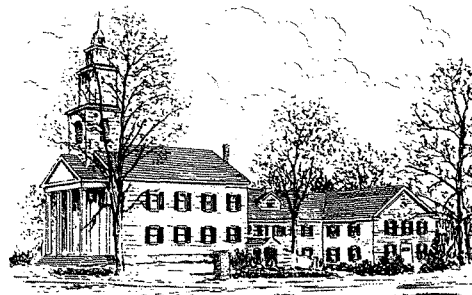


# Southwick Congregational Church United Church of Christ



Established 1773

August 19, 2022

Community Preservation Committee  
Town of Southwick  
454 College Highway  
Southwick, MA 01077

Dear Members of the CPC:

I am writing on behalf of Southwick Congregational Church, located at 488 College Highway, and applying for CPC funding to help with repairs and restoration to the steeple of our historic church building.

After a leak was discovered earlier this year in our sanctuary, an inspection of the interior of our steeple revealed significant structural damage. Subsequent professional follow-up confirmed the urgency and complexity of addressing this issue, as described in our attached application.

We are a small congregation of about 50 active members. While we manage to fund our current day to day operations, the extraordinary cost of the steeple restoration is beyond our ability to self-fund. This is especially true in light of upcoming necessary church maintenance that includes replacing our 25-year-old roof.

Our church and the town of Southwick share a long-standing, distinguished history as outlined in the application. As such, we are confident that this request as submitted will qualify as an approved CPC project.

For more information, please contact Eric Nitsch, Jim Putnam, or me by contacting our Church Office at 569-6362 or via email at [Southwickucc@gmail.com](mailto:Southwickucc@gmail.com).

We look forward to working with the CPC on this much-needed initiative and eagerly await your feedback.

Sincerely,

Hannah (Terry) Putnam  
Church Moderator



**PROJECT APPLICATION  
FOR  
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUNDING**

ORIGINAL

Submission Date: August 19, 2022

**APPLICANT INFORMATION**

Applicant: (Please circle public or private): Southwick Congregational Church  
Private Nonprofit  
Street Address: 488 College Highway  
P.O. Box: 260  
Town, State, Zip Code: Southwick, MA 01077  
Telephone: 413-569-6362  
E-mail: Southwickucc@gmail.com  
Website: Southwickucc.org  
Contact Person(s) and/or Project Director(s): Eric Nitsch, Chair Buildings &  
Grounds; Jim Putnam, Church Treasurer

Name	Title
Name of governing board, trustees, directors or members:	
Church Executive Committee	
Hannah "Terry" Putnam, Church Moderator	

Federal Tax Identification Number (if non-profit) 04-2825252

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

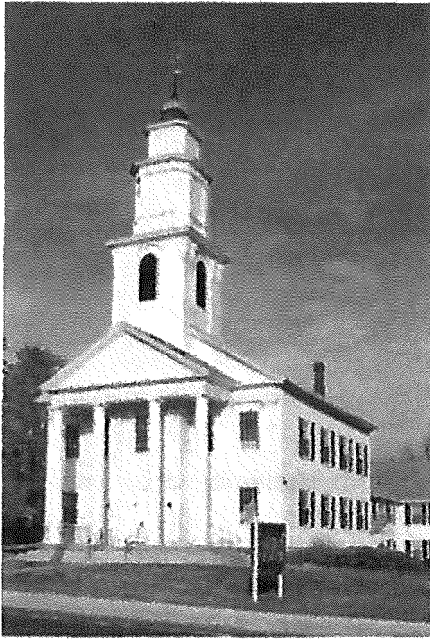
**Amount Requested \$60,790.00**

Project Site Address: 488 College Highway, Southwick, MA Project Site Assessors Map/Parcel:089/022 Project Site Deed Book/Page: 1922/0075 Current Owner: Southwick Congregational Church	<u>Purpose (please check all that apply)</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Open Space <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historical <input type="checkbox"/> Housing
--	--

Brief Project Description: Historic Church Steeple and Belfry - Structural repairs due to water intrusion; repair of exterior roofing, valleys and ridges, repainting of steeple; and gilding of dome.

