

## Historic Church Steeple Gets a Facelift

The steeple of the Trinitarian Congregational Parish of Castine is an important symbol in this picturesque village on Penobscot Bay. Constructed in 1867 when the original church building was enlarged, the 120-foot steeple contains all the elements of a classic steeple: tower, belfry, lantern, and spire. A 1,600-pound bell was installed when the steeple was constructed, and in 1890 a four-face mechanical clock, a gift to the town of Castine, was installed in the tower. The spire is so tall and visible that even today it is included on navigational charts for Penobscot Bay.

This past fall, following more than two years of planning, fundraising, and work, members of the Trinitarian Congregational Parish of Castine celebrated the completion of a major Steeple Restoration Project, in which the structure was examined, scraped, primed and painted. Contractor George Burgess performed the work with a unique approach, working in a bosun's chair to access the heights, scrape and paint. George's mastery produced a beautiful steeple with a paint job that will last for several years.

Fundraising for this necessary and timely project was supplemented by an important grant by the Maine Community Foundation, and through the generosity of members and friends throughout the community, funds matching the \$28,000 project estimate were secured before work on the project began in September. But like many projects, closer inspection of the project uncovered several problems that had to be addressed, and cost overruns brought the project in at a little more than \$50,000. While church officials are still working on solutions to the funding shortfall, members and the community are pleased with the efforts to preserve and protect Castine's beautiful and historic church steeple. It is very satisfying indeed to know that our historic churches provide inspiration, beauty, and even joy to all who see them.