

July 27, 2011

Submitted by Irma Forger, member, Grace and Glory Lutheran Church

Barbara and Dick Haas – ON BUILDING A CHURCH.....

You've probably passed the blue and white sign on Route 53, **Grace and Glory Lutheran Church**, opposite the Fluvanna County Library, and wondered when construction would begin. Finally, that day has come! The congregation is eagerly planning the ground-breaking service and celebration for Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, at 5:00 p.m. at the church property.

Over ten years ago a group of about 40 people voted to start the first Lutheran Church in Fluvanna County. Dick and Barbara Haas were one of those charter members, and were part of the original Leadership Team of the newly organized Grace and Glory Lutheran Church in Palmyra. Pastor Bill Stewart agreed to shepherd the fledgling church on a part-time basis, with the first worship service held on Sunday morning, February 11, 2001, in a local fitness center (thanks to the kindness of its owner).

Dick remembered how we each had to carry our chairs to Sunday worship, plus a few extras for visitors. At the first Christmas service, in 2001, 82 people came, and there was the wonderful dilemma of finding seats for all the people!

Pastor Stewart convinced Dick that he could prepare the Power Point slides for the Sunday service, which Dick did for five years, improving and finessing as he went. "The service was projected on a blank wall until we purchased a screen", said Dick. "What a thrill when we got permission to worship at the Fluvanna Middle School in the cafetorium – we didn't have to bring our chairs, or the screen, and there was enough storage space for most of our things!" The congregation still worships there, at 10:15 a.m., until their new church is ready.

Barbara volunteered to play the organ for the services, then she started a choir which first met in the Haas' bedroom; as the choir grew, they rehearsed in the livingroom.

Meanwhile, the congregation found and purchased the ten acre property on Route 53, and in 2005 they called The Rev. Ken Albright to be their first full time Pastor. Even without a building, we are a church. Dick once said, "The people make the church. We knitted together for a common cause, and became a family."

As I spoke with the Haas' last year, Dick reminisced, "As each need arose, the right person was available at just the right time to step into the job. Things fell into place each time we seemed to hit a wall. The message is so powerful: God wants a church in this place. Most of the charter members are still with us. Lew Post, our first Treasurer, and Herb Meyer, who scouted around for a property on which to build our church, have passed on. Many of us have wondered if we would still be around for that first service in our own church."

Those were Dick's exact words. He passed on suddenly, unexpectedly, this past March. Barbara says he was so looking forward to being at the ground-breaking, and later for the first worship service in the new church. We all know Dick *will* be there in spirit, as will Lew and Herb, and others who have gone on ahead. We remember and hold in our hearts their faithfulness and vision, all their striving to make the new church building our reality.

Please visit the church website, [www.graceandglory.org](http://www.graceandglory.org). Call Pastor Albright at the office: (434)589-2217; or his cell phone: (434) 531-3551.