

**CHRIST OUR HOPE CATHOLIC CHURCH
1786 WELLBORN ROAD
LITHONIA GA 30058**

HISTORY

ON AUGUST 1, 1984 THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA ESTABLISHED THE FIRST CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHONIA. FATHER JOHN C. KIERAN WAS ASSIGNED AS FOUNDING PASTOR. THE FIRST CELEBRATION OF MASS TOOK PLACE IN LITHONIA FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ON OCTOBER 21ST 1984 SINCE CHRIST OUR HOPE DID NOT HAVE THEIR OWN PLACE OF WORSHIP. THE NAME CHRIST OUR HOPE WAS CHOSEN FROM THE OPENING WORDS OF ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO TIMOTHY: CHRIST JESUS, OUR HOPE. THE LOGO IS A COMBINATION OF THE FIRST TWO LETTERS OF THE GREEK WORD FOR CHRIST (CHI AND RHO) AND THE ANCHOR CROSS USED BY THE EARLY CHRISTIANS AS THE SYMBOL OF HOPE.

FROM DECEMBER 1984 UNTIL THE PRESENT CHURCH BUILDING WAS COMPLETED IN JUNE OF 1987, MASS WAS CELEBRATED IN LITHONIA HIGH SCHOOL.

THE FOUNDING MEMBERSHIP CONSISTED OF THIRTY FIVE FAMILIES. AS OF APRIL 1ST 1997 THE MEMBERSHIP CONSISTS OF 430 FAMILIES COMPRISING 1335 PERSONS. A RAINBOW OF CULTURES MAKE UP THE MEMBERSHIP INCLUDING PERSONS FROM THE CARIBBEAN (CUBA, BAHAMAS, TRINIDAD, TOBAGO, ST. LUCIA, PUERTO RICO, SANTO DOMINGO, ST. MARTIN & GRENADA), HAITI, AFRICA (NIGERIA, SIERRA LEONE, SOMALIA), THE PHILIPPINES, SOUTH AMERICA (BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, VENEZUELA), IRELAND, CANADA, HAWAII, AND EVERY CORNER OF NORTH AMERICA.

CHRIST OUR HOPE TAKES PART IN SEVERAL OUTREACH MINISTRIES. LOCALLY IT PROVIDES FINANCIAL AND FOOD ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY PERSONS LIVING IN LITHONIA; CONTRIBUTES MONTHLY TO THE GREATER LITHONIA CHRISTIAN COUNCIL HOMELESS PROJECT. PREPARES MEALS AND SERVICES THE HOMELESS AT A SHELTER IN

ATLANTA. A PARISH IN HAITI WAS ADOPTED IN 1987 AND A PERCENTAGE OF CHRIST OUR HOPE OFFERTORY INCOME IS SENT MONTHLY.

FATHER JOHN KIERAN SERVED AS PASTOR FROM AUGUST 1984 UNTIL JUNE 1991. FOLLOWING HIM WAS FATHER AUSTIN FOGARTY UNTIL FEBRUARY OF 1997. THE PRESENT PASTOR IS FATHER PAUL A. FLOOD.

CHRIST OUR HOPE PROVIDES A WIDE VARIETY OF MINISTRIES SERVING THE LOCAL PARISH AS WELL AS THE COMMUNITY OF LITHONIA AND DEKALB COUNTY.



Archbishop Thomas Donnellan (L) And Father John Break Ground.

Parish Festival Slated By Church

Food, fun and fellowship are in store at the third annual Christ Our Hope Parish Festival to be held in the Stone Mountain/Lithonia area on Friday, Oct. 19, and Saturday, Oct. 20.

One of Lithonia's most popular events, this year's festival features craft and yard sales, raffles, an auction, prize bingo, children's games, pony and hay rides, a bake sale, refreshments, and continuous entertainment by "Blinky" the Magical Clown, Doopy the Clown, the Dixie Doll Cloggers and Harry the Hawk.

Contemporary Christian singer Cathie Knight will perform in concert on Friday night from 7:30-9 p.m. A visit by the 007 Truck, featured in the James Bond thriller *License To Kill*, is also planned.

The festivities run from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 19, and from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 20.

Christ Our Hope Catholic Church is in the Stone Mountain/Lithonia area at 1786 Wellborn Road, Lithonia (between Covington Hwy. and Redan Road).

Debbie Robinson 9/26/90

Parishioners Pull Plow

DeKalb
News/Star

Together To Begin Church

6/18/86

Groundbreaking for the first Catholic Church in Lithonia is set for Sunday, June 22. The new church is to be built on Wellborn Road one half mile south of Redan and will serve the Catholic population in the fastest growing section of DeKalb County.

Figures from the Atlanta Regional Commission reveal that the rapid growth in southeast DeKalb in the 1970's produced a sizeable community of 22,380 persons, which is expected to more than double during the next 15 years to a major community of 54,487 persons. Church statistics and information from the Regional Commission indicate that Catholics are two percent of the population.

