

In the News

Prestonwood Baptist Church

Prestonwood Baptist Church opens Prosper campus

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PROSPER – After more than two years of setting up and taking down their sanctuary each week at Prosper High School, a group of Prestonwood Baptist Church members now have a new building to call home.

More than 1,700 people attended the first Prestonwood North service in Prosper, about 17 miles north of the megachurch's main campus in Plano.

Prestonwood North started with about 40 people meeting at a Prosper house in January 2006. Then it expanded to home Bible study groups and continued to grow until people were meeting at Prosper High. Now their new campus is on 127 acres just north of Frisco near the Dallas North Tollway extension.

Prosper resident Lisa Tyson, a fourth-generation Prestonwood church member, and her husband attended some of those early home meetings in the town.

"The relationships we built while building this church are amazing," Ms. Tyson said, while holding her daughter and watching her two sons play in the two-story, enclosed jungle gym from the second level of the church atrium Sunday. "This new building means our family can worship together and be involved. It's our family."

Dick Hughes, Ms. Tyson's father, lives in Dallas but attended Sunday's service in Prosper with his daughter. He helped with the building of the Plano campus in the 1990s.

"The obvious benefit is that they can worship without having to encounter a long drive each Sunday, like they do every day of the week to go to work," Mr. Hughes said.

The Rev. Jack Graham, Prestonwood's senior pastor, presided over the first 9:30 a.m. service at Prestonwood North and told attendees that "the new campus is a way for us to grow our faith ... and still have the Prestonwood experience."

Dr. Graham occasionally paced the stage and told the congregation that this new church home is more than an idea in a new building.

"This is not a human vision, but the mission and vision of Jesus Christ," Dr. Graham said.

After his sermon, Dr. Graham asked to be excused so he could rush down the tollway to preside over the 11 a.m. service in Plano, which is on a 130-acre campus with more than 26,000 members. It is one of the largest churches in the United States.

Before leaving Dr. Graham turned the microphone over to Prestonwood North Pastor Marc Rylander, who encouraged everyone to tour the 77,000-square-foot facility's Sunday school classrooms, day care and children's play area.

Gwen Ray of Prosper kept tabs on her five children while chatting with other church members after Sunday's service.

She said they used to drive 45 minutes each Sunday to attend church in Dallas before joining the Prestonwood North ministry.

"My husband and I could go almost anywhere," Ms. Ray said. "But we needed something for our kids. We wanted our kids to be able to go to church and school with the same children.

"That way they could continue to foster those relationships at church and school. Once a week, their youth pastor has lunch at the middle school with them. Things like that couldn't happen for them if they went to a church in Dallas" while they were living in Prosper.

For more information, visit www.prestonwood.org/northdedication.