

St. George's prepares to debut new hall

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NORTHUMBERLAND TODAY

GRAFTON — Whenever a helping hand was needed at St. George's Anglican Church, the community has always pitched in.

With the current renovations to the Grafton church hall, project manager Ron Watters is pleased to report that the tradition still holds.

Built in 1884, the church burned down and was rebuilt in 1908. The other churches in the community pitched in for the entire 10-month project, Watters said, and the finished product was acknowledged to be one of the most beautiful in Ontario.

The Canon Nind Hall addition in 1970 was also done with the help of the local churches.

With the work that has taken much of 2016 so far, the community has also pitched in. For example, nearby St. Andrew's United Church offered space when pre-scheduled events at Canon Nind Hall could not be held there.

As well, the wider community has been on board, giving breaks on materials and labour and generally going the extra mile. They are a key reason why the work is winding up well within budget, and Watters hopes these community partners will join members of the greater Grafton community at the June 19 ribbon cutting to share the congratulations.

Watters explained that the diocese has been making grants available to update churches, and St. George's was interested.

"You could only get the grant if you were taking your building and redesigning it for new uses than it had before, so we looked at it," he said in a recent interview.

"Mostly churches want to get new parishioners in, younger people. We thought, 'What our community needs is something for seniors.'"

They took their idea to the di-



From left, people's warden David Wright, rector's warden Ann Raymond and deputy warden Ron Watters look forward to Sunday when the ribbon will be cut at St. George's Anglican Church in Grafton and members of the public can see the renovations on the church hall for themselves.

cese and got the grant.

Preservation of a heritage building was a strong point, of course, but conservation is also important. Under the guidance of a specialized consultant, the building now has new insulation and gas heating to replace the old electric heating. Air conditioning has also been installed.

"All the lighting is LED. We can light the hall with just the chandeliers for only 250 watts, which is a huge savings," Watters added.

The large Last Supper hooked rug created by the late Bill Raymond has hung on the hall's south wall for years. It's back in place, Watters said. But with the new lighting trained on it, many

people are actually noticing it for the first time.

Opposite the hanging, on the north wall, a beautiful stone fireplace provides a focal point. Another attractive touch will come when the chairs now grouped around the tables are replaced with more comfortable banquet chairs.

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from MacCoubrey's Funeral Home 27 years ago, and it was about 30 years old at the time.

The baptismal font will be moved to the front of the church, and the area behind the altar will be repainted. At some point, he said, that recess was painted an odd pinkish colour — or perhaps mauve, depending on the light — and it can be distracting.

Looking ahead, they are planning programming that will ensure the hall is an asset to the community.

The monthly Soup Lunches the church has had for several years will return in this new setting, and they hope to expand seniors' programming (cooking and computer instruction are possibilities, Watters said). He also hopes to see Messy Church programs organized to draw in families.

Meanwhile, they hope to draw in members of the local community for the re-opening this Sunday. A representative of The Anglican, a church publication, will be present to report on the occasion, as reverends Dudley Walker and Ed Caccia hold the ribbon. Watters will be cutting.

The church is located at 10792 County Rd. 2.

The event runs from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., and everyone is welcome. cnasmith@postmedia.com [Twitter.com/NT_cnasmith](https://twitter.com/NT_cnasmith)

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The kitchen has been redesigned for caterers. With more use of the hall for functions like weddings and banquets (as they are hoping), they figure on being able to count on some income.

And to top it off, you now enter the church through glass doors, which are considered by modern planners to give a more welcoming impression. In any event, the sunlight certainly brightens up the foyer.

The hall had sort of a dry run recently, when a group of 65 ball players met there. And a pre-opening dinner for 60 is planned, where a Cobourg caterer will come in and use the kitchen facilities.

Watters is pleased with the convention oven. It cooks food in one-third of the time, and he likes its holding feature — it can hold food without cooking it for a couple of hours, he said, in case the bride is running late for a wedding.

Extra shelving has been added, and the lay-out has been planned so that no one entering the kitchen from the hall will be exposed to anything hot.

Watters said a few changes are planned for the sanctuary as well. Pew cushions have been installed, and the carpeting will be replaced. This carpeting has a bit of a pedigree, he said. It came