

Lutheran parish opens new building

\$6 million site on Corridor G accommodates church's growth



About 500 people attended the dedication ceremony of St. Timothy Lutheran Church Sunday. The Rev. Dr. Ralph W. Dunkin, bishop of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, officiated at the ceremony.



After 58 years in South Charleston, the church moved to its new \$6 million home on Corridor G near Ashton Place.

By **Scott Finn** 11/22/04
Staff writer, Charleston Gazette

They started the service Sunday evening with the Martin Luther hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" — an appropriate song for dedication of St. Timothy's roomy new church.

More than 500 people attended the service marking the opening of the modern, airy building, which cost about \$6 million altogether and took more than a year to construct.

The church is on a hill above Corridor G near Ashton Place — one of a number of churches that have located near the busy highway.

Its pastor, the Rev. Richard Mahan, hopes the new visibility will help his evangelical Lutheran parish to reach out to the larger community. He has already invited residents from a low-income housing complex next door to come to the church.

"People are hurting today," Mahan said. "We bring a positive message of hope and love, and they are responding."

Mahan himself seems the embodiment of that message. After the dedication service, he hugged and kissed his parishioners, thanked them for coming and told them, "It's your church."

The former church building in South Charleston was desanctified and sold to Thomas Memorial Hospital. The 58-year-old building was about half the size of the new one and no longer met the needs of

the congregation, Mahan said.

The new building includes a large multipurpose room, which can become a gymnasium or a reception hall. It also has a special choir room, a smaller chapel and space for the church's food pantry.

The main sanctuary includes a large stone pillar as its main focus, with windows in the shape of a cross looking across the hills. It also includes a stained-glass window depicting the Lamb of God from the old church, which children collected coins to buy more than 50 years ago.

The building includes new technology, such as large-screen projection. It also is better suited for contemporary Christian music like the kind performed by the St. Timothy Praise Band, Mahan said.

The Rev. Ralph Duncan, bishop of the West Virginia Synod, praised the congregation for its expansion when others complain they cannot grow.

"We should be inviting in the 50 to 60 percent of the population here in Kanawha County" who do not regularly go to church, Duncan said.

On the Web: <http://www.sttimothy.com>

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