

underbelly of the roof and then ultimately redoing the shingling of the steeple and the roof.”

Colleen was the Conservancy staff who did the site visit for Broad Street. She said, “Broad Street is a remarkable building that we were happy to help.”

Colleen continued, “I always come away from a grant round or a site visit inspired because of all the service I see these sites are doing—they are the ones working with people in recovery, the homeless, people in the margins, refugees, and natural disasters. All these sites are fulfilling needs. It gets back to my argument that you can’t do these services if your roof is leaking. It’s not just a leaky window—it’s feeding the hungry. On one hand you have architectural beauty, but you also have this whole other piece—community service!”

Does your church need restoration and can use the help from the Conservancy?

The deadline for the next round of grants is Dec. 15, 2022.

Visit <https://bit.ly/SacredSitesgrantsUNY> to see more examples of UNY churches who were able to accomplish restoration projects with the help of Sacred Sites.



Visit <https://bit.ly/SSgrants> to learn more about the Sacred Sites program.



Colleen Heemeyer at the Conservancy would be happy to help. You can contact her at 212-995-5260 x305 or via email at Colleen Heemeyer [colleenheemeyer@nylandmarks.org](mailto:colleenheemeyer@nylandmarks.org).

## How do you encourage your pastor to prioritize wellness or take a Sabbath?

The next issue of the *Upper New York Advocate* (our digital and printed magazine) will focus on pastoral wellness. We are looking for stories of congregations or church members who help their pastor prioritize wellness.

Perhaps you help her with some of her tasks, so she has time to rest

and restore. Maybe your congregation gives him a dinner-and-a-movie gift card so that he can have a fun time with his spouse. We want to hear your stories! Send them to [news@unyumc.org](mailto:news@unyumc.org) by Aug. 19, 2022.



*The Bridge* is a Conference Communications Ministry tool that delivers to local churches news and stories of ministry from around the Upper New York Conference and the world. For more news and stories visit: [www.unyumc.org](http://www.unyumc.org)



*“What can be done, beyond bake sales and chicken barbeques, when a church building needs repairs that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars?”*

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*The Upper New York Conference’s vision is to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be God’s love with our neighbors in all places.*

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# Sacred Sites program provides grants for restoration

Many of the local churches in the Upper New York (UNY) Conference are considered landmarks; several of our churches are over 100 years old. Over time, these church buildings face structural damages from the foundation to the roof, from the stained-glass windows to the steeples.

Our churches are more than just buildings; they are gathering places not only for congregations, but also, communities. These churches evoke meaning for Scouts groups or recovery groups that meet there weekly, for the couples that were married there, for the community members who rely on the food bank at the church, and for so many more.

What can be done, beyond bake sales and chicken barbecues, when a church building needs repairs that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars?

Some churches have endowments that help. There are also several grant programs. One of them is the New York Landmark Conservancy's (Conservancy) Sacred Sites grant program.

The Conservancy, a private, nonprofit organization, offers financial and technical help to the owners of landmark properties. Its Sacred Sites program works with congregations of all denominations throughout New York State to ensure the continuing use of their buildings.

The Sacred Sites program provides congregations with matching grants

for planning and implementing exterior restoration projects along with technical assistance and workshops. Since 1986 (when the program was founded), the program has pledged over 1,550 grants totaling more than \$14.8 million to over 825 religious institutions statewide. Many of those grants were pledged to UNY churches.

The Sacred Sites grant program pledges matching grants twice a year.

These grants are available to historic houses of worship that are listed either on the State/National Register of Historic Places or designated locally as a landmark by the town or city where the site is located. The Conservancy helps fund exterior work to a religious institution's primary worship space and consulting projects (like architectural or engineering work). They do not fund work retroactively.

The most recent grant was pledged to Port Gibson United Methodist Church.

In October 2019, Port Gibson UMC members noticed several cracks along the exterior walls and other locations within the sanctuary. The Conservancy came and



Port Gibson UMC

assessed the damages, estimating that the cost to repair them would be \$115,000.

There would be many steps involved to start the repairs and the first would be for an architecture firm to draw up plans for the restoration.

Nancy Anderson, a member of Port Gibson UMC's Board of Trustees, is the acting liaison from the Port Gibson UMC and spent many hours gathering paperwork for a Sacred Sites grant request. She worked with Colleen Heemeyer from the Sacred Sites program to prepare a grant request of \$7,500 for the architectural work.

Nancy said, "I am so impressed with the professionalism of the personnel at the Landmark Conservancy. They are extremely patient with my questions, regardless of phone calls or emails. They respond promptly. They offer their assistance every step of the way. Working with them is a pleasure."

Port Gibson plans to apply for more Sacred Sites grants to help cover the next steps in their project.

One fact to note is that churches need to try to match what the Conservancy pledges and most often the church then has to raise more funds to cover the cost of the project.

Colleen said, "We like it when our grants can leverage additional funding. A church can approach their congregation or members of the community and say for example, 'We have an opportunity to be given a \$25,000 grant, can you match?' It's a good campaign plug too."

Since 1986, the Conservancy pledged almost \$800,000 to UMC sites. There has been a wide array

of projects in the UNY Conference funded in part by the Conservancy.

One great example is Broad Street UMC.

The Conservancy pledged \$30,000 to Broad Street UMC in Norwich, NY in 2019 for roof and tower restoration.

Bernie Winsor, the trustee chair for Broad Street said, "Our building is special to me. I have been a member for 57 years. My husband and I were married here. Our steeple is 190 feet tall. It's the tallest point in Chenango County. It's a focal point for our community.

Applying for the grant was a lot of work. You need to provide information about the property itself, how the building is used for outside organizations, and all the details about the project including bids from contractors.



Broad Street UMC

The \$30,000 has been well used. We've actually spent almost \$500,000...we probably have close to a million more to spend by the time this is done.

We have six stages of production. We have so far stabilized our steeple internally. We have an attic between the sanctuary and steeple. It used to be dangerous with no light and just beams. We now have beautiful platforms.

The masonry bricks were deteriorating, and they've been replaced.

We are now working on the