Signature of Applicant: [Signature] Date: 8-19-22  
Signature of Owner of Property: Hannah Putnam Date: 8/19/22  
on behalf of Southwick Congregational Church

**Project Title: Restoration of Historic Steeple and Belfry  
at Southwick Congregational Church**



**(1) SOUTHWICK  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**  
488 College Highway  
1824-26/1924/1957

From the 1770's until the early 1820's, Southwick Center was in the vicinity of College Highway, Bugbee Road and Klaus Anderson Road, where the town's first meetinghouse, cemetery and several taverns were located. In June of 1823, the first meetinghouse burned down, probably by a lit candle left by the choir during an evening rehearsal. After lengthy community debate, it was decided to build its replacement a mile further north, where it joined a general store, tavern, small law office, and several other homes. The new meetinghouse was designed and constructed under the aegis of Capt. Isaac Damon, a prominent Northampton architect and contractor who was also responsible for the Congregational churches in Springfield, Blandford, and Simsbury, as well as court houses

and covered bridges throughout the region.

The building is typical for his churches, with the pitched or gable end facing the front, four monumental columns supporting a shallow porch (portico), window sash consisting of twelve over twelve (12/12) panes, and a tall steeple consisting of a square base with arched louvers (where the church bell is hung), topped by several octagonal plan stages and a gilt dome. Several additions to the rear, constructed in 1924 and 1957, provide religious education classrooms, office, kitchen, stage and social halls for church and civic functions.

***A Sampling of Historic Buildings of Southwick, Massachusetts Center***, Southwick Historical Commission. July 2015.

- 
1. Scope or Concept of Project – Update and repair steeple structure to its original and sustainable utility and visual appearance as the iconic image of Southwick Center and Southwick Congregational Church. In so doing, maintain the historical integrity and charm of Southwick Center for future generations to enjoy. This property is doubly significant as it is also home to Southwick's Veterans' Memorial under long-term lease to the Town of Southwick. It is important to know that the Church building and all underlying land is owned with clear title to Southwick Congregational Church.

2. Project Goals

- a. Repair and restore structural integrity of steeple structure (repairs necessary to repel moisture intrusion to wood components)
- b. Assure continuing safety of the steeple structure
- c. Prepare and repaint wood surfaces
- d. Regild the “gold dome”

3. Project Objectives

- a. Reinforcement of compromised American chestnut beams and installation of new EPDM rubber roofing over existing bell deck.
- b. Exterior painting of the church steeple, replacement of the steeple roofing, and gilding of the steeple dome and weathervane.
- c. There is lead paint on the steeple exterior. Project will be conducted by industry standards and in accordance with applicable Town of Southwick standards for repainting over lead paint. Contractor holds valid “Lead-Safe Renovator – Supervisor Initial” certification pursuant to 454 CMR 22.00. There is no asbestos on or in the steeple.

4. Projected Action Plan and Timeline

- a. Reinforcement of the American chestnut beams with modern LVL beams and custom metal brackets. Installment of EPDM rubber roof over existing bell deck to stop leaking from louvres. Timeline is August 2022.
- b. Cleaning, caulking, priming, and painting the steeple. Repairing or replacing any damaged wood (siding and/or trim). Removal of existing asphalt shingles to the sheathing level and replacing with new asphalt shingles at all three steeple levels. Timeline is spring 2023.

5. Project Evaluation and Maintenance

- a. The Church Buildings and Grounds Committee will maintain an open line of communication with the contractor(s) which will include scheduled inspections during the restoration.
- b. The contractor(s) will be paid based on the progress of the project.

