

Mayfield church selects architect

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MAYFIELD -- Every Sunday, music and prayers echo through the halls of the Mayfield Junior/Senior High School.

The Mayfield Central Presbyterian Church and its members have had to call the school's auditorium its home since last April, when a bolt of lightning sparked a blaze that destroyed the congregation's nearly 200-year-old church on School Street.

Last spring's early-morning blaze, and the months of upheaval that followed, seemed to be little more than a distant memory on Sunday, as church members gathered to celebrate a new beginning.

Rev. Bonnie Orth used the occasion of Sunday morning's service to announce that Schenectady architect James Hundt had been chosen to design the new church structure. It is to be built on the same land that once accommodated the previous church.

Hundt was officially installed in a special commissioning ceremony, in which he was blessed by Orth, who, together with the congregation, prayed that Hundt be the recipient of divine inspiration and be guided by knowledge and light in his efforts to design the new church.

"What an honor it has been to have been selected as your architect," said Hundt, who had an opportunity to speak during the service.

According to his website, Hundt specializes in designing facilities dedicated to religious worship. His work -- which includes everything from drafting master plans, to renovations and additions, to construction of completely new buildings -- can be found throughout the region.

Orth said they are hoping to be able to break ground on the new church this spring, and though it may seem overly optimistic, she would love to be able to celebrate next Christmas in the new church building.

With respect to its appearance, Orth said she only asks that its design be in keeping with the unique history and tradition of the village.

"It will be a country church that will fit in Mayfield," said Orth. "It will be similar in character to our old church, we hope."

Having spent years specializing in meeting each church community's unique needs and designing structures that accurately reflect their heritage, Hundt expressed his intention to design the building according to the wishes of the church community.

"It's really nice to be working with this congregation," said Hundt. "We'll come up with what's right for them."