

NW Side Lutheran churches change hands

By Patrice D. Raia
SPECIAL TO THE LEADER

Eight Lutheran Churches, including the former St Andrews Church, 5447 W. Addison St. — a neighborhood landmark — changed hands on Friday when winning bidders of the eight-property sealed-bid auction were announced. The announcement was made at United in Faith Lutheran Church — formerly St. Andrews — into which congregations from the auctioned properties were consolidated.

Seven of the eight properties were purchased by religious organizations; one successful bidder was a residential developer. Winners were chosen from 41 bidders who made a total of 54 bids.

Winning bidders and their properties are:

- United in Faith Lutheran Church, 5447 W Addison St. — to Liberty Christian Center, affiliated with the Defender of the Christian Faith Movement. The new owners purchased the property with the stipulation that United in Faith Lutheran would lease the property for five years while site selection and construction of its new church took place;

- Gladstone Park Lutheran Church, 6200 W. Foster Ave. — to the International Pentacostal Assembly;

- Peace Lutheran Church, 5944 W Cullom Ave. — to St. John of Rila Bulgarian Orthodox Church;

- Our Saviour's English Lutheran Church, 4159 N. Laramie Ave. — to Bishop David and Jewel Jackson;

- Medill Avenue Lutheran Church, 4917 W. Medill Ave. — to Abundant Life Christian Center, Inc., an independent church that began as a bible study group;

- Nebo Evangelical Lutheran Church and a free-standing parsonage, 3914 N. Menard — to a Chicago-based residential real estate developer whose plans for the property have not been disclosed;

- Our Lord's Lutheran Church, 6224 W. Gunnison Ave. — to Dhammakaya International Meditation Center of Chicago whose headquarters is in Bangkok, Thailand;

- Holy Communion Church,

3010 N. Lavergne — Marantha Romanian Church.

According to Jeffrey King, interim pastor of the United in Faith congregation, the consolidation of the eight congregations and the property auction reflect changing demographics on the Northwest Side.

"These congregations were all established and became the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," King said. "The churches served mostly Norwegians, Germans, Danes and Swedes."

"Eventually the congregations just moved away," he said. "Then we had eight churches within three miles of each other."

Proceeds from the auction will be used by the 400-member United Faith congregation to purchase a site and construct a new church somewhere on the Northwest Side.

The sealed-bid auction was conducted by Sheldon Good & Company, a Chicago-based real estate auction firm. Bidding the properties began last fall.