The congregation of Christ Our Hope began forming in August of 1984 when Father John Kieran was appointed pastor. The congregation is now 139 households but has no church home. Father Kieran commends the Lithonia Methodist Church for helping his parish get started. The first Sunday masses were held at the Methodist Church, and religious classes for the children of Christ Our Hope

are held on Saturdays in the Methodist Education Building. "Our friends at the Methodist Church have been great...very supportive" said Father Kieran.

The Most Rev. Thomas A. Donnellan, Archbishop of Atlanta, will preside at the groundbreaking ceremony organized by Ron Taylor, chairperson of the Building Committee. "We wanted to involve all the parishioners," Taylor said, "so we are going to use a horse plow and have everyone pull it together. We don't know of any other groundbreaking done like this in Atlanta."

A model of the multi-purpose building to be constructed will be on display. This scaled model was made from the architect's drawings of parishioner, Joe Cumble Sr.

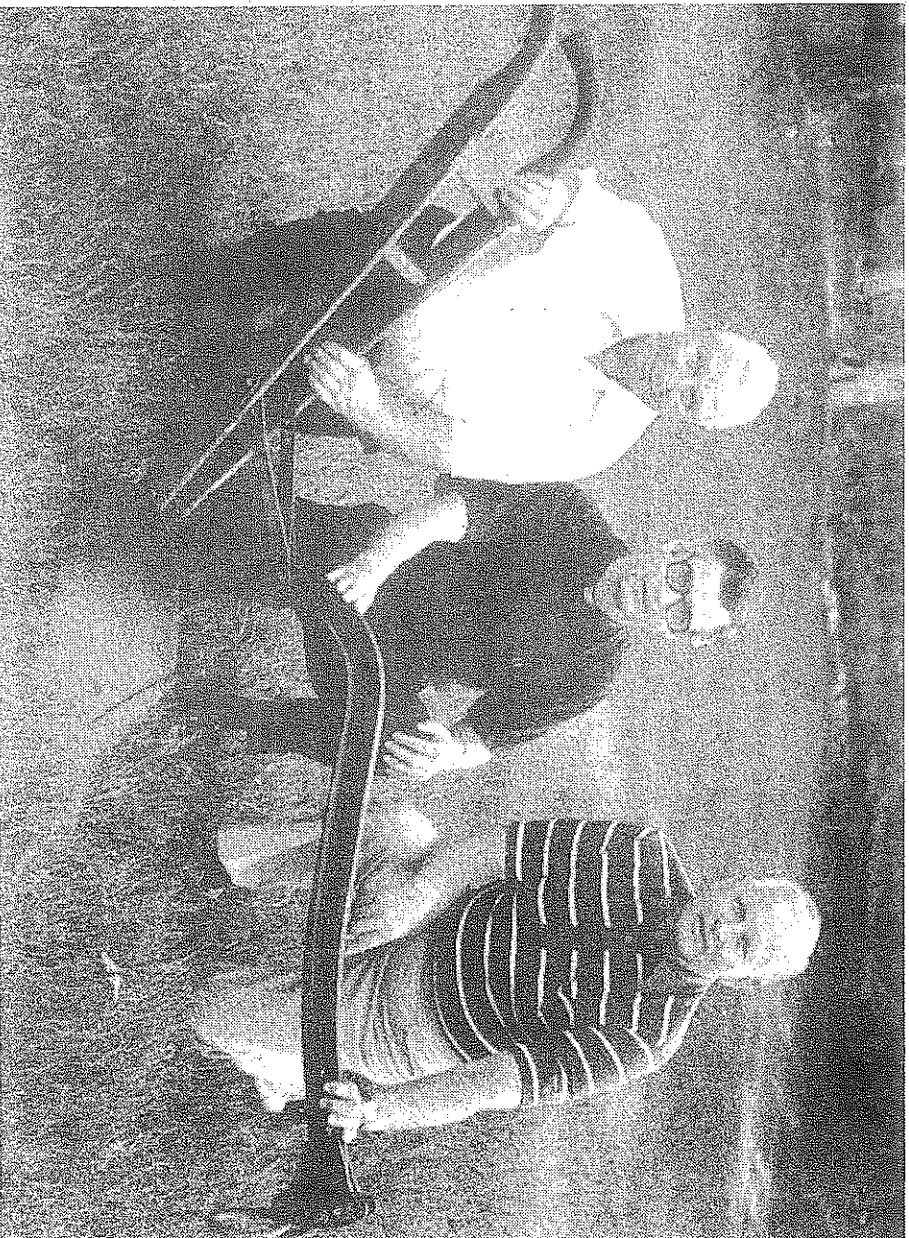
Grading and site preparation will begin immediately. Construction of the 8,600 square foot multi-purpose building will begin in July. Father Kieran explained that there will be a main axis with moveable walls for worship and fellowship. There are two side wings; one for administration and kitchen, the other for five class-

rooms.

CLERGY from local churches and Catholic parishes are expected along with county and community leaders. The DeKalb County Commissioner will be represented by Commissioner Robert Lanier.

