

22 acres purchased

in West Knoxville; new church projected to begin in 2008

By Annette Spence

Holston Conference and the Oak Ridge District have partnered to acquire 22 acres of land to establish a new church less than one mile from Pellissippi State Technical Community College.

The property, located in an explosive-growth area of West Knoxville, was purchased for \$1.55 million in January.

Now, conference leaders are working on establishing leadership for a faith community that they hope will be ready to worship in the Hardin Valley area in 2008.

Conference leaders are pursuing a “planting model” that would call on a parent church to birth the new congregation, according to the Rev. Richard Edwards, director of congregational development.

Leaders who participated in the purchase are enthusiastic about the prospects of developing a

large church on land that has 865 feet of frontage on a high-traffic highway. The new church will be within eyesight of a state college with 7,900 students, an elementary school with 730 students, and a proliferation of new residential communities.

The property is also less than one mile from Interstate 140 (Pellissippi Parkway) and from Hardin Valley High School, which is expected to open in August 2008 with more than 1,000 students.

“Though we paid top price for the land, we have a location that has very high visibility and wonderful location in a rapidly developing part of the county,” said the Rev. Bill Kilday, former director of congregational development.

Kilday, who now serves as Holston’s director of stewardship, began inquiring about property in the Hardin Valley area in 2004. Kilday bought his home in Hardin Valley in 2001 and noticed the area’s remarkable growth. He consulted friends in construction, the county planning office, and Knox County school administration who told him of upcoming developments.

“If we are able to draw the typical 10 percent of the population to the new church, that would account for an estimated congregation of up to 1,800 people,” Kilday said.

Trustees in the Oak Ridge District have eyed the Hardin Valley area for many years, according to the Rev. Ken Henderlight, Oak Ridge District superintendent.

The district actually bought 10 acres of Hardin Valley property in 1996.

“They knew that one day they would need a church in this area,” said Henderlight. “The Oak Ridge churches paid for the property through their apportionments. But the growth projections for Hardin Valley didn’t materialize as early as anticipated.”

When growth finally did take off, Oak Ridge District trustees realized that 10 acres of land might limit them to a congregation of about 350 members, Henderlight said. Also, the 10-acre plot was less than accessible, with a side-street entrance and the Pellissippi Parkway at its back.

“We determined that if we partnered with the conference and bought a larger piece of property, we would have more opportunity to expand and accommodate a larger congregation,” Henderlight said.

In December 2006, the Oak Ridge District sold its 10 acres for \$450,000 – \$150,000 more than the purchase price.

Profits from the sale were combined with funds from the Committee on Congregational Development and the Holston Conference Foundation’s Earl and Conchita Blazer Endowment to buy the 22-acre tract.

See **22 acres**, page 11

The Rev. Bill Kilday (below, left) and the Rev. Richard Edwards stand where a new church will be located on Hardin Valley Road in West Knoxville. Visible in the background is Pellissippi State College.



“Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away...