6. Other Funding Source(s)

Pledge from Church Member/Southwick Resident	\$10,600
Additional Fund Raising from Members & Town Residents	Unknown
Church Funds and/or Borrowing	As necessary
CPC Funding	60,790
TOTAL	\$71,390

7. CPC Funding Request: \$60,790

8. Budget – briefly describe expected project costs	
Steeple structural repairs	\$15,500
Steeple roofing and exterior painting	38,800
Restoration of dome gilding	10,600
Contingency (10%)	6,490
TOTAL	\$71,390

9. Budget Justification

- a. Steeple structural repair – there are rotted American chestnut beams in the steeple due to water leakage. These beams required immediate reinforcement to maintain the structural integrity and assure safety to those in Church, pedestrians and motorists on College Highway. The new bell deck roof will weatherproof the area where the leakage originated. (The original bell deck lasted almost 200 years.)
- b. Steeple exterior painting – a weather-tight exterior is needed to maintain the structural integrity, safety and historic appearance of the steeple.

10. Describe how the Project accomplishes the goals of the CPC.

“Historic resources” for CP purposes is defined in G.L. c. 44B, § 2 as a “building, structure, vessel real property, document or artifact that is listed on the state register of historic places or has been determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture or culture of a city or town.” [3 Historical Resources | Southwick MA](#)  
**Rationale:** In its 2015 publication *A Sampling of Historic Buildings of Southwick, Massachusetts Center*, the Southwick Historical Commission listed Southwick Congregational Church as #1. Its rationale has already been shared at the beginning of this document

Rehabilitation - Painting that is an integral part of a larger, eligible rehabilitation or restoration project, i.e., painting after extraordinary repairs or restoration of walls, woodwork, trim or siding (etc.) is allowable. However, periodic painting or repainting of a historic building on a recurring basis would be in the nature of “maintenance” and not be eligible for CPA funding. [3 Historical Resources | Southwick MA](#)

**Rationale:** This project was triggered by the extraordinary need after 200 years to immediately deal with the rotted chestnut structural members in the steeple and then to follow-up with exterior repairs to assure that similar issues do not recur. The painting of the steeple is both integral to the weather-proofing process as well as to restoring the steeple to its proper original appearance. The re-gilding of the “Gold Dome” likely does not meet the requirement. Accordingly, while listed within the overall project, an individual has pledged to fund this part of the project so that there is no cost to the Church.

## 11. Relevance to Community

This building has been an integral part of Southwick's historical heritage since 1770. It was originally referred to as the "Meetinghouse" and was used for Town Meetings and other public functions long before there were other venues to hold such meetings.

The original petition to the legislature for separation from Westfield dated March 15, 1765 pledged that the petitioners would "jointly and severally promise to fulfill our equal part and proportion advancing money to according to our respective interests for the settling a learned orthodox minister and for the building and compleating a Meeting-house..." (original grammar and spelling)

In 1773, in fulfillment of their requirement, the residents built the original Meetinghouse about a mile south of today's Town Center across the street from what is now known as Pumpkin Valley Farm. This Meetinghouse was destroyed by fire in 1823. After some controversy among Southwick voters, it was decided to build a new Meetinghouse at the current location in what was emerging as the Town Center at the four corners of key roads. (Some of the dissenters split off and built what is now known as the old Methodist Church at Gillett Corners.)

Captain Isaac Damon of Northampton was commissioned to design the new Meetinghouse. He was a highly regarded architect of that time and much of his work still graces the Connecticut Valley, contributing to the vintage charm of our village centers. [Isaac Damon - Historic Northampton Museum and Education Center \(historic-northampton.org\)](http://historic-northampton.org)

The new Meetinghouse with its steeple soaring some 100 feet over Southwick Center was completed and dedicated in 1824. It has faithfully served Church and community for the past 198 years, and hopefully for many more to come.

