

Solon

T I M E S

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Photo by Anton Albert

Robert Shimits, president of the Solon Historical Society, entertains members of Mrs. Koski's third-grade class from Lewis Elementary with stories about Solon history during their recent visit. More than 400 third graders will visit the local museum this fall as part of their study of local history.

Third graders venture into history

By MICHELE COLLINS

The third graders from Lisa Koski's Lewis Elementary School class bounded up the stairs of the Solon Historical Society last week, energetic and ready to learn about their hometown.

The excitement about going on a field trip, the first in two years, and getting to see and maybe touch some old stuff in person was palpable.

The 25 third graders were the first of 400 students who will descend upon the former 1899 Disciples of Christ Church building at 33975 Bainbridge Rd, which houses the historical society. The group of students includes third-grade classes from Solon's Lewis, Roxbury and Parkside elementary schools and from St. Rita Catholic School.

Robert Shimits, the president of

the historical society, won over the students with his storytelling style, and his kindly white beard. He started the tour with a description of the church bell stored in the front of the building, telling students to cover their ears before he rang the 123-year-old bell and then allowed them to feel it vibrate.

Mr. Shimits was an instant hit with the kids.

Along with Denise Maiorana, a former teacher who serves as the education coordinator for the historical society, Mr. Shimits mesmerized children with what he showed and what he told.

"Who knows when the city of Solon was founded?" he asked.

Several hands went up.

"Remember the timelines we

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Solon Community Church to hold its final service

By MICHELE COLLINS

The last service at Solon Community Church will take place at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 20, a service that will end the church's 188-year history in Solon. Following that service, the church will be closed.

The Rev. Brian Saxe, who became the church's pastor in October 2020, said it will be a bittersweet day for him and his parishioners.

"It is the hardest decision a congregation can make," the Rev. Saxe said. "For members this isn't just a building they come to on Sunday morning. It's a second home where they get to enjoy time with their faith family and find their best

possible selves."

The church, which began when Solon was just a rural town in 1834, has seen the city change not only in its population numbers but in its demographics as well.

"We just realized that the factors were telling us that our congregation was shrinking and the demographic changes in Solon did not set us up for future success," he said.

Solon Community Church, which is part of the United Church of Christ denomination, has long been a part of life for many of the church members' families, some for generations. But they decided that the best option for the congregation

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BOE approves five-year forecast, shows expected deficit

By MICHELE COLLINS

Tim Pickana, treasurer of Solon City Schools, gave a grim forecast for the next five years as it relates to school funding – revenues will remain stagnant, while expenses, due to inflation, will go up.

"You will see that by the year 2027, if nothing changes, we would see a deficit of about \$10 million for the district," said Mr. Pickana at a recent Solon Board of Education meeting.

He said that Solon City Schools does not rely solely on state funding to run the district. It uses a combination of state funding, local property taxes, and federal funds to pay the district's expenses.

In fact, Solon is only about five

percent funded by the state.

Mr. Pickana said the 2023 five-year forecast is similar to what was passed by the board in May 2022, except for two differences.

"The salaries for our staff are higher, and the benefits expenses are lower," he said.

He pointed to the new increases in salaries approved for the teacher's contract prior to the 2022-23 school year, as meaning an increase in the budget for salaries, but he also explained that there was a "massive change in the cost of employee benefits," due to the change in health insurance the school system adopted earlier this year.

"Those two things kind of offset

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