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ALERT FEATURED

Albany's Cumberland Church finally makes move to new location

Maddie Pfeifer

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The Cumberland Church relocated to its new home on Santiam Road and Pine Street on Sunday.

Amanda Loman, for Mid-Valley Media

Maddie Pfeifer

Community members gathered at the Cumberland Church **Sunday morning** in the crisp, cold air to watch the historic building move to its new location.

Coffee, cameras, binoculars and lawn chairs in hand, spectators watched with anticipation as workers in neon vests and hardhats surrounded the move site.

The Albany church moved 1,200 feet along Santiam Road from Main Street to its new spot on Pine Street. A road closure along Santiam Road slowed nearby traffic. Local businesses were without power due to safety concerns regarding power lines.



The mood among the small crowd was relief, excitement and joy.

“I am really emotional because it’s been a long road,” said Emma Eaton, president of the Cumberland Community Events Center. “We’re finally alive to the public. This is the first thing not behind the scenes that they can see.”

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It really has been a **long road** to get the church moved. It started with a few years of hard work trying to save the City of Albany-owned building from being removed. After securing funds for a new plot and an agreement to buy the building from the city, a new problem arose. Settling on a move date became a consistent bump in the road.

Multiple move dates came and went throughout September and October. A few times, the transportation was postponed because moving company Emmert International did not have the necessary personnel to handle the job. Other times, a lack of communication with Pacific Power or Union Pacific put the move on hold.

But on Sunday, the day finally came and all parties were prepared. The Cumberland Church was right in the middle of Santiam Road, ready to begin its transit.

“I’m really happy to see it’s finally been accomplished,” Charlene Dunten of Albany said. “It’s important because Albany has a historic background and we need to keep that history going.”

The small crowd of spectators included families with small children, individuals from the neighborhood, groups of friends and preservationists too.

Katelyn Van Genderen, Preservations Programs Director for Restore Oregon, was in attendance. Restore Oregon strives to preserve historic sites throughout the state. Van Genderen and Restore Oregon have been working with the Cumberland Church organization and plan to continue that partnership.

“This is a particularly momentous occasion,” Van Genderen said. “There are a lot of different ways to preserve and reuse buildings. There’s always obstacles, but a dedicated group of people can get it done.”

She added that the Cumberland Church has been on Restore Oregon’s list of most endangered places since 2019.

It's been a long journey for all involved with saving the historic building, and Sunday's move marked an ending.

The church was finally moved to its new home — a four-lot parcel at Pine Street and Santiam Road near Eleanor Hackleman Park. The Cumberland Community Events Center board bought one lot for \$69,000 and plans to lease the other three lots before eventually buying them for \$207,000. On Sunday, the group officially bought the building from the city for \$1.

But the move also signaled a beginning. The restoration project planned for the building can now become the group's focus. Eaton said the fixing and restoring the roof is probably the next priority. She added that the foundation for the new spot will be laid and poured within the next couple of weeks.

Community members who gathered on the sidewalk Sunday morning were optimistic for the future of the church and its presence in Albany.

"I wanted to witness a rare spectacle and admire the city's people and their desire to preserve history," Albany resident and historic house owner Bruce Gillooly said. "You don't see this in other places."

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