At the time the Meetinghouse was built, brothers Thaddeus and Enos Foote purchased the bell for the steeple which remains operational today. Starting in 1845, the bell was rung daily at certain hours with the Town paying for this. Undoubtedly the Foote Brothers bell has been rung on many joyous and somber occasions during the past 200 years. It is still rung today every Sunday before our worship services, during Memorial and Veterans Day ceremonies, and on other special occasions.

In 1950, the columns of the Church were replaced. Inside the north column, a box of papers written by the people who had constructed the meetinghouse in 1824 was found. In addition to the wonderful historical insights, this was quite newsworthy in 1950.

12. Valley Restoration Services [\(3\) Valley Restoration LLC | Facebook](#)

When the structural damage was discovered in early 2022, the Church immediately reached out to several established companies that specialize in steeple restoration for estimates. Valley Restoration was chosen based on its extensive experience and strong reputation in this field. They also were the lowest bidder and were relatively local, based in Torrington, Conn.

Appendix 1. Selected Project Photos

Appendix 2. Selected Historical Photos

Appendix 3. Letters of Support



## Appendix 1. Selected Project Photos









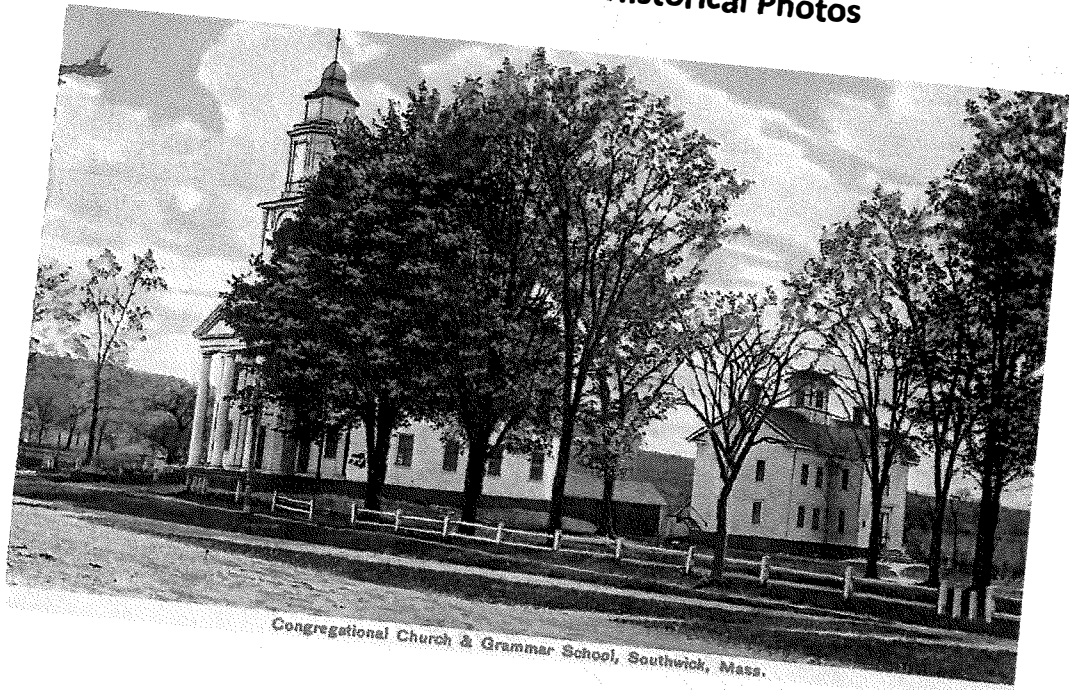


Figure 11.1: A concrete slab being prepared.

