

Dedication Service filled with Worship and Celebration

The dedication service for the Imagine Center was held June 26, 2011, a mere 51 weeks after the groundbreaking ceremony and 51 years to the day after the last dedication of a new building wing on the grounds of Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Sunday morning worship service began at 10 o'clock with Pastor Christopher D. Carr preaching and Bishop James F. Mauney presiding over Holy Communion. After Communion the entire assembly followed the cross in procession out the front doors of the church and along the cemetery, gathering at the red brick arches of the handicap accessible main entrance to the Imagine Center.

Our youth were well represented. Katie Burns served as acolyte and Saul Rodriguez, Jr., served as assisting minister and crucifer, leading the procession. The choir and other worship leaders gathered in the portico of the main entrance. Under the expert direction of Choir Director Debbie Mongold, the choir sang the anthem "Upon This Rock" by Pepper Choplin, whose lyrics are taken from Jesus' response to Peter's confession of faith, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." Organist Otto Pebworth and Pastor Carr provided percussion. The building committee and the capital stewardship campaign committee held the ends of the yellow ceremonial ribbon while Bishop Mauney, Pastor Carr, and Council President Bill Converse cut the ribbon in unison.

The congregation then continued the procession through the Gathering Area of the \$1.3 million new building and into the two-

story main hall of the Imagine Center. The worship leaders and committees formed an arc of 18 people across the wood floor of the spacious new stage. The dedication portion of the service included scripture readings and prayers, praise and thanksgiving to God who alone made this project possible in a down economy, and thanksgivings and recognitions for the hard work and sacrifice of everyone.

In the Pastor's remarks, Carr noted that 51 weeks ago we would have to have been standing 15 feet in the air to be where we were gathered. Who could have imagined? God imagined, and God has imagined uses for our new facility of which we've not yet dreamed.

The congregation was also reminded that the building project was not without set-back. One winter Wednesday proved harrowing when 70 mph winds sent the farthest ten roof trusses crashing to the cement floor 20 feet below, like a pile of giant matchsticks. Special thanks was again given to God that all the construction workers had scrambled to safety in time.

Bishop Mauney's remarks focused on the Trinitarian nature of the congregation's buildings: first came a sanctuary for worship, next came a Sunday school addition for teaching the faith, and now has come a mission center for hospitality, fellowship, activity, and outreach. Charles Dennison II, chairman of the building committee, reminisced about his own service as acolyte at the dedication 51 years ago. He acknowledged the fine work of architect Dale Cupp, who was present, and of Harman Construction. He expressed his thanks for everyone's efforts, recognizing the need for a wide variety of gifts and abilities. In turn, Charlie was thanked for his years of humble leadership as Builder-in-Chief with the gift of an

engraved handsaw. Pastor noted that, “Charlie’s vision, excitement, and tenacity helped to inspire and encourage me and others as we led the congregation through this monumental undertaking. It is difficult to imagine achieving this goal without him.” Council President Bill Converse concluded the time of thanksgiving.

The service of dedication marked the first event in the 12,000 square foot Imagine Center. In addition, the structure is 60 feet wide by 120 feet long, and averages about 40 feet high.

Recognizing the importance of modeling good stewardship of creation, the building’s temperature is controlled by a geothermal heating and cooling system, making the dedication far more comfortable than the ground-breaking service the year before. Motion-sensitive and/or LED lighting are also employed wherever possible.

After asking God’s blessing on the three-story brick building, it was set apart for the sake of God’s mission and ministry in the congregation and community. The assembly stood and sang the Doxology as the table blessing. The dining committee laid out five tables full of food and two more for all the desserts, though these proved not to be enough to hold everything that had been brought. The seating for 250 was beautifully decorated with blue silk hydrangeas and candles covered in glass hurricanes, contrasted by white tablecloths. New dishes were purchased using the funds that the children had collected with their “noisy offerings,” and these anchored each place setting. A gift was given to all 236 people in attendance, in the form of a commemorative refrigerator magnet with the date and pictures of the newly dedicated building. Family, friends, and former members from near and far enjoyed food and

fellowship well into the afternoon. A building phase had ended. The joy and work of ministry in the Imagine Center began.

Existing Building and Imagine Center building specifications

Existing structure, main floor (sanctuary, classrooms, office, and restrooms)	8373 sq ft
Existing structure, lower level (social hall, kitchen, youth room, restrooms, etc.)	4434 sq ft
Imagine Center, main floor (gathering area, kitchen, restrooms, main hall)	6604 sq ft
Imagine Center, lower level (unfinished walk-out basement)	4497 sq ft
Imagine Center, main floor, main hall only (not including stage) (approx.)	3000 sq ft
Imagine Center, total (approx.) (main floor, lower level, upper room mezzanine)	12000 sq ft
Imagine Center, average cost per square foot	\$100
Imagine Center, exterior dimensions	120L x 60W x 40H