

Gordon congregation to dedicate church

By Peter Bortner
The REPUBLICAN

GORDON — The congregation of Christ's United Lutheran Church will come together Sunday to dedicate formally their new sanctuary.

"The congregation is extremely excited," the Rev. Joseph A. "Jay" Serafin, pastor of Christ's United Lutheran, said this week as he and his congregation of more than 400 adult members prepared for the 2

p.m. dedication service at the new Barry Township church.

The church is located about two miles west of Gordon on seven acres of land on Airport Road between Gordon and Route 901.

Bishop Harold S. Weiss, Wescosville, of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the church's parent organization, will be among those assisting Rev. Serafin at the service.

"It will be a communion worship service with a special time set aside . . . to dedicate the altar, pulpit, baptismal font and building," Rev. Serafin said.

The building itself is ready, having been used for services last Sunday and Christmas Eve.

"It is mostly finished. There are just little odds and ends to be done, but the construction is basically finished," Rev. Serafin said.

This Sunday's service will be

more than just the dedication of a building, he said.

"We look at this building as a tool or a place from which we can do ministry. We feel that having one centrally located place is going to enable us to do that," Rev. Serafin said.

The church is a combination of members from four northern Schuylkill County chapels, including two, St. John's, Kimmels, and St.

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Peter's, Lavelle, that merged. Members also came to Christ's from the chapels of St. Paul's, Gordon, and Zion, Girardville.

The desire for unity was a factor in building the new church, according to Rev. Serafin.

"The congregation felt that we needed to combine, to pool our resources together and worship in one location. They felt that a new building would make that easier," he said.

The congregation chose the site because it was a central location for them and it was large enough to accommodate the building. The building has over 11,000 square feet and room for church activities.

"The building has a sanctuary

area that will seat 250 people, and a large narthex area that can seat an additional 100 people," Rev. Serafin said. Between the two are sliding glass doors that can be opened to expand the worship area, he said.

The building also has a social hall for 200 people, a kitchen and five Sunday school rooms, he said.

Groundbreaking for the sanctuary was held April 11. Construction of the building cost over \$700,000, while furnishings cost over \$100,000, Rev. Serafin said.

To pay for it, the congregation ran a capital funds campaign, received a loan from the parent organization and received memorials and gifts ranging from \$10 to over \$20,000, he said.

Before the dedication service,

there will be an open house with tours of the church from noon to 2 p.m.

Also celebrating at the dedication service will be the Rev. Dr. Jon Brndjar, assistant to Bishop Weiss; the Rev. Donald Henderschedt, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Scranton; the Rev. Peggy Sue Pfeffer, pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, Mount Penn; the Rev. Jimmy Lee Werley, pastor of Trinity Memorial Lutheran Church, Allentown; and the Rev. Joseph Kean, pastor of St. Joseph's Church, Ashland.

A new sanctuary will mean a new focus for the congregation and a new chance for them to spread the Gospel, according to Rev. Serafin.



Church dedication

Participants for the dedication service of Christ United Lutheran Church on Sunday afternoon were, from left, host pastor Rev. Jay Serafin, Bishop Harold S. Weiss, Rev. Dr. John Brndjar, Rev. Peggy

Sue Pfeffer, Rev. Donald Henderschedt, Rev. Jimmy Lee Werley, Rev. Joseph Kean and Rev. Thomas Horan.

(Evening Herald/Robert N. Kyler)

Lutheran parish to dedicate new church on Dec. 27

ASHLAND — With mountains rising up on one side and the rich farmland of Ashland R.D. 1 spreading out on the other, the new Christ United Lutheran Church rises beautifully out of a field that used to be the home of the Gordon airport.

On Sunday, Dec. 27, during a service scheduled for 2 p.m., the CULC congregation will dedicate its new facility to the "service of the Lord."