Pastor Kieran, who is a native of Ireland, is currently organizing the new parish out of his home in the Great Oaks subdivision. "This is a very new experience for me," he said. "Where I come from, 96 percent of the people are Catholic." "I am very proud of our people and the way they have come together to form a parish community for the Lord," Kieran said. His enthusiasm shows by the involvement of parishioners in the building program.

The members of Christ Our Hope Parish live in the Lithonia-Redan area. Currently, Sunday Mass is held at the Lithonia High School. Persons seeking more information about Christ Our Hope Parish and the June 22nd/groundbreaking should call the Parish House, 981-0511.



Church Plows Ground

A horse plow was pulled by parishioners of Christ Our Hope Catholic Church as a ground-breaking. The new church is being built on Wellborn Road.

Shown are Jim Huber, Father John C. Kieran, and Don Murphy.

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Catholics Have Groundbreaking For First Lithonia Congregation

By GAINES BREWSTER

"A great new era for the work of God" began last Sunday when ground was broken for the new Christ Our Hope meeting house, the first Catholic church in Lithonia area's history.

It was a short - 30 minutes - but a "beautiful and exceptional" ceremony held outdoors under blue skies and hot summer weather. Many youngsters and several adults waved green and white flags.

The novel and unusual mass groundbreaking took place on a sun-soaked, pastoral knoll on east side of Wellborn road south of Old Redan community.

A variation of the traditional groundbreaking, an old farm implement — a heavy duty, two-horse plow — was used instead of shovels to cut into and turn up the sun-baked soil.

JUST AS PIONEERS turned the sod of a new frontier, Archbishop Thomas Donnellan and Father John Kieran guided the big plowshare into dry, virgin earth. Amidst cheers and laughter 90 parishioners, young and old, of Christ Our Hope church pulled in unison on three strands of rope.

As excited parishioners tugged vigorously on the ropes particles of Georgia's familiar red clay, loosened by the plow, covered the flowing, purple vestments of The Most Reverend Donnellan and Father Kieran. (Had it been a commercial venture it would be described as an "extravaganza").

A significant, dedicatory prayer preceded this successful, symbolic act which triggered cheers and amens from church members and guests sitting beneath a large tent and standing in shade of nearby trees.

As parishioners dropped the three tug lines an onlooker remarked, "There's a certain magic about witnessing the start of something new."

Expressions of "enthusiasm and rejoicing" were exchanged among parishioners. One observer voiced the pride and sentiments of many. She said, "A church builds encouragement. A

church structure, home of the Lord, brings many blessings to families and individuals."

Briefly reviewing the past two years, Father Kieran expressed thanks and gratitude to the Christian Council, a number of Protestant ministers, city and county officials and several individuals. "We have an indebtedness to many in the Lithonia area," Father Kieran told those assembled.

HE SPOKE of special feelings, saying, "We've come a long way. We're building a temple of granite, mortar, lumber and glass... living stones built into an edifice of spirit." The parish is composed of 137 families and households.

Archbishop Donnellan reflected on motivation of the small and young parish. He assured those assembled they "were erecting a structure worthy of our Savior." He continued, "You started small and are becoming strong. You had an humble beginning, and this is the beginning of great things. Today's event is an indication of goodwill of this community. It indicates a willingness to sacrifice, persevere... you have pooled your efforts and resources. Gospel is work and deeds. Blessings of the Lord follow faith and work of the people."

Thus was the assurance of Archbishop Donnellan as he addressed those attending the first groundbreaking for a Catholic church in this vicinity. Parishioners and guests were visibly moved by the clergyman's challenge, praise and remarks.

The new church home will be an 8,600 square foot multipurpose building. Divided walls will allow usage for worship, suppers and other gatherings. The sanctuary area will feature a large stained glass cross behind the altar. There are two wings: one will have five classrooms, the other will have offices, nursery and kitchen.

The master plan and location of this first building allow for future development with space for a church in front of the initial building.

CONSTRUCTION of the building will begin immediately.

A model of the multipurpose building to be constructed was on display Sunday.

Participating in Sunday's ceremony were Red Cleary and Ron Taylor.

Also present at the historic event were DeKalb Commissioner Robert Lanier, representing CEO Manuel Maloof, Elizabeth Mitchell, Lithonia councilwoman, representing Mayor John Robins; Mark Westmoreland, pastor Redan Methodist Church; Mac Paterson, pastor, Lithonia Methodist church, and Ed Stemberge, Lithonia architect who designed the \$400,00 structure.

School Board Cites 450 Students For Their School Achievements

The DeKalb County Board of Education has recently recognized more than 450 sixth-year students for outstanding school achievements.

Among them are 130 Board Elementary Scholars (one, two, or three from each elementary school) who have shown excellence in academics, interpersonal skills, extracurricular activities, and attendance.

The approximately 300 other outstanding students (one to five per school) have been named to the Superintendent's Elementary Scholars Club.

All of these students will be identified as exemplary models during their seventh year in school.

A committee in each school composed of the principal, instructional lead teacher, sixth-year teachers, a PTA representative, and one teacher selected by the faculty gathered information from each applicant's school career in order to complete the nomination process. In addition, each student wrote an essay and appeared for a personal interview.

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