

# VFW hall transformed by faith

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

Rob Flutur, a church elder at Faith Bible Church on Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills, believes God had a hand in his church's renovation.

Members transformed the former VFW Hall located on Orchard Lake Road south of 10 Mile into a place of worship.

The original building opened in 1948 and housed the Farmington Hills-Broadhead VFW Post 2269.

Flutur works as the acting principal/teacher's consultant at The O'Connell School at 27400 12 Mile Road in Farmington Hills.

He was the shop and computer teacher at Boys and Girls Republic in Farmington Hills for 14 years.

The nondenominational Bible congregation had rented space at the Seventh Day Adventist Church on 10 Mile near Middlebelt in Farmington Hills since 1990.

"As a rental, it's only so many places you can go," said Flutur, a Farmington Hills resident. The congregation draws about 200 members weekly.

"The veterans group, which had about 200 members, only had a handful of active members who took care of the hall," Flutur said. "They combined with a post in Howell," he said.



A mural of a lighthouse greets folks who come to the church.

"It was a sad day for them but they were very happy to sell it to us. As God works, if we had even put the (church savings) money into a safe fund, we would have lost a lot of it."

Renovations, which cost \$170,000, were far less expensive because church members rolled up their sleeves and did much of the work.

"They told us construction fees were \$160-\$180 per square foot," Flutur said. "We figured out what we did was \$27 per square foot. When we called for a work day, we'd have everybody showing up."

Jerry Potma, a Canadian friend, painted a lighthouse

mural in three days. "The lighthouse is our logo," Flutur said. A large window cross adorns the multipurpose room, which is used by the youth group under the direction of David Benglin, the youth pastor.

The church found a \$1,500 sound board for \$300 and wired extra speakers, Flutur said.

Members host Cafe Hope, a coffee house open to the community, from 7-10 p.m. the first Friday of the month.

They sold the large refrigerator to another VFW hall and used that money to purchase a new refrigerator, dishwasher and microwave.

What was once used as the bar area is the "Wee Worship Room" for young children. The bathroom was renovated to accommodate people with disabilities.

"We have a lot of young families," Flutur said. "We aren't a rich church ... God has provided for us, but we are still struggling. It's neat to see how God has provided for us."

As they approached the church opening Feb. 9 of this year, for instance, they still



PHOTOS BY BILL BRELLER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Church Elder Rob Flutur recalls the extensive remodeling of the former VFW hall.

needed chairs. "We got 100 folding chairs from Nardin Pack for \$1 a piece," Flutur said.

However, the \$14,000 carpeting bill is still out on Flutur's credit card.

Chris McCaskin, a Farmington resident, and former paraprofessional for Farmington Public Schools, volunteered time to paint the

church. Flutur helped him become a Christian, and McCaskin wanted to return the favor.

Other church elders include Mark Kieft, the pastor, who lives in Redford Township;

Mike Adams, a Detroit area lieutenant in the Detroit Police Department; John Shaw, a Livonia resident and a former Clareneville school board

member who works as a media specialist for Walled Lake Public Schools; and Peter Ward, a Ferndale resident and a high school teacher for Southfield Christian School.

Members will hold a square dance May 16. For more information, call the church at (248) 426-0096.

Sue Buck is a home columnist. (248) 477-5452



The church looks much different than before the remodeling.

## Faith Bible pastor has passion for church work

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

Faith Bible Church Pastor Mark Kieft is as at ease making 20 pounds of chili at home for guests as he is delivering his weekly sermons.

Kieft, a Redford Township resident, also works as a Spanish translator in Westland's 18th District Court. "Chili work, though, is his passion."

"Every other year, he accompanies a group of 12-18 students on a trip to Mexico to do work projects, build homes and hold vacation bible school. That helps him remain fluent in Spanish."

Kieft's parents were missionaries in Mexico for 15 years; he was born in Mexico City. The Grand Haven High graduate and his wife, Carol, were missionaries in Bolivia from 1979-1984.

"It's an Andean country," Kieft said. "We lived at 13,000 feet above sea level, which was really an experience. They are descendants of the Inca (instead of the Aztecs). That makes a difference, different Indian languages."

"After working in Colorado for a time, the couple relocated



to the Detroit area. "This has been the longest time in my life that I have lived anywhere, the Detroit area," Kieft said.


Seeking stability for their three daughters, Tascha, 25, Kathryn, 23, and Rachel, 21, the Kiefts stayed in north Redford in the Redford Union Public School District. The high school has a small town feel to it, he said.

Kieft also helped coach the girls basketball team at Filbert Junior High and has connected with nearby Farmington High School, on Shawwassee just a few blocks away from the church.

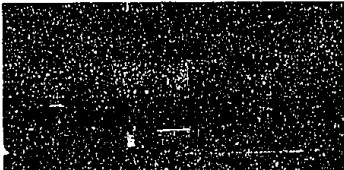
"They had a teenager who OD'd (overdosed) there," Kieft said. "When that happened I was involved a little bit with some of those folks. I said, 'I'm available. I'm across the street if you need help.'"

He's been contacted by the school to provide pastoral help if the need arises during the war in Iraq.

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