

## Novesta Church of Christ

# A new church takes more than money

Members of the Novesta Church of Christ, who dedicate their new building Sunday, have more than money invested in the structure.

Many of them also invested their own time and labor.

There will be the regular morning service, with the dedication service at 3 p.m.

Speaking at both will be Dr. Keith Keeran, professor of ministries at Great Lakes Bible College, Lansing, who spoke at the groundbreaking ceremonies last August.

At the dedication, the contractor, Gene Stauffer of Vestaburg, will present the keys to Ray Peasley, chairman of the building committee, and Keith Little, chairman of the church board, will lead the congregation in the act of dedication. The church choir will sing.

Playing the piano will be Becky Speirs, whose great-grandmother played at the dedication of the original Novesta Church of Christ

building in 1903.

Past ministers of the congregation have been invited to attend, but as of last week, it was still too early to know who would be able to come, according to the present pastor, Rev. Vern Lockard.

The public is invited to attend the dedication service and/or the open house to follow from 4-6 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

The Novesta Church of Christ is on Cemetery Road, about three miles south of Cass City.

The congregation had its beginnings some time before 1896, starting as a Sunday school in a schoolhouse.

Services were held there until it moved into its new building, which was dedicated Nov. 8, 1903. According to Rev. Lockard, the building was apparently started by a Baptist congregation, which sold it to the Church of Christ.

A basement was excavated under the church in the 1930s. An annex, which was an old one-room schoolhouse moved to the site, was added in 1954. The parsonage was built across the road in 1939.

The old church, now for sale, would seat 175 if stretched.

The idea to build a new structure first germinated about eight years ago, the minister said, when the education building was constructed behind the parsonage, across Cemetery Road. The old building is bordered on three sides by the Novesta Township cemetery, so there was no room to expand there.

**SERIOUS PLANNING** began about a year-and-a-half ago. Arvil Brown and Associates of Kendallville, Ind., which has designed several Churches of Christ, was hired as the architect.

The contractor, Gene Stauffer, has a daughter who is a member of the congregation, but he got the job because he was low bidder. One condition of his being hired was willingness to let church members help with construction.

They did a lot of the work, Rev. Lockard pointed out, mixing mortar and carrying brick to the bricklayers, helping install the heating system, laying some floor tile, assembling the pews, doing all the wood staining and finishing, and all of the painting except for the high ceilings.

Women of the congregation prepared the noon meals for the construction workers.

The pastor had no idea how much money was saved because church members did part of the work.

The finished structure will cost close to \$260,000. Of that amount, \$200,000 was raised by sale of bonds, the rest by a bank loan and from savings. About half the bonds, sold in 5, 10 and 15 year

denominations, were sold to church members, the rest to members of the community.

**THE NEW BUILDING** was erected in two sections, with the eight-year-old classroom section in between.

The south portion contains the auditorium, with seating capacity for 300 plus 40 in the choir, new office for the pastor and secretary, combination library and conference room, some small rooms for various purposes and the main entrance, which is around the back from Cemetery Road.

The major change in the classroom section was dividing of one large classroom into two smaller ones, plus tiling the floor. Including the nursery, there are a total of 12 classrooms.

The north portion contains the combination gymnasium and fellowship hall, large enough to seat at least 300 persons at tables for wedding receptions, etc., a kitchen large enough to prepare food for that many and restrooms.

**SUNDAY SERVICES** were first held in the new auditorium March 23, but church members wanted to wait until everything was done before holding the dedication. There may still be a few finishing touches to be completed after the dedication.

The third Sunday in the new auditorium, a new attendance record was set at 226 persons.

The church has a membership of about 175, adults and children, and has average Sunday attendance of about 150.

