



Big plans: Reverend Dennis Flett, Ian Finer and Graham Armstrong, from Waitara's Knox Church, are on a mission to raise \$1 million in two months. The money will go towards the rebuilding of the church.

Photo: JONATHAN CAMERON

On a heavenly mission

Knox Church aims to rebuild

Esther Taunton

esther.taunton@dailynews.co.nz

Faith is flourishing at Knox Church in Waitara, leading the congregation to embark on an ambitious fundraising campaign.

Over the next two months, church members will dig deep in an attempt to raise \$1 million towards the build-

ing of a new church and community facilities at the Grey St site.

The money will be given as pledged contributions to be paid over five years; fundraising campaign chairman Graham Armstrong said.

The church will then be able to borrow against the pledges and begin building late next year.

Aside from being more than 100-years-old and not earthquake-proof, the current building is too small, Mr Armstrong said.

"The main auditorium fits about 120 and we have people standing at

the door most weeks." The fundraising plan was both exciting and scary, but Mr Armstrong said he was confident the target could be met.

"We have a group of committed people who are determined to improve the ministry of this church and as a result serve Waitara better," he said.

The church has strong ties to the community and the redevelopment will benefit many people beyond the congregation, Mr Armstrong said.

"We already impact the community through our youth and

mothers and toddlers programmes," he said.

"Our building is not always able to cope effectively with these programmes and our day-to-day running, to say nothing of our expected growth."

If the \$1m target is met, the church will receive an additional \$500,000 from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

A total of \$2.35 million is needed for the redevelopment, with the remainder expected to come from the wider presbyterian and Waitara communities.