

Church breaks ground on innovative building

SPECIAL TO THE CARY NEWS

Hope Community Church hosted a ground-breaking ceremony Sunday at 821 Buck Jones Road in Raleigh for its new, *** 88,000-square-foot multipurpose facility.** Church members will be able to view the building progress

weekly as they attend services in the auditorium of Grace Christian School adjacent to where their church is being built.

Hope Community Church has experienced a 240 percent growth over the last three years, with average weekend attendance grow-

ing from 500 to 1,700 attendees. To what does the church attribute its phenomenal growth?

"We have always sought to be a vibrant and welcoming church, providing strong, relevant opportunities for involvement and service," Pastor Mike Lee said. "This

new facility will allow us to continue to be the kind of church we need to be in this community — available, authentic, and relevant."

Lee is the senior pastor, overseeing a church staff of 20 full- and part-time employees.

The innovative two-story building will include an initial 1,200-seat auditorium for weekend services complete with theater-staging capabilities incorporating professional lighting and sound, a green room, dressing rooms, and other special event

and visiting artist capabilities. The church will continue to offer multiple services on the weekends and seating eventually is planned to increase to 1,400.

A 400-seats-plus atrium with coffee/café/cafeteria seating will welcome guests as they enter the building. A kitchen and cafeteria-style restaurant can be used on Sundays before and after church services for breakfast or lunch; during the week for lunches; and at other times for conferences, wedding receptions and more.

In keeping with the church's mission to be relevant in its community, the campus will also house an impressive children's area for weekend services — classrooms complete with stages, PowerPoint and video capabilities, and other amenities for a state-of-the-art learning center. In addition, a McDonald's-like Kidzone is planned for the children's wing so that church and community members can host children's birthday parties and other children's events.

The second floor of the church campus will host the junior and senior high youth areas, providing teens with three multipurpose activity centers. For weekend services and other special events, there will be a 350-seat main room

with "stadium" bleachers, a full-sound stereo system and stage, and a large screen with DVD and PowerPoint. A sports-themed room, decorated with local middle and high school team colors and banners, will provide a "homework/after-school" area where local and church teens can hang out, do homework, play video games and interact with supportive adults. The "living room" will provide teens with a final, more intimate meeting/teaching area.

Complimentary laundry facilities will be provided by the church for the large number of college students who regularly attend.

"It will be a place where those students can hang out, do their laundry, study and have a chance to connect with one another and with us," college Pastor Jeff Ramsey said.

Also on the second floor will be adult classrooms, a chapel for weddings, funerals, and/or conferences, and the church offices.

Hope Community Church held services in its own facility in Cary prior to its temporary move to Grace Christian School.

When the church campus is completed, the church and school will continue to share facilities and amenities.

*Comparison as to Size (in Square Feet):

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| Colonial Baptist-Cary/Total Present Size | 80,000 |
| First Baptist-Cary " " " | 60,000 |
| GRACE School " " " | 53,000 |
| Hope Community Church to be | 88,000 |
| Combined Footage for Hope & GRACE | 141,000 |

**Sunday January 11, 2004 attendance was 1,963 people!