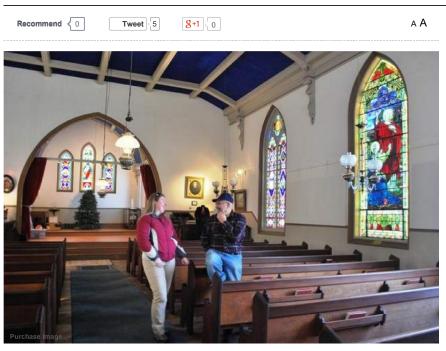


## Saving Vermont's history one grant at a time

Montgomery community works to keep Pratt Hall erect

Jan. 24, 2014 2:45 PM



Caitlin Corkins of the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation talks with Montgomery Historical Society Chairman Scott about the preservation grant for Pratt Hall in Montgomery. / LYNN MONTY/Free Press

Written by **MONTGOMERY** — Since the late 1800s the soulful tale of Simeon Lynn Monty Free Press Staff Writer and Anna has stood tall, filled with light, at Pratt Hall in Montgomery. FILED UNDER This stained-glass revelation tells an ancient tale through textured, Living Hometown multi-hued glass, and it's not just this one little known biblical story seen through the sunbeams, there are more, each one more beautiful than the last — each pulsating with exquisite, priceless historical significance. A peppermint-clad evergreen tree sat forlorn beneath these windows, lovingly adorned for a community singalong that never happened over the holiday weekend, canceled because of an ice storm.

Beside the stunning-glass depiction of Simeon and Anna rests a less obvious



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Pratt Hall in Montgomery on Jan. 21. / LYNN MONTY/Free Press

naturally illuminated message. "I call it a flow chart for the Holy Trinity," smiled Scott Perry, Montgomery Historical Society chairman. "In the center is God. It's a flow chart that walks you through a decision tree."

Turns out, these massive, precious panes are in dire straits. Their home on the west wall of Pratt Hall is sinking.

Montgomery Historical Society has one major artifact, and it's a big one. Pratt Hall's bell tower has already been repaired. To this day, its varied uses make it valuable to the community that has grown up knowing the

stories in the windows regardless of their religious predilection.

"When I come down into town and see Pratt Hall, I know I'm home again," Perry said.

Caitlin Corkins of Barre works for the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation. She met with Perry at Pratt Hall to discuss the urgent structural repairs that need to happen posthaste.

Pratt Hall is one of 17 structures to benefit from a State Historic Preservation Grant this year.

Timber framed Pratt Hall, much like Vermont's signature covered bridges, will receive \$20,000 toward their West Wall Capital Campaign goal of \$150,000.

Make shift fixes won't foot the bill, and timber framing is not something an average contractor has experience with, Perry said.

The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation recently awarded matching grants totaling \$257,404 to help restore and maintain Vermont's historic buildings.

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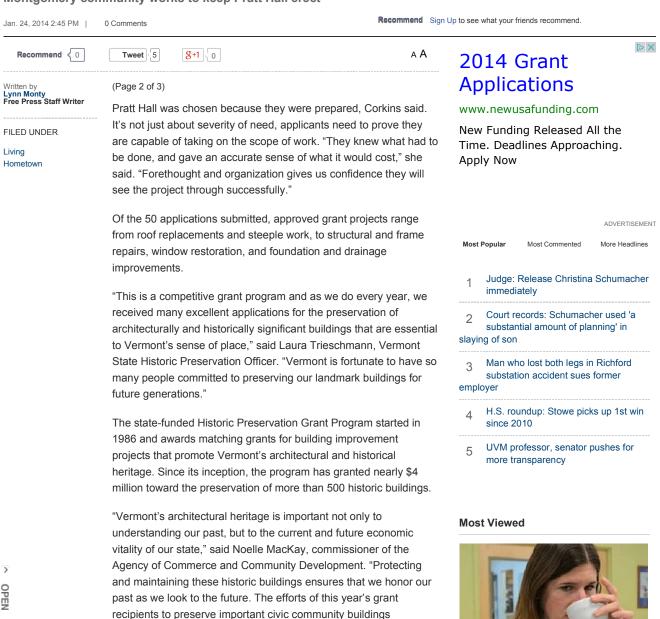
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demonstrates their commitment to a vibrant Vermont economy."

Perry said Pratt Hall was built as an Episcopalian church in 1835 and for the past 40 years has been painstakingly restored and repaired. The west wall will be the last of the major fixes.

"Montgomery is a small community that has done an amazing job taking care of this building," Caitlin Corkins said. "Everything is sagging on the west wall. The clapboards are wavy. This is a bad sign. It's putting stress on the windows."

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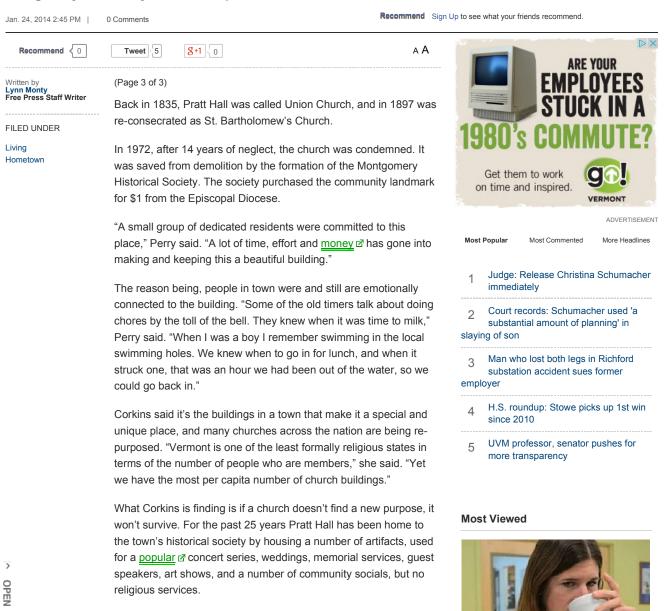
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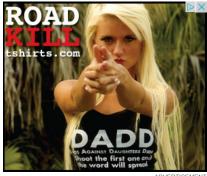
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