

THE EAST TENNESSEE EPISCOPALIAN

— As published in the April/May 2007 issue —

St. Barnabas Episcopal-Lutheran worshiping community, Jefferson City

On March 28, members and friends of the St. Barnabas Episcopal-Lutheran congregation in Jefferson City were joined by Bishop Charles vonRosenberg and the Rev. Gary Christensen of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Southeastern Synod to dedicate the ecumenical congregation's first building.

Cleaning, building, repairing, wiring, painting – the people of St. Barnabas transformed a run-down bungalow into an inviting church that is a light for the mixed commercial-residential neighborhood. Members Greg and Brenda Foreman and Marty and Nola Lehman were instrumental in much of the 18-month remodeling process. Before the building's purchase and renovation, the congregation previously had met in borrowed or rented facilities.

The 40-member faith community formed in 1999. The Rev. Peggy Blanchard, the congregation's Episcopal priest, began serving as supply priest two Sundays a month in late 2003.

"This has been good for me because I've had to stretch myself and be very aware that it's not about being Episcopalian or Lutheran but about being Christian," Blanchard said. "You don't realize how



denomination-bound you can become until you're put in a position of ensuring that you include everyone."

After touring the renovated building, members and guests gathered in the front yard to form the procession. Led by crucifer Sarah Bentley and her sister, book-bearer Diana Bentley, parishioners, visitors and clergy entered the building singing "Christ is Made the Sure Foundation."

Bishop vonRosenberg, Christensen and the Rev. Jim Sharp, an Episcopal deacon, remained on the porch as the doors were closed behind the congregation. Bishop vonRosenberg knocked three times with his crozier, as he and Christensen proclaimed, "Peace be to this house." Council members Greg Foreman and Valerie Cushman opened the doors, responding, "And to all who enter here."

Bishop vonRosenberg and Christensen were concelebrants for the liturgy – a combined form from the Episcopal "Book of Occasional Services" and "Occasional Services: A Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship." They began



On March 28, sisters Sarah and Diana Bentley lead the procession to begin a Service of Blessing for St. Barnabas Episcopal-Lutheran worshiping community's new facility in Jefferson City. Council member Valerie Cushman and Rea Johnson are next, and Johnson carries paraments and banners to be blessed. The ecumenical congregation's supply priest, the Rev. Peggy Blanchard, is at center in white vestments, and members and guests follow.

by dedicating the baptismal font, and then they sprinkled the people with blessed water in reminder of their baptisms.

John Weigel, an Episcopalian, read the first lesson, and Martha Lionberger, a Lutheran, read the second lesson. Sharp served as gospeller and cantor for the litany, and Blanchard preached the homily. The Rev. Gigi Sharp and members Leslie Hunt and Amy Reeves sang the anthem.

Organist Susie White, a Methodist, offered beautiful music from the organ, which had been donated to St. Barnabas by the people of Nativity Episcopal Church in Ft. Oglethorpe, Ga. A lovely arrangement of flowers placed in front of the altar had been generously given by the clergy and people of All Saints Episcopal in Morristown.

"St. Barnabas has been blessed by the efforts of a number of gifted parishioners," Blanchard said. Altar paraments and banners were made by Rea Johnson. Hunt designed and made the altar cross, processional cross and four pectoral crosses for the altar party in the same design. Nola Lehman organized a group of members in offering tasty hospitality following the service.

Representatives of All Saints Episcopal, Morristown, and Good Shepherd Lutheran, Morristown – the founding parishes of St. Barnabas – attended the service, along with clergy and members from Annunciation Episcopal, Newport, and St. Paul Episcopal, Seymour.

Church members thank everyone who participated.

St. Barnabas: 423-475-9859



Clergy gather on the porch beforehand to go through the service booklet and mark their individual roles. From left are the Rev. Gary Christensen, mission director in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Southeastern Synod Office of the Bishop; the Rev. Peggy Blanchard, Episcopal supply priest at St. Barnabas; the Rt. Rev. Charles vonRosenberg, Episcopal Bishop of East Tennessee; and the Rev. Jim Sharp, Episcopal deacon.