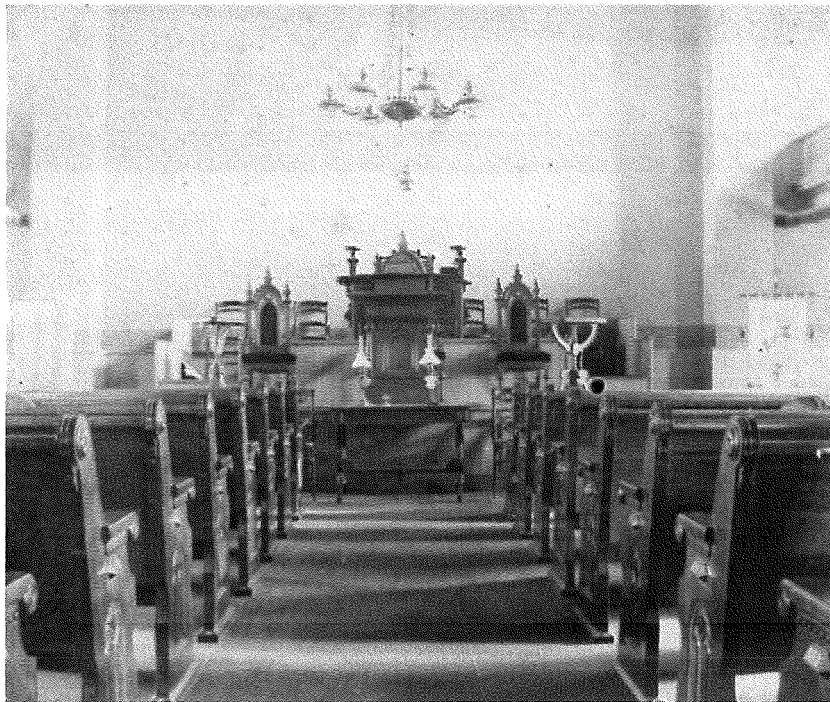




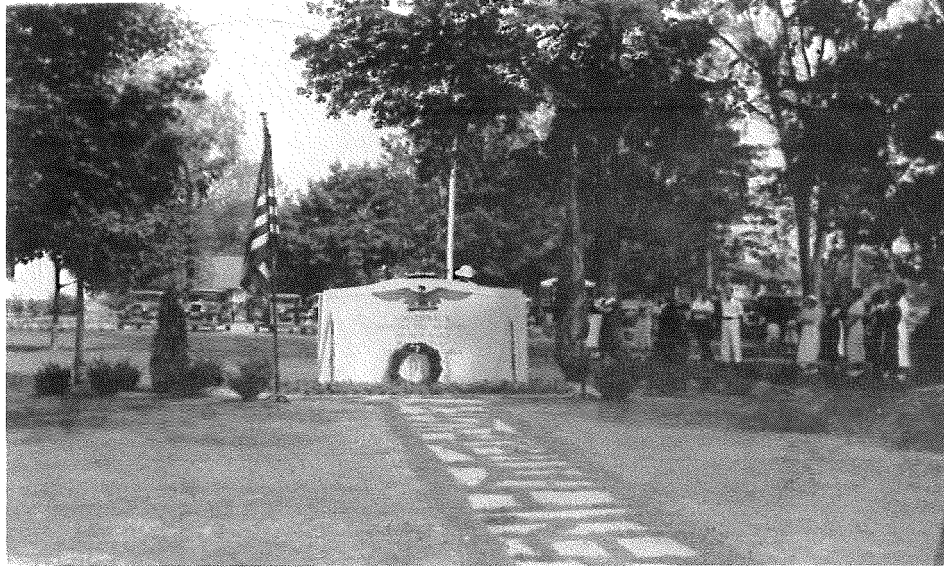
**Appendix 2. Selected Historical Photos**