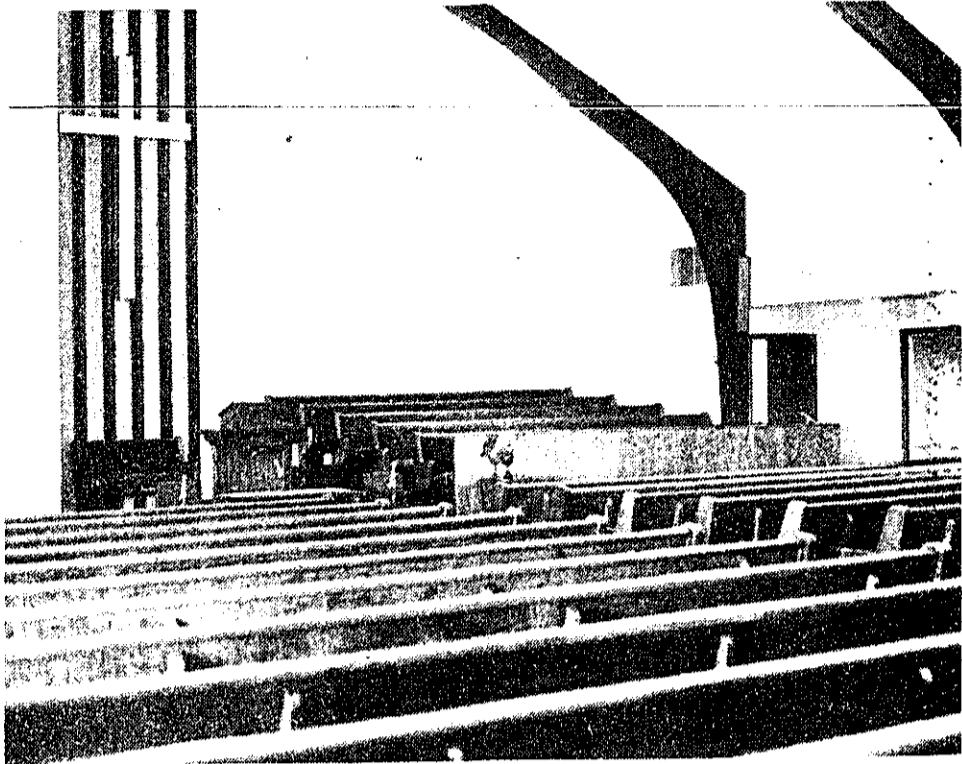
The new building will help the church to increase its membership, said Rev.

Lockard, who has been there two years.

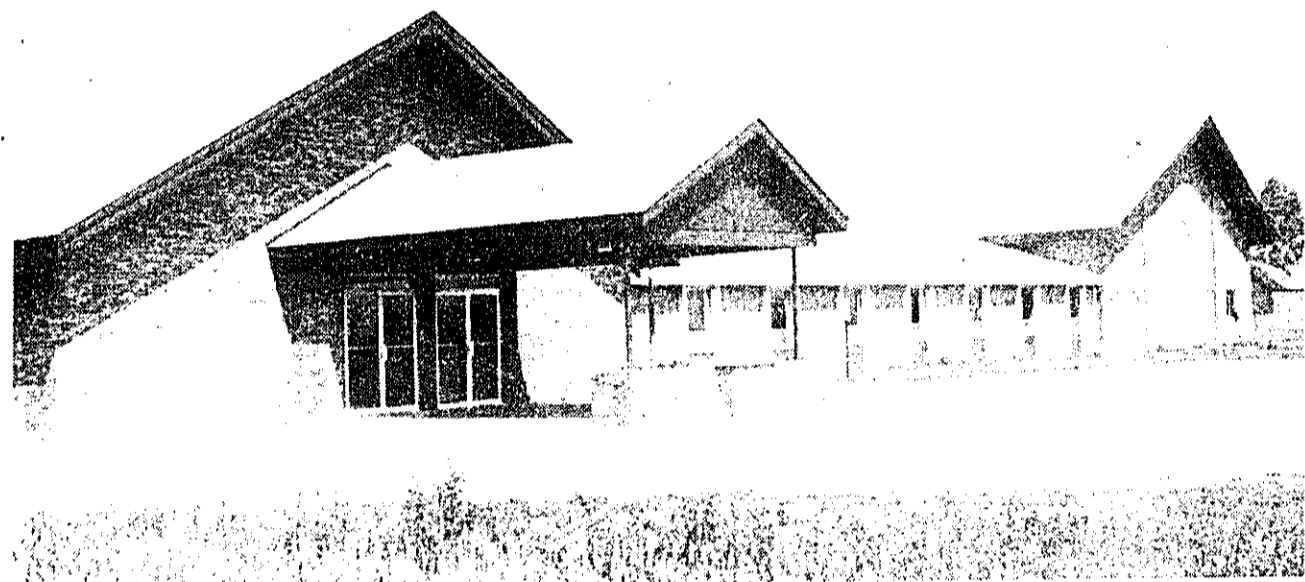
He cited statistics that once churches reach three-fourths of their seating capacity, they usually don't grow any larger until they build a larger structure,

perhaps because would-be parishioners don't want to feel crowded.