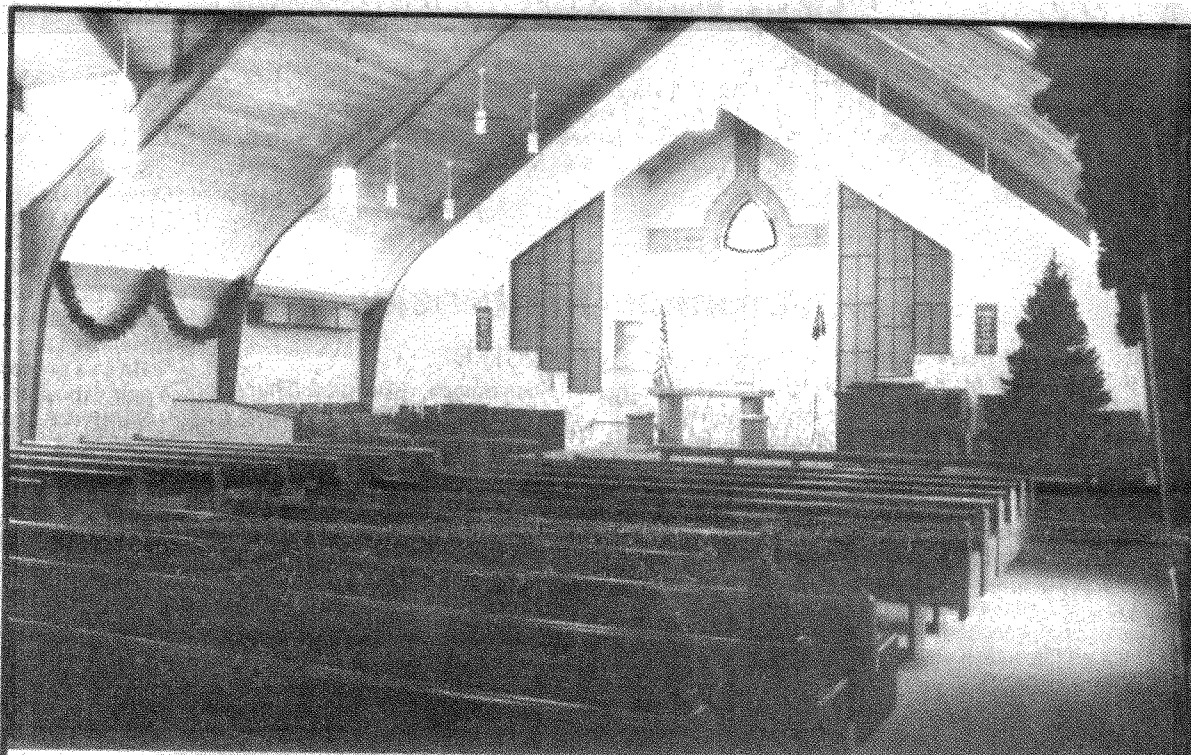
Christ United Lutheran Church was founded on Jan. 1, 1969, bringing together five separate congregations into one corporate identity, but worship services and church meetings continued to be held in the different buildings located throughout the Ashland area.

One of the chapels (as the former congregations came to be known), Good Shepherd in Ashland, decided to pull out of the union in 1978 and became a separate congregation.

Because of a need to unite and pool resources, the members of Christ United decided to build one worship facility to meet all of the needs of the congregation.

Citing their desire to continue ministry on their own, members from Zion Chapel, Girardville and Saint Paul Chapel, Gordon, left Christ United.

Some of the members of these chapels, however remain members of Christ United. With Saint John Chapel, Kimmels and Saint Peter Chapel, Lavelle, providing building space, the Christ United congregation



NEW CHURCH — The beautiful new Christ United Lutheran Church, built on the former home of the Gordon airport, will be dedicated with a special service on Sunday, Dec. 27. The top photo provides an inside view of the sanctuary while the bottom photo captures the overall view of the facility.

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has continued worshipping and serving in the Ashland area, awaiting completion of the new house of worship.

On April 11, 1992, groundbreaking services were held at the site along Airport Road between Gordon and Route 901. Construction began immediately following the services, and has continued through the first part of December. The total cost for the construction will exceed \$700,000, with additional money being spent to furnish the building.

A capital funds campaign among members has raised well over \$100,000 so far, and another \$100,000 has been donated for memorials and special gifts in order to provide furnishings. Through a loan fund established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the rest of the construction costs have been met, church officials said.

Members of the congregation, who await with great anticipation the

dedication service on Dec. 27, look upon the new facility as a place, finally, to come together as a united congregation to worship in the 250-seat worship space, to minister to the needs of the community and to gather for fun and fellowship. The building will serve as "a tool to reach out to the Ashland area with the love of Christ," church officials said.

A festive day is being planned for Dec. 27, they added. A regular worship service will be held at 9:30 a.m. At noon, an open house will be held for the entire community, featuring tours of the building. The dedication service itself will follow at 2 p.m., with Bishop Harold S. Weiss of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, participating.

A meal will be served following the service in the 200-seat social hall. The public is invited to attend the events. Tickets are needed for the dinner and may be purchased at the church office. For details call the church office at 875-1591.