

**ST. JOHNS – ST. MARKS LUTHERAN CHURCH
CANAJOHARIE, NY**

On July 2, 2006, fire wrought significant damage to our historic church. Built in 1869 from locally quarried limestone, the church is a landmark in our community and was beautifully designed and appointed. One third of the roof and underlying structure was lost. Our organ loft, along with our pipe organ was destroyed. Smoke, water and falling debris resulted in varying degrees of damage throughout the building.

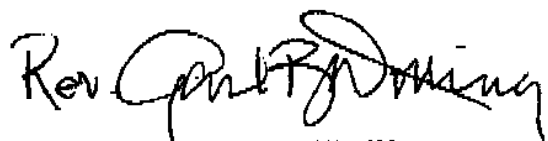
Our project represented two significant challenges. First, having been constructed in the mid-19th century, only the building itself could reveal the techniques and systems that were employed. As was discovered, some of the old techniques continued to be adequate; some did not. Second, since the fire destroyed only a portion of the building, and the goal was restoration not demolition, then each section to be repaired had to be cautiously dismantled and new construction techniques melded into the old.

Ashley Construction Services took up the challenge with enthusiasm and professional expertise, working through each of the puzzling portions of the building: repairing, replacing, refinishing, restoring, and where necessary, re-building. Led by Joe Aquilo, our project supervisor Paul Sheedy directed the work and was attentive to the details, both the underlying construction details and those items which were necessary to retain the historic presentation of the building.

Ashley Construction Services was able to balance the congregation's need to see the on-going progress with the safety of the job site. The job site was kept clean and the crafts people were well supervised and good to have around. Weekly construction meetings helped to keep our leadership informed and to talk through problems as they arose. Ideas and suggestions were exchanged with positive results. Joe Aquilo helped our leadership understand the construction and code issues.

Our sanctuary is beautiful; it has been restored while being updated in ways which make it more safe and more accessible. Fine touches, several which were suggestions from Mr. Sheedy have enhanced its beauty. Restoring an historic building, particularly a sacred space, requires both technical expertise and respect for the history and purpose of the place. Ashley Construction Services succeeded in both categories.

Recovering from a fire is a difficult process. Ashley Construction Services made the road easier, and the final results beautiful. My thanks to Joe Aquilo and his fine team of employees for the job they have done. You could expect no less.



The Rev. Gail R. Wolling
Pastor