

Dear Members and Friends of the First Spiritualist Church of Salem,

Remember the saying, “When it rains, it pours?” The First Spiritualist Church of Salem is in the midst of a deluge!

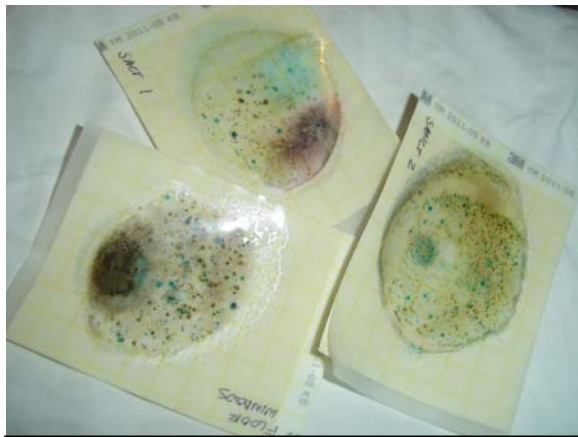
In 2010, the church suffered an electrical fire during a workshop over Memorial Day weekend. The fire was contained, thanks to the quick actions of both workshop attendees and the Salem Fire Department. Though the damage to the church was negligible, much electrical work was required to remedy the problem and allow the church to remain open. The cost to repair the upstairs electrical system was nearly \$2,000.



*Board President, Pat Cizewski, meets with Salem police and fire officials during Memorial Day Weekend electrical fire.*

Downstairs, known as Olmstead Hall (named after church founder, Ruth Olmstead), a number of electrical issues also exist, including: live wires running through structural wooden beams, gaps between fixtures and the walls, improper live wire junctions, and worn wiring.

During this same time, the board was alerted to the presence of mold growing within a sealed-off basement window located in the kitchen area. Many years ago, the windows along the kitchen wall were covered using masonite (fake tile board) with kitchen cabinets and appliances placed in front. The old stove hood and exhaust fan, long inoperable, fed moisture into the basement. Sealing off the windows blocked sunlight from streaming into Olmstead Hall and, coupled with the dampness, provided the perfect conditions for mold growth.



*Three of the samples which revealed mold*

Professional testing was conducted at the church to ascertain if the “fog-like substance” in the basement window (as seen from outside the church) was mold, and if so, to ascertain its threat. The results revealed inactive spores that, under further moist conditions, would pose a health risk.

The board of trustees decided to immediately remedy the mold issue in the basement and contracted to have the old kitchen removed, the mold remediated, and the kitchen rebuilt—but this time, with the windows exposed.

The kitchen remodeling will see a dishwasher and water filter installed together with wooden cabinets, a new wall-mount microwave (which will also provide an updated and upgraded vent system for the stove), new flooring in the kitchen and both bathrooms especially designed for use in basements and able to withstand substantial water exposure, and new toilets in the bathrooms to bring them up to current building code. The cost of the downstairs renovation is estimated to reach nearly \$10,000...the total amount of available cash. Protected in a CD is another \$6,000, but other issues with the church building need to be addressed as well in the near future, including:



*The kitchen wall and windows exposed*

- Demolition of the basement wall sealing the windows located along the front of the church (this is being rolled into the current project due to the evidence of additional mold growth in that location)<sup>#</sup>
- Furnaces: replacement and upgrade for efficiency
- Masonry: repointing mortar, replacing some lintels\*
- Front portico: repair/replace rotting wooden pillars, wooden railings, and overhang\*
- Back doors: replace rotted doors and frames\*
- Sanctuary: strip chipping and falling ceiling paint, repair plaster, treat plaster for paint adherence, and repaint
- Roofing/Drainage: replace rotting eaves, install gutters and downspouts\*<sup>#</sup>

\*Requires historic commission review and approval.

<sup>#</sup>This will help mitigate future mold growth by directing moisture away from the church

The church is facing an unprecedented amount of work. At a recent board meeting, the trustees discussed submitting an application to the National Spiritualist Association of Churches for a single, large loan to provide the means to make all of the repairs at one time. Rev. Bradley Gosselin, NST and Vice President of the NSAC, informed our board that many other NSAC churches require substantial work, and the NSAC is not financially able to fund all of the repairs required by all of its churches; therefore, there are no further loans available.

Over the next months, the Board of Trustees will layout a Capital Projects plan and brainstorm ideas for raising the funds that will be required to meet the infrastructure needs of our church. The Board of Trustees will also submit the loan request, as originally discussed, to the NSAC in the event that circumstances change and allow the NSAC to provide a loan to our church in the foreseeable future.

In the mean time, the Board of Trustees is making its appeal to you, our members and friends, to help move the church through this immediate crisis of electrical repair and mold remediation, and to take steps toward creating a solid financial foundation upon which future repairs and routine maintenance can be funded. The Board of Trustees is committed to the health and safety of the congregants of the First Spiritualist Church of Salem and is addressing each issue as rapidly and responsibly as possible, but

we need your help. We are asking each person who receives this letter to offer a monetary gift to the church to help keep our church clean and safe. Please, give what you can as you can. Using the form with this letter of appeal will earmark your gift for the Church Improvement Fund.

We have worked together and rallied in the past to keep the doors to the First Spiritualist Church of Salem open and serving this community. We trust that we can rally again in this moment to rededicate ourselves and demonstrate our commitment to Spirit by supporting the remediation and renovation efforts that will allow us to move forward and protect our church building for generations to come as our founder, Ruth Olmstead, and others did in securing this building for us.

Please visit our website at [www.firstspiritualistsalem.org](http://www.firstspiritualistsalem.org) to stay informed about the progress of our renovation. You can also make a donation through our website.

Thank you for your continued support and love of the First Spiritualist Church of Salem.

Love and blessings,

Pat Cizewski  
President, Board of Trustees

cut along dotted line

Church Improvement Fund: Olmstead Hall Remediation/Renovation Project

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have enclosed a donation for the Church Improvement

Your name printed here

Fund in the amount of:

\$50

\$100

\$200

\$500

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation amounts are *suggestions* only. Please give more if you can, less if you can't.

***All gifts are gratefully accepted and donors and donation amounts remain confidential.***

Please make checks payable to the: **First Spiritualist Church of Salem** and mail to:

First Spiritualist Church of Salem

34 Warren St.

Salem, MA 01970

Attn: Joyce DeFazio

The First Spiritualist Church of Salem, NSAC is a religious non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.