RELIGION

Construction of new G'ville United Methodist Church to begin in spring

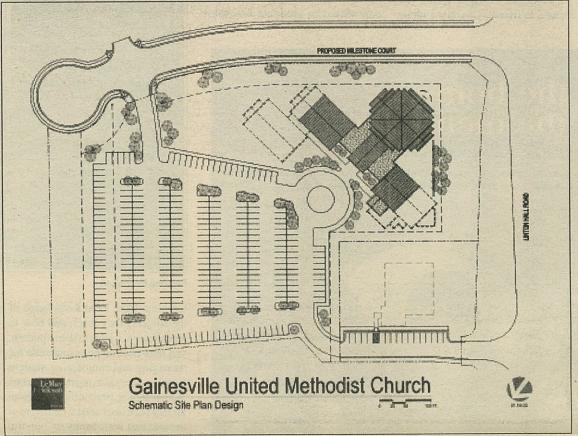
By JENNIFER HEYNS

After more than 30 years of dreaming, hoping and planning, the Gainesville United Methodist Church plans to break ground on its new facility this spring.

The new church will be located on the church's nearly sixacre lot at the intersection of Linton Hall Road and the future Milestone Court. The existing historic church, which served as a backdrop for a scene filmed for the new docu-drama now being shown at Manassas National Battlefield Park visitor center, is located on VA 55 at the intersection with Gallerher Road.

Last year the church's Building Committee began working with the Reston-based architectural firm of LeMay Erickson. Concept drawings of the new building have been made to reveal the needs and wants of the church. As the pre-construction process continues, the drawings will be finalized and county permits ac-

Funds for the new church have come partially from grants from the district. Also, the church has been collecting grants from parishioners throughout the past 10 years in anticipation of this event but even the generous grants that have been donated will not be sufficient to bring



Schematic site plan design for the new Gainesville United Methodist Church facility to be built on Linton Hall Road. Groundbreaking is set to occur this spring with first services in the new building planned by Easter, 2004.

it to completion and a mortgage from a local bank will have to be sought, said Don Phillips, chairman of the Building Committee.

The new Gainesville United Methodist Church will have a sanctuary of 500 seats, which is more than quadruple the capacity of the present sanctuary.

"We could hold maybe 110 people on a good Sunday, with everyone holding it in," said Phillips, a member of Gainesville United Methodist since 1989.

In addition to the sanctuary, the new church will house a Christian Education Wing, a Fellowship Hall, offices and a kitchen - Much

to the delight of many parishioners," said Phillips.

The Education Wing will not offer preschool right away, but Phillips said it is in plans for the

The site plans have already been approved for the building and will allow for approximately 300 parking spaces.

Phillips said a sign for the church will be placed on Linton Hall soon. Gainesville United Methodist is purchasing the piece of property through a land-swap with The Peterson Companies. The Peterson Companies will acquire the five acres located behind the current church in return for the sixacre lot on Linton Hall.

The existing church will still be maintained by the fellowship of Gainesville United Methodist even after construction of the new church has been completed.

The congregation plans to use the older church for special occasions such as weddings, Christmas services, candlelight services and funerals. Phillips said church members also hope to be able to help new church groups who are just getting started and are looking for a gathering place.

Phillips said he anticipates Pastor John Patterson will be giving his 2004 Easter sermon in the

For more information about the Gainesville United Methodist, call 703-754-4511.

> Easter, 2003 is Sunday, April 20th

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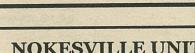
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