

Cornerstone placed for new, \$702,000 church near Gordon

From staff reports

GORDON — Members of Christ's United Lutheran Church are beginning to feel a unity that has been lacking from their parish over the past 23 years.

On Sunday, the Rev. Jay Serafin and other church officials placed a cornerstone at the congregation's new \$702,000 church along Airport Road about 1 mile west of Route 901.

The cornerstone placement came at the end of the third service held in the new church, the first two taking place this summer. With installation of the pews set for early December, church members plan to be in the new building just in time for the Christmas program at the Dec. 20 services.

Forrest L. Shadle, building committee chairman and committees coordinator for the project, said economics played a part in the project — with the parish going from four churches to one — but that a sense of unity will be the true benefit.

"We feel there will be a stronger, better congregation, Sunday school, choirs," he said. "We never really were one — now we are one," he said.

The parish dates to 1969 when Zion's Lutheran, Girardville; St. Paul's Lutheran, Gordon, Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran, Ashland; St. Peter's, Lavelle; and St. John's (Kimmel's), Barry, joined to form Christ's United Lutheran Parish. Later, Good Shepherd went back on its own.

Three years ago, parish officers organized the building project. At the time, some members of Zion's decided to keep their church and withdrew from Christ's United, Shadle said. About one year ago, some of St. Paul's also withdrew to keep their individuality, according

to Shadle.

In June of 1992, St. Peter's Church was sold; and St. John's might also close, although there is discussion of some members keeping that church, too.

Christ's United purchased the seven acres of land for its new church from Steve Tynio. It is land that formerly belonged to the Gordon Airport.

The church has a capacity of 250 people in the sanctuary. It also has a fellowship hall, a large kitchen, parlor, secretary and pastor's offices, nursery, four Sunday school rooms and a multi-purpose room.

All the stained glass and icons from the former St. Peter's Church have been used in the new building.

Shadle said memorials have been coming in "by leaps and bounds" since May, with more than \$100,000 collected.

He said the support and participation from church members, local communities and other churches has been tremendous.

The hope is that the building can be used more than just on Sunday morning. "We want to make it accessible to the community," with possibilities such as a day care, senior citizens center and other uses, Shadle said.

During the cornerstone placement on Sunday, members placed a variety of items in a time capsule, including newspapers, Christ's United Family Pictorial directory, St. Paul's 100th, St. Peter's 75th, Zion's 100th and St. John's anniversary books, St. John's worship schedule from 1937; St. John's bulletins from 1938 and 1941; old pictures of St. John's Chapel and Cemetery; that day's bulletin, a 1992 penny; contents from the cornerstone of St. Peter's, and other items.



Placing the cornerstone

Rev. Jay Serafin hands articles to Forrest Shadle to be placed in the cornerstone at Christ's United Lutheran Church near Gordon. The congregation

took part in the ceremony on Sunday. See story on Page 9. (Citizen-Standard photo by Hugh Dougherty)