

Summit Church: Show and Tell

As the church breaks ground on its new building, it prepares to show and tell of God's love for the community.

Living in the South, residents become accustomed to seeing churches on nearly every street corner. But rarely do we even think about how a new church is started. The reality is it is not dramatically unlike starting a business. When one sits down and talks with Rev. Vann Trapp, pastor of Summit Church in Cary, you will quickly realize that it is a conversation any entrepreneur in the Triangle would find familiar.

"There were a lot of times and places where this church could have just folded up and gone away," said Trapp. But instead, the church has broken ground on a new building that is set to open early in 2008 in the Bishop's Gate community in Cary.

Summit began more than 14 years ago as a small prayer group of people who were involved in a variety of Christian organizations. Soon, they hired a pastor and the church was founded under the name Redeemer Covenant Church and grew steadily for about five years — a typical start-up success for the Cary area. However, the first pastor was hired on by another church in California, and the church went through a struggle to survive for several years. In 2001, they hired Trapp, an experienced pastor who was eager to help the church grow.

"I was looking for a church that was still in formation instead of an established church. It is still kind (of a new church)," said Trapp. "About four or five years ago we went through some steps to replant."

Soon after his arrival, the church members and Trapp changed the name of the church to Summit and worked together to come up with a common vision, and the church began to grow. Today, it averages about 200 members on a Sunday morning — a solid number by beginning church standards — and has a staff of four employees.

Summit is a part of the Evangelical Covenant Church denomination. The community of churches was founded by a Christian religious movement in Sweden in the 1700s. Swedish im-

migrants in the 1850s started to bring the movement into the United States, and the denomination is strongest in Minnesota, Wisconsin and the Great Lakes areas. The denomination has more than 700 churches worldwide.

"The Evangelical Covenant Church holds to five essentials," explained Trapp. "A relationship with Jesus Christ, authority

permanent roots in the Triangle community, Trapp, married and a father of three children, is intent on leading the church in showing God's love for people through community involvement.

"(Our purpose is) to show and tell of God's love to this generation," Trapp said of Summit. "The emphasis is not just tell-



Rev. Vann Trapp

of the Bible, the work of God with us, the understanding of the church as God's family and then the mission of spreading the Gospel. The other essential is freedom. Inside these five essentials, there is a lot of freedom to talk about a lot of things. We have people (from all types of theological backgrounds) in the same room, and we choose to land on one mission. The main idea is having a relationship with Jesus Christ — that's what gives any of these actions any meaning."

Trapp says that it is this freedom that most people find appealing about Summit.

"For a lot of people, it's a relief to find a place where they can put on the table 'this is where I am on my journey' spiritually."

Now that Summit is putting down

ing, but a show and tell approach. We really want to ... be involved in helping to bring the community together. God has his plans not just for individuals but for communities of people. We really want to get that message and that expression of God's heart for people out so that they can see it."

So in ways reminiscent of many start-up companies in the Cary area, Summit Church, with solid leadership, great people and an enduring vision, is poised to make a lasting, positive impact in the Triangle area.

Summit currently meets at the Cary YMCA at 101 YMCA Drive off of Cary Parkway. Service time is 10:15 a.m. on Sunday with Sunday school beginning at 9 a.m. For more information, visit www.summitnc.org.