

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bethesda-Chevy Chase Celebrates 75th Anniversary; County Executive Leggett presents Proclamation stating Sunday, December 6, 2009 Christ Evangelical Lutheran Day in Montgomery County.

It was December 2, 1934 that Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) held its first service at the old Hiser Theatre at Wisconsin and Old Georgetown Road in Bethesda. Seventy-five years later, more than 200 past and present members joined with many community and non-profit leaders and County Executive Isiah Leggett at the church at Old Georgetown and Glenbrook Road to celebrate that history.

CELC's anniversary was highlighted with a worship service that included many video clips from longtime members who helped form the rich heritage of community services first started at Christ Lutheran. Those services included Ivymount School, Bethesda Fellowship House, Family Counseling Services, Bethesda Cares and Christ Church Children's Center, which all have their roots at Christ Lutheran. In June of 2009 the church received the Greater Bethesda Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce Community Service Award for its long standing record of providing resources to the less fortunate in the county.

Guests were treated to a viewing of the hand-drawn timeline of the 75 years of Christ Lutheran's history in Bethesda. Included was church member and artist Dottie Davis Hofstad sketch of the 1st meeting at the Hiser and the march up Old Georgetown to the site of the current campus and old frame house first purchased in 1937 that served as the church's first permanent home. Members viewed future plans for the campus currently pending county approval for a LEED Silver complex of housing and a combined worship and community center.

In presenting the official proclamation County Executive Leggett said *"the many ministries of Christ Lutheran have benefited the Bethesda and Montgomery County communities in excellence for 75 years. The people of Christ Lutheran have taken the lead in community ministry by embarking upon the development of innovative, multi-use space to support the church growing ministry. Christ Lutheran, a recognized leader among the faith communities of Montgomery County, is proudly and justifiably celebrating its 75th year of services and sharing God's love among the people of this great county"*.

About Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Since the 1930s the Christ Lutheran Church has been a Bethesda fixture at the corner of Old Georgetown and Glenbrook Roads in the Woodmont Triangle. Over the years with the help of many volunteers, professionals, and non-profit collaborators, the church has provided needed services to all Montgomery County residents including child and senior care, counseling, homeless lunch, 12 step groups, worship space for other congregations and much more. In 2008 alone, individual services were provided to more than 43,000 clients.

Christ Lutheran's vision is to stay in Bethesda for generations to come and continue to offer and expand collaborative services in sustainable new Smart Growth facilities. The proposed plans, currently moving through the County approval process, include a new integrated church and community center to house a wide variety of much-needed programs for county residents. Also planned is a new housing facility with both market rate, and high-demand moderately priced dwelling units.

Photos



1. Original Christ Lutheran Church member and Bethesda resident Bill Huffman from the 1930s being recognized as the celebration guest with the longest relationship with the church.



2. Guests viewing the 75-year timeline of Christ Lutheran Church in Bethesda from its 1934 roots at the Hiser Theatre to plans for a new Housing, Worship and Community Center at the corner of Old Georgetown and Glenbrook.



3. County Executive Isiah Leggett presenting Proclamation to Christ Lutheran Church leaders Barry Lemley, June Bradley and Senior Pastor Marv Tollefson marking December 6, 2009 as Christ Lutheran Church Day in Montgomery County.



4. Art work depicting founding members Christ Lutheran marching from the church's original meeting place at the old Hiser Theatre (now the location of the Hyatt Regency Bethesda) to the church's present location at Old Georgetown and Glenbrook in 1937.