

# Archbishop Lori dedicates new church for 200-year-old Buckeystown parish

**By Maria Wiering**

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BUCKEYSTOWN – A throng of St. Joseph on Carrollton Manor parishioners stood under an overcast sky May 4 as Archbishop William E. Lori began the dedication rite for their new church in the outside plaza.

Representatives of the architectural firm, builder and instrumental parish committees presented him with the church's significant documents, and two parish corporators handed him the keys.

The archbishop then asked Father Lawrence K. Frazier, St. Joseph's pastor, to open the doors, and they, along with Auxiliary Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski, retired Auxiliary Bishop William C. Newman, more than 25 priests and six deacons, processed into the new space, followed by parishioners.

A Psalm over the doors between the narthex and nave greeted them: "We shall go to the altar of God, the God of our joy." Bright light streamed into the sanctuary through three large windows, which framed a view of the historic church's white steeple just beyond the new building.

The two-hour liturgy was the capstone of a year-long construction process and nearly two decades anticipating a new worship space.

Parishioners broke ground for the \$4.7 million, 11,500-square-foot church in April 2013, a decade after they had outgrown the 1871-built church. Most Masses were celebrated in the parish center constructed in 1996.

*See a time-lapse video and tour of the construction below:*

In the past 16 years, the parish has grown from 250 families to more than 930, and continues to expand by 8 to 9 percent per year, said Deacon Gregory Rausch, the building committee vice chairman who ministered at the dedication Mass.

The new church holds about 500 people.

Father Frazier told the Catholic Review the parish is "ideally located for growth" as new housing developments and expanding biotechnology companies draw people north from Montgomery County along the I-270 corridor.

Signs of impending development line the road to the church, but for now, St. Joseph overlooks rolling farmland and thickets.

The new church coincides with the parish's 200th anniversary of its founding. In 1814, Declaration of Independence signatory Charles Carroll granted land from a 12,000-acre tract to his Catholic tenant farmers for construction of a church, completed in 1822.

One of his descendants, Camilla Carroll, attended the dedication Mass.

In his homily, Archbishop William E. Lori praised the work of Sulpician Father John DuBois and Jesuit Father Francis Maleve, priests who served in the parish's infancy. He connected the new church to the Mass reading from the Gospel of Luke that described the encounter between Jesus and his disciples on the road to Emmaus.

"We built and now dedicate this beautiful new church," the archbishop said, "because again and again and yet again, until the evening of our lives, we want to experience what the disciples on the road to Emmaus experienced: A living presence of the crucified and risen savior, the one we call Lord Jesus, our redeemer, our brother, our friend."

At the end of Mass, after the procession, parishioners clapped and cheered. Building committee chairwoman Carole Sepe was thrilled fellow parishioners were happy with the new church, calling that "the biggest thing" for her.

Bishop Newman, who has celebrated confirmations in the parish center, praised the parishioners' perseverance, faith and support of their pastor.

"I couldn't be happier for them," he said. "I love the church. I think it's very handsome. ... (But) the beauty of the church is in the pews, where the people sit. They radiate the vitality."

The new church's facade includes fieldstone and vertical siding, intended to evoke the feeling of a country church, said its architect, Stuart Christenson of Noelker & Hull Associates in Chambersburg, Pa.

Hanover-based Conewago Enterprises provided complete design-build services for the new church. Its president, Don Smith Jr., told the Catholic Review by e-mail that the company was honored to bring St. Joseph parishioners' vision to reality.

"While we construct many large-scale commercial projects, it is always rewarding to build meaningful spaces like this one that will impact several generations of parishioners and the community," he said.

Longtime parishioner Bonnie Morris, 71, said worshiping in the new church for the first time was "fantastic." She and her family moved to Buckeystown in 1978 from Washington for "a peaceful place in the country" and an old house, she said.

"We've kept our loving, welcoming, warm community as it's grown," she said of the parish. "Our parishioners are our church, and it shows. ... The new church is just the icing on the cake."

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