

# Atonement Lutheran Church Cuts A Ribbon On New Fellowship Hall

September 23, 2019 by Celeste McLaughlin [Leave a Comment](#)



A ribbon was cut on Sept. 7 for Atonement Lutheran Church's new building, which has added more space for the church's many ministries, including a food pantry that feeds up to 250 families each week.

The newly built structure in front of Atonement Lutheran Church may be somewhat nondescript, but the fact that it exists at all is something of a miracle, considering the church was once facing its last rites.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Sept. 7, to officially mark the opening of the church's new Fellowship Hall.

At about 2,800 square feet, it is triple the size of the church's former multi-purpose room, which only held about 70 people. The new room's capacity is 200.

Pastor Scott Lindner says it's an exciting sign of growth for the small church, which has been a part of the community for 30 years, but almost closed its doors for good in the early 2000s.

Lindner says instead of giving up, a former pastor sold five of the church's original 13 acres to a developer to create the neighboring office park.

"When I got here in 2006, they had just burned the mortgage," Lindner explains.

As Wesley Chapel has grown, the church has grown, too. Atonement Lutheran church regularly sees about 100 families in worship during the summer, and that number doubles in the winter when the "snowbirds" return to Florida.

The church also just celebrated the 10-year anniversary of its food pantry program, which feeds up to 250 families each week with 15,000 pounds of food.

“Our ministries have grown so much in the past five years,” says Rebecca Parker, a church member who also is a volunteer and chair of its worship and music committee. “We needed more space, so this is very exciting for us.”

Pastor Lindner agrees: “We’ve known for years this time would come.”

The new building will be used for not only Atonement’s own full congregation, but also for some ministries and outside groups to use. In fact, the New River Branch Library plans to host some of its programs in the building when it closes for renovations this fall.

The Fellowship Hall also will be used for a weekly family service the congregants call “Child of God,” which is held every Sunday at 11:30 a.m.

The entire family hears a message geared toward children from the pastor. Then, the kids break off to do a craft or activity, while the pastor goes over what he calls a “home blueprint” relating to the message.

“It’s like children’s church, but also a parent support group,” explains Lindner. “There’s a story, questions, prayer guides and suggested activities, so you can make your house an extension of the church.”

Five years ago, Atonement Lutheran held a capital campaign that raised \$300,000 to fund the building.

“It took us years to figure out what would work and what we could get permitted and what we could afford,” Lindner says. Over those years, prices increased, and the church will take a loan to cover the rest of the costs, which are expected to come in at about \$125,000, once all of the final expenses are tallied, including permitting, landscaping and other expenses.

“We’ve been able to be generous to nonprofits by allowing them to use our building at no cost, and we will continue to do that,” says Lindner. “We believe this is a special place; that’s what keeps us going.”

The Wesley Chapel Noon Rotary Club also has announced that it will again feed hundreds of people in need at Atonement Lutheran for the club’s annual “Turkey Gobble” meal on Thanksgiving morning.

**Atonement Lutheran Church is located at 29617 S.R. 54. To learn more about the church, visit [DiscoverALC.com](http://DiscoverALC.com) or call (813) 973-2211.**