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Funding for restoration of Kingston church making its way through Congress

KINGSTON – The U.S. House has approved \$350,000 to help fortify the walls of the historic Old Dutch Church in uptown Kingston. The Senate must go along, but Rep. Maurice Hinchey, who is working to get the money, said that will happen.



Rev. Kenneth Walsh and Rep. Maurice Hinchey



The wall has been an issue since the church was built 160 years ago

Hinchey said this is not about Congress directly supporting a church, but more about funding the preservation of an historic structure critical to the local economy.

“This is a building that has to be sustained. It’s very, very important to this community, very important for the religious aspect of it, of course, very important to the people who come here, but it’s also critically important for its historic circumstances,” he said. “The historic circumstances provide a great deal attraction to a number of people who come here, spend time here, spend money here.”

The money will help to restore an external wall that, since the current structure was built in the mid-1800s, has had problems, and is permanently 11 degrees out of plumb. The project includes repainting the walls, using 19th century mortar to ensure the structure can bear the weight of the new support system.

Rev. Kenneth Walsh said getting the federal help is critical.

“We really didn’t know where we would obtain this kind of money. The total amount is close to a million dollars for the work that has to be done. We’re a small struggling congregation, like so many congregations in America today.”

Walsh said the church, with its roughly 100 congregants, continues to function despite the structural problems.

