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Congregation's efforts help to restore church

By KATE GILDERDALE
Melville United Church congregation may be small, but the enthusiasm and dedication of its members more than compensates for lack of numbers.
The present church was built in 1878. Last year, the members and adherents undertook a major fundraising campaign to restore the historic building to its former beauty.
The target of \$25,000 was quickly achieved, thanks to the generosity of membership past and present, as well as the community at large. Restoration of the exterior is nearing completion.

Says church steward Ann Pompili: "We want the community to know the money's being put to good use. The first phase is almost finished."
With this objective about to be realized, a second fundraising campaign will be undertaken for interior restoration.
"Due to water leakage, there's paint damage inside," Mrs. Pompili explains. "We want to strip the wainscoting back to the original wood. The remainder of the church needs painting."
Although final decisions on how to raise the money haven't been finalized, a bazaar, raffle and auction sale are being considered.

"We'll definitely have a bake sale," she stresses, noting that last summer's event at Forsythe Farms raised \$600 towards their goal.
Mrs. Pompili wants the community to participate or come forward with fundraising suggestions.
A lot of the funds for Phase 1 were donated by members of the congregation who'd moved away, notes the congregation's pastor, Rev. John Miller.
"We did a big mailing and the response was very gratifying," he said. "The membership also dug deep. This is an outreach community."
Not only has the congregation supported the fundraising wholeheartedly, it has donated large amounts to the church's mission work. The U.C.W. (United Church Women), give thousands every year towards missions. "The (church) community doesn't simply survive," he states, "it reaches out."
On Sunday, June 4, a special anniversary service will be held, marking the start of the fundraising initiative.



Work is underway to restore Melville United Church to its original architectural beauty. Members of the congregation and community have taken the lead in fundraising to see the project through.

"We had a full sanctuary for our anniversary last year," recalls Mrs. Pompili. The church has approximately 35 supporting families, says Rev. Miller. The sanctuary can accommodate up to 150 people.
Although the majority of members are seniors, a Sunday School group was started recently.
"There was one here before, but it had been shut down for a number of years," Rev. Miller explains. He feels there's a good potential for growth with five or six children attending. He hopes to attract more young families.

Both Rev. Miller and Mrs. Pompili point out that the church is an historical building that's being carefully restored through the use of reclaimed brick.
"Over 2,000 bricks have been cut out and replaced," he notes.
Melville United Church comprises the amalgamation of three congregations — Melville Presbyterian, Bethesda Methodist and Peach's Primitive Methodist. The present two-point charge includes Locust Hill.
Donations should be sent to 'The Melville United Restoration Fund, R.R. 1, Unionville.' (L3F 2L6).

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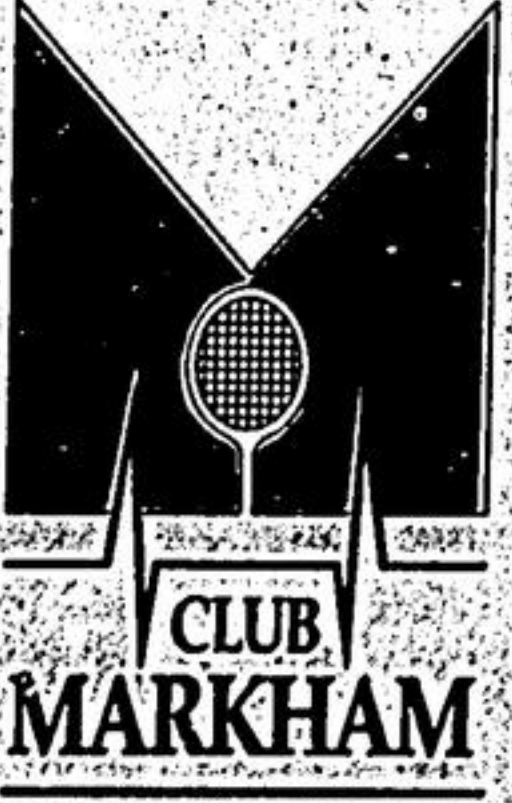
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