

Island Notes

Newsletter of the Island Church Foundation

P.O. Box 12, Waterloo, Wisconsin 53594

June 2003

●●●● Annual meeting is Sunday, June 8 ●●●●

A strong foundation will preserve our church

Volunteers act to save church from deterioration

Your Island Church Foundation has put a strong foundation under our historic church. Literally, as well as figuratively.

Armed with hammer, nails, and circular saws, taking nourishment from bologna sandwiches, and informed by a sense of historic heritage, volunteer members of the Foundation put our little church on course to stand strong for another 140 years.

Come see for yourself at the annual meeting this Sunday, June 8, at the church, Island Church Road, Waterloo. The meeting starts at 1 p.m.

Your Foundation's board of directors noted that the old church was sinking into the earth, especially on its northwest side. The church was built in 1863 with only four corner stones as its foundation. The squared-off tamarack logs on the northwest side were crumbling from the moisture



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Leo Yelk and Ed Updike prepare new floor boards.

Foundation project ←

absorbed from the ground. Something had to be done.

The Foundation contacted Lyle Lidholm of Watertown to recommend the proper course of action and to oversee the project. Lyle is a nationally respected restorer of log buildings who restored many of the structures at historic Old World Wisconsin. Lyle recommended a full foundation as offering the best long-term solution.

To prep the church, late in the Autumn of 2000, volunteers removed the pews and artifacts from the interior of the church. They also carefully removed, numbered and stored the outside sheathing of white-washed boards and battens and covered the exposed outer walls in protective plastic for the winter. Because the wood was still in its original shade of light brown, it now seems probable that the board and battens were original equipment and not added much later, as had long been thought. The logs are expertly mortised and tenoned at the corners. The rotted log on the north side was carefully replaced.

Bailey Construction out of Clyman was hired. They began digging in Spring 2002. The church was hoisted into the air while a proper foundation was dug and the concrete poured. Then the foundation was faced with field stones donated by Roy Haberman. A plastic vapor barrier was laid down under the floor and covered with pebble stones. The foundation is vented to the outside.

Foundation members found that the floor was not joined to the building but instead floated on hewed logs. Parts of the floor had rotted. Volunteers removed the old floor in Spring 2001 and a year later laid a new floor from wide pine planks tongue-and-grooved to match the original.

The volunteer work took many week ends, during which the ladies of the Foundation made lunch. At this writing, the front vestibule needs to be reattached. The board of directors also decided to install a wheelchair-accessible ramp.

The project helped bring a new sense of unity and purpose to the Foundation, which was begun in 1970 and formally chartered in 1976 to “purchase, maintain, preserve and restore St. Wenceslaus Church on its original location in the Town of Waterloo, Jefferson County, Wisconsin.” Today, the church built by immigrants from Bohemia (the modern-day Czech Republic) stands as it always has high on its “Island” community, so-called because it occupied high ground surrounded by wet lowlands.

St. Wenceslaus Church on the Island remains a living testament to the faith of those pioneers.



The new foundation under him, restoration expert Lyle Lidholm peers out the entrance while waiting for more boards to complete the floor joists.



Island Church Board of Directors

James Kilian, president
920/478-2428
David Blaska, vice president
608/271-4882
Dave Tillotson, secretary
920/648-2183
Dorothea Fischer, treasurer
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920/648-2583
Karen Deppe
920/478-3218
Marvin Homan
920/648-5016
Larry Libert
608/233-7805
Bill Blaska
920/478-2616

Help preserve
this important
history! Annual
memberships
are \$10.



Restoration volunteers:

Leo Yelk
Bill Blaska
Catherine Updike
Dave Tillotson
David Blaska
Dorothea Fischer
Jim Kilian
Ed Updike
Karen Deppe
Kate Radke
Larry Libert
Larry Peter
Marvin Homan
Mike Veith
Roy Haberman
Ruth Berner
Stan Deppe
Tom Veith
Lyle Lidholm



President Jim Kilian prepares the outer boards and battens for winter storage in November 2000. (below) before the church is ready to be lifted the next spring for the laying of its foundation.



Island Church Foundation
P.O. BOX 12
Waterloo, WI 53594

Annual Meeting:

1 p.m. Sunday, June 8
Island Church utility building
Island Church Road, Waterloo

Agenda:

1. Election of Directors
2. Amend Constitution
3. Discuss church restoration

Upcoming meetings:

July 10 - Board Meeting - Island Church - 7:30 pm
August 14 - Board Meeting - Island Church - 7:30 pm
Sept 11 - Board Meeting - Island Church - 7:30 pm
Oct 9 - Board Meeting - F&M Bank 7:30 pm
Nov 13 - Board Meeting - F&M Bank 7:30 pm
December - No Meeting



Evidence of rot before repairs were undertaken