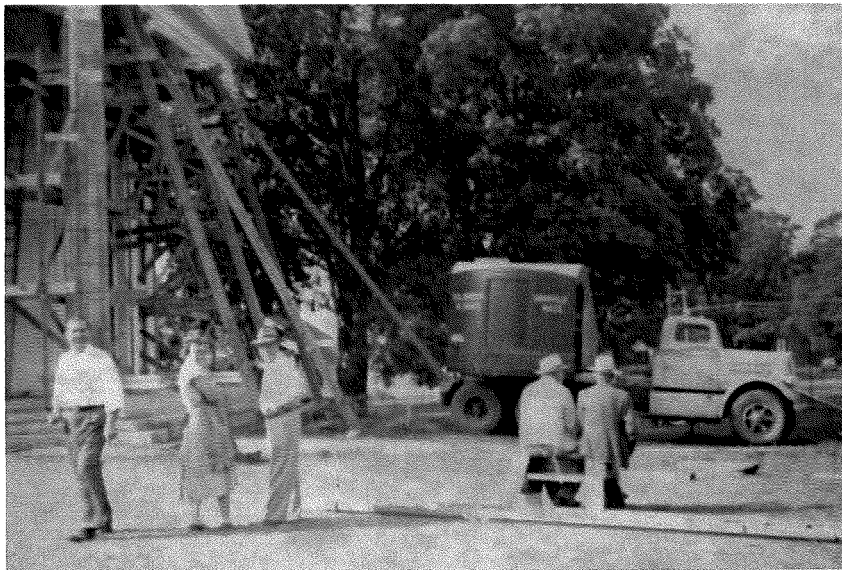
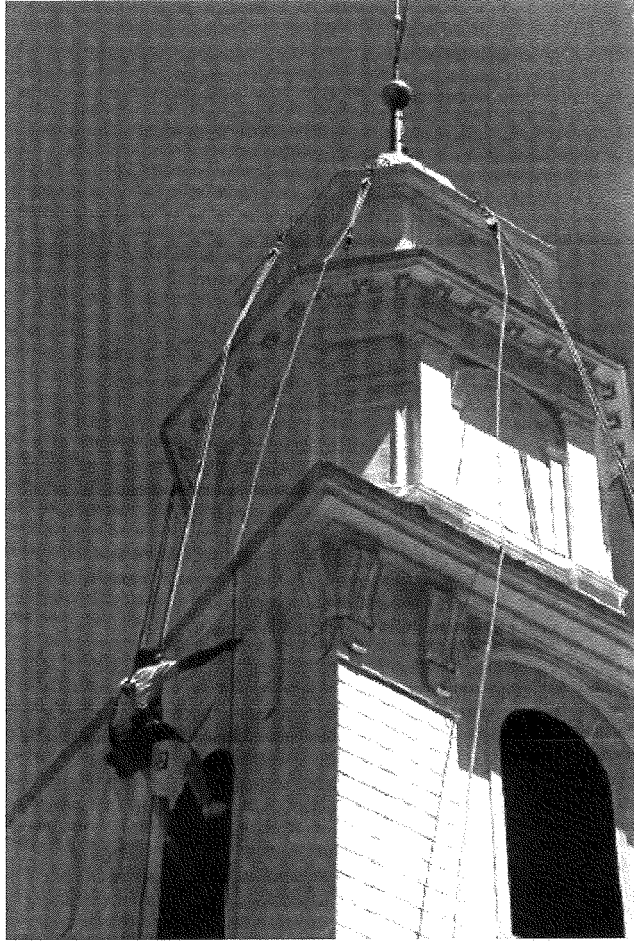


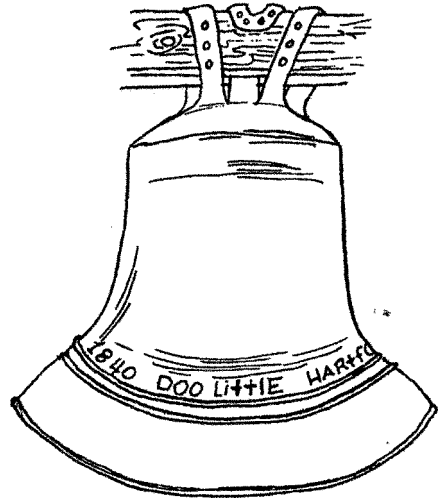












The Foote Brothers Bell



Thanks to ***Giguere Photography*** for this perspective.