"If you want to grow, you have to expand, so the building does have an effect on it, somewhat," he commented.



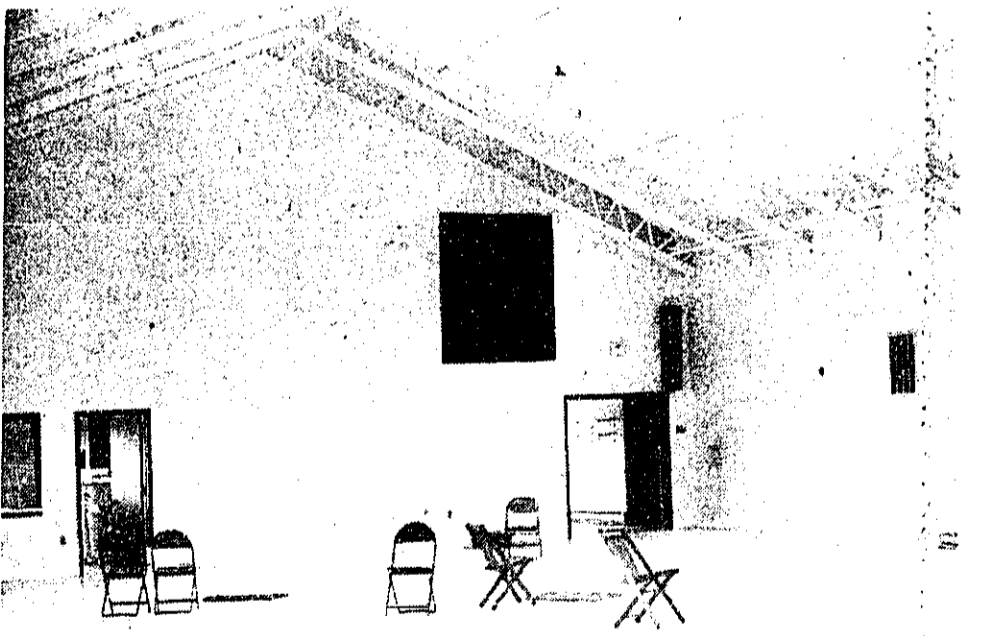
**AUDITORIUM** of the new building seats 300, plus 40 in the choir. The old church could seat 175, but it was a tight squeeze.



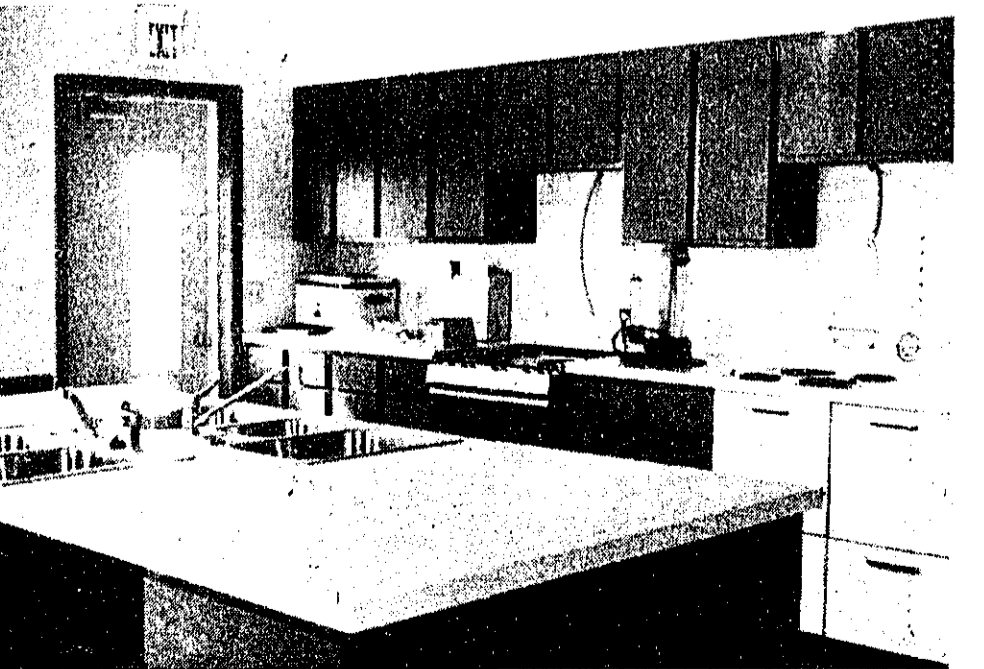
**NOVESTA CHURCH OF CHRIST** -- Main entrance to the new buildings is at left and leads to the auditorium. The eight-year-old classroom building is between the auditorium and the gymnasium-fellowship hall at right. The back of the new structure is the side facing Cemetery Road.



