

Stained glass new feature of church renovation

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

Grace Baptist Church is getting a long-awaited facelift.

The 130-year-old building on Talbot Street North in Essex is being outfitted with 22 new stained glass units, along with five new doors and a re-pointing of the brickwork.

Pastor Richard Valade said he hopes the restorations will last for the next generation of churchgoers.

"We knew that it had to be renovated," Valade said. "So it was presented to the congregation and they all felt this was the best route to go."

Essex Stained Glass was commissioned to replace the older "drafty" windows.

Owner Liz Semperger said the coloured glass is classically designed, and will add to the elegance of the church.

Valade and the congregation originally planned to replace the older windows, which are not stained glass, with a similar model. But a recommendation from the church's contractor had the group looking to Semperger for a different design.

"Once we talked to (Semperger), we found she was very reasonable in price," Valade said. "So that's why we went ahead with the new stained glass."

Semperger, who's done work for local churches in the past, said it's a common misconception that the application of stained glass is a "million-dollar process."

"When they came to see me and I gave them a quote, I think they were a little shocked," Semperger said.

She presented the congregation with four different designs after visiting the church for ideas.

"It's such a beautiful church already," she said. "And I think the new glass is really going to add to it."

The work is expected to



Essex Stained Glass owner Liz Semperger pieces together fragments of coloured glass at her shop July 28. Grace Baptist Church in Essex commissioned Semperger to construct 22 units to replace old windows in the building with stained glass. A restoration project on the 130-year-old church also includes a re-pointing of brickwork and the installation of five new doors.

be finished by the end of summer.

The stained glass will be one of the new features the congregation will notice about the renovations. In May while restructuring the building's brickwork, contractor Everet VanDoorn

discovered a plaque with the words "Bap. Church A.D. 1875."

Local historians believe Grace Baptist Church was originally a Methodist church. It is believed that a building on Medora Avenue called the Methodist

Episcopal Church was purchased in 1887 to hold religious services for local Baptists. The congregation eventually moved to its current building on Talbot Street North although the exact date isn't known.

Cruise for a Cure

A fundraiser dinner for the Canadian Cancer Society will be held Aug. 26 at the Roma Club in Leamington.

The fundraiser is hosted by the Young Adults of Leamington — Leamington District Secondary School and Cardinal Carter

Secondary School graduates.

The event will include a four-course meal, live music, prizes and a live auction. Doors open at 6 p.m. and dinner will be served at 7 p.m. All money raised will go to the Canadian Cancer Society

for cancer research, education and community programs. For further information contact the Canadian Cancer Society Essex County Unit at 519-254-5116.

Tickets will be sold at The Hairport, Sport Mart Leamington, the

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