

# Uxbridge church gets facelift

*Crews will restore exterior brickwork*

By Jeff Hayward  
Staff Writer

**UXBRIDGE** — Officials of a local church have faith the latest renovation of a Toronto Street landmark will go smoothly.

The St. Andrew's-Chalmers Presbyterian church, 40 Toronto St. S., has a long history in the township dating back to 1869, undergoing maintenance and additions through the years. Scaffolding is already up to perform the latest six-week project to restore deteriorating brickwork, which might be tricky, explained Scott Andrews, the church's head of maintenance.

Mr. Andrews said Bowie Contracting Ltd., based in Gormley, has been hired for the masonry work. "We're hoping the bricks don't give them a problem once they're into it... once they're into it they have to keep going," said Mr. Andrews.

A 2004 building condition assessment notes new face brick was added to the original portion of the building in

1984, according to church records. But much of the older section consists of clay bricks. "It appears the original walls were sandblasted and this intervention has led to significant weathering of the brick and mortar," the assessment reads.

A photograph from Uxbridge Times-Journal archives shows a past church upgrade that went terribly wrong. Crews had removed earth from around the building to reinforce footings, but during that process an entire wall slid into the excavated hole. Mr. Andrews could not pin down an exact date on the incident, but Uxbridge Historical Centre assistant Nancy Marr said museum curator Allan McGillivray did some research and believes it occurred the same year as the 1984 restoration. No one was injured in that mishap.

The masonry work is just one component of an overall facelift for the church which began two years ago. Mr. Andrews said about \$150,000 was raised in donations and pledges through the church. "The response has been tremendous," he said. The assessment report estimated the cost of the recommended upgrades, including roofwork, some of which has been completed, to be between \$142,100

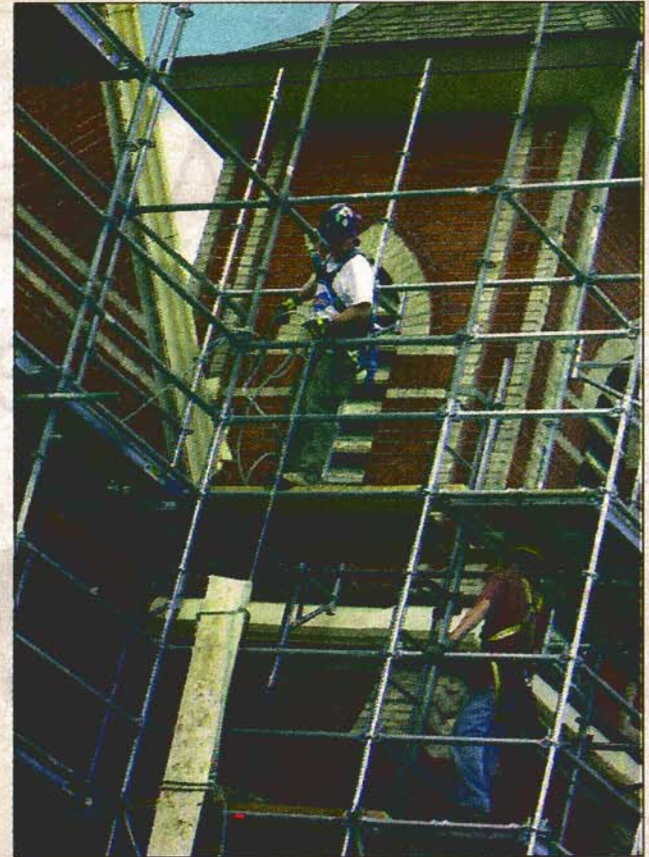
to \$178,800. Doors will also be refinished and window sills painted, Mr. Andrews added. Part of the project costs included removing what the report referred to as "bird guano," up to 12 inches deep, in two bell towers on the church.

During the St. Andrew's-Chalmers drive to raise money for renovations, another cause was collected for, noted Dave Phillips of the church's office. The church has received donations and pledges of \$26,000 toward the Livingstonia Synod AIDS program, with some of the funds to come during a three-year commitment from the congregation.

The program involves consultation with churches in Malawi, Africa and funding toward projects there such as drilling wells for fresh water, training volunteers to provide support for those living with AIDS, improving agriculture, and training the young to ensure they can provide for themselves.

"There's so many children (in Africa) with no parents," said Mr. Phillips.

He said a cheque for \$16,620 has already been delivered. "The money has gone there and is probably being used as we speak," he added. "It's not just sitting in a bank somewhere."



Celia Klemenz /Times-Journal photo  
Keith Fisher hauls planks up to the top level of scaffolding as he, Dave Bridges, right, and a crew from Skyway Canada prepare for restoration of the exterior of St. Andrew's-Chalmers Presbyterian Church on Toronto Street.