**ENGRAVED STONE SIGN** over the entranceway to the old church has been transferred to the wall across from the entrance doors to the new building. The bell from the old church will go on top of the platform. From left are Rev. Vern Lockard; Keith Little, chairman of the church board, and Ray Peasley, building committee chairman.

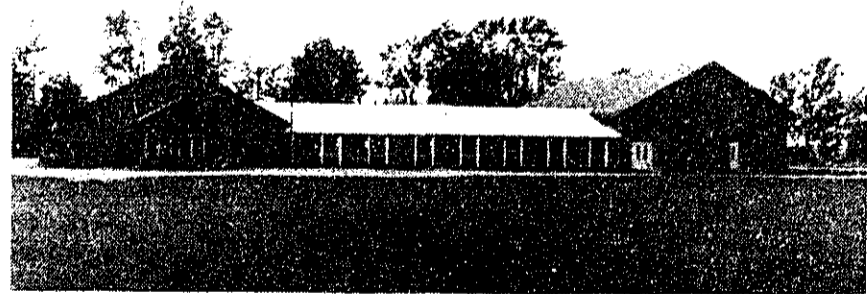


**PLAY BALL** - The combination gymnasium and fellowship hall was still awaiting installation of baskets when photo was taken last week. Entrance to the kitchen is at left.



**ONLY A PORTION OF** the kitchen is shown here. Cabinets lining two walls and two refrigerators are on the sides away from the camera.

**THE NOVESTA CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
 INVITES YOU TO SHARE IN THE  
**DEDICATION SERVICES**  
 OF THEIR NEW BUILDING AND  
**OPEN HOUSE**



**SUNDAY, JULY 20**

DEDICATION 3 p.m. - OPEN HOUSE 4-6 p.m.

Refreshments will be served during the open house following the dedication service.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the following businesses for their excellent service and cooperation in helping us to make our dream a reality.

- M & M Block Co.
- Tuckey Concrete
- Croft-Clara Lumber, Inc.
- Cass City Steel Supply Co.
- Tuckey Block Co.
- Albee True Value Home Center
- Schneeberger TV Sales & Service
- Rabideau Motors Inc.-Farm Store
- The Paint Store
- Jebco Electric Control Serv.
- Rapson Refrigeration, Inc.
- Caro Electric Supply
- JPM Electric
- Cass City State Bank
- Stauffer Construction Co.

The church is located 3 1/4 miles south of the stoplight in Cass City on Cemetery Road.

### 4 awarded honors at Michigan

Four recent graduates of area high schools, who will be entering the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, have been named Regents-Alumni Scholars.

They are Steven Corcoran, 4077 Van Dyke Road, Decker, and Kevin Wagg, 4755 Spence Road, Cass City, from Cass City High School; Brad Erickson, 3454 Sixth Street, Owendale, Owendale-Gagetown H.S., and Laurey Hanselman, Minden City, Uby H.S.

Each year, U-M selects the scholars for their "superior academic achievement and their potential contribution to the scholarly community of the University of Michigan."

Of the 1,410 scholars named, 320 also received a one-time only award of \$500, but none of the above four were selected for the additional honor.

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