually be provided with folding walls that can divide each room into two rooms when needed. There is another new room under the back part of the Hall, and we still have the old room under the stage area and the room that was recently remodeled for the youth group.



VBS ACTIVE IN THE NEW BASEMENT

Further carpentry work has been accomplished in the area of the new kitchen, lounge/library, and first floor bathrooms. In addition, Lennie Brill and his accomplices have begun the plumbing work in this area. We offer a big "thank you" to Lennie for volunteering his plumbing skills for this job! More of the old false ceiling and old insulation over the Fellowship Hall has been removed in anticipation of the work to remove some of the old roof structures and properly reinforce the roof and exterior walls in the Hall and stage areas.

Project Costs: Total cost to date is about \$84,000, of which \$42,000 are the engineering and architectural services, \$14,000 is materials, \$26,000 are construction services (primarily the Spinks' masonry work), with \$2000 miscellaneous. We have drawn \$45,000

on our line-of-credit with the Bank of Castile. That account has a maximum draw of \$300,000, with interest at the prime rate, currently 8.25%, and a full repayment due date in five years. We have the option at any time of paying off the outstanding loan by using some of the money in the Richards (endowment) Fund, which at mid-year had a value of over \$200,000. Current plans are to pay off the loan as proceeds from the capital fund drive come in, starting later this year, and to let the investments in the Richards Fund grow.

Work Planned: The Labor Day weekend and the couple of weeks following is the time when some NEW BIG THINGS will begin to happen on the project. The first work will be to strip the walls in the current lounge and start the demolition of the basement restrooms. The following week we hope to start excavation into the basement area under the center section of the church (the area under the center front and rear entrances and under Jean's and Pastor Dave's office). The concrete front basement wall, the raised concrete floor, and the

stairs to the basement all have to come out to lower the basement floor to the level of the rest of the basement, to rebuild the basement restrooms, and to put in the new stairway to the basement and the handicap lift in the rear. Once again, we will need to dig into the basement from the front of the church (entering under the front steps in the center entrance). A LOT OF VOLUNTEER HELP WILL BE NEEDED BEFORE, THROUGH AND AFTER THE LABOR DAY WEEKEND - IF YOU CAN HELP, CALL DAN SHELDON AT 494-2442.

September or early October will also see the start of the work to expand the center entrance area, thus giving us a lot of needed space in the hall by the offices and by the side sanctuary double doors. There will be a new front wall several feet closer to Lake Street, new sets of stairs to the basement and second floor, an entry to the library/lounge in its new location, and a large, airy two-story entryway over the whole space. Rick Stacy of our congregation has been contracted to carry out this work (once again we are blessed by having one of our congregation with the skills to undertake such a job).

In mid-September work on the roof structures over the Fellowship Hall will begin as Ron Spink and Ron, Jr. start putting up new steel beams in that area. Soon after we can look forward to seeing the new cathedral ceiling in the Hall take shape.

There is much work to do and many months of continued support from our volunteers is needed to do the job. It is amazing, however, to consider how much has already been accomplished. It was early June before any of the major work in and under the Fellowship Hall was begun, and we achieved our first major goal - having some new space available for VBS! We are now moving on to the next major phase of the renovation - think what can be accomplished by the end of the year. Maybe we can have our Christmas Dinner in the new Hall!!

More History: In an earlier issue of The Renovation News we related how the Fellowship Hall had begun life in the late 1840's as the sanctuary for a splinter group from the main congregation, then located on the cemetery hill. That group, who were called "Snyderites", built their sanctuary (our Hall), which came to be known as "The Little Church", at the corner of Lake Road and Apple Tree Lane. By sometime in the mid-1850's, the Little Church and its Snyderites had disbanded, and our church bought it for use as a "lecture room", leaving it at its Apple Tree Lane location for some time.

In 1866 the church, having moved with the sanctuary from the cemetery hill to our present location, was proposing some major renovations to the sanctuary. It is interesting to note that their first plan, in December of that year, was to sell the Lecture Room and use the proceeds to raise the foundation of the sanctuary to provide a basement with "Sabbath School" rooms and a meeting room! Just a month later, in January of 1867, they decided instead to leave the sanctuary building as it was (it wouldn't be until our major renovation in 1983 that a basement to the sanctuary was constructed) and move the Lecture Hall down the road and set it on the south side of the sanctuary. Apparently, the first plan was to join the two buildings and build a steeple at the juncture. That was not done, however, and the former Lecture Hall was set down apart from the sanctuary and became the Session House. It remained thus for nearly a century when, in 1957 the two buildings were joined to become the single structure we have today.

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