

PRESS RELEASE
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A Homecoming for Many at Mill Neck Chapel

Attendees at the November 10 rededication of the John of Beverley Chapel at Mill Neck Manor were part of an occasion filled with joy and fond memories, and for those who have a history with Mill Neck, a homecoming. Lutheran Friends of the Deaf (LFD), the founding organization of the Mill Neck Family of Organizations, welcomed friends, family, staff, alumni, board members and Atlantic District members of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS), to the blessing and rededication of the chapel.

The John of Beverley Chapel resides in the 1920s Tudor Revival manor house on the campus of Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf, which was founded by LFD in 1947. The founders' original mission of serving the needs of people who are Deaf, has since grown into the Mill Neck Family of Organizations, which provides services for those in need locally, nationally and worldwide.

During the early years of the School for the Deaf, LFD began their commitment to the students' spiritual needs with the conversion of the manor's parlor-drawing room into a sanctuary. On September 14, 1958 the chapel was blessed, with nearly 2,000 people attending the outdoor service on the estate's sprawling lawn. Shortly after, pastors from St. Matthew Lutheran Church of the Deaf began regular visits to lead services for school. The chapel's name is in honor of John of Beverley (Bishop John of York), an English clergyman who lived at the close of the 7th century and according to recorded history, was the first Christian educator of the Deaf.

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As LCMS Atlantic District President Rev. Derek Lecakes, the Presiding Minister for the rededication, led the congregation into the chapel, the soft piano notes of “When the Saints Go Marching In” were heard. Rev. Dr. David Benke, Emeritus LCMS Atlantic District President and current member of the Mill Neck Manor Board of Trustees, remarked, “This is the realization of a long-time dream, to fill this temple with joy and to express the depth of what this means to Mill Neck.”

Among those who returned to Mill Neck to witness the joy, was alumna Catherine Barlick who signed the verses of “Jesus Loves Me.” Now a Florida resident and grandmother of five, Barlick was nine years old at the original chapel service. Another alumnus, Todd Tillotson of Queens, who attended Mill Neck from 1954 to 1961, reprised his role as crucifer (person appointed to carry the processional cross). Both he and Barlick later reminisced with former student Kathy Clarke Wasil of Rockville Center, who today remains an active participant on various Mill Neck committees.

For Rev. Timothy Yeadon, LCMS New England District President, the rededication was also poignant, as he recalled his visits to the Mill Neck campus during his youth. He spoke of his parents, Margaret and Ray, dedicated Mill Neck employees who married in the chapel in 1958 and of his aunt Eunice Weidner, an Assistant Superintendent during Mill Neck Manor’s early days. Later, during college, he spent his summers as part of the grounds crew. Rev. Yeadon concluded by referencing the title of the Thomas Wolfe novel, *You Can’t Go Home Again*, to which he said, “You can go home again, at least once in a while.”

In his remarks after the service, Mill Neck Family President and CEO Michael Killian said, “The rededication of the John of Beverley Chapel marks a significant moment in our history, one which our founders would have been pleased to witness, as did the many friends and families who turned out today for worship and celebration.”

Following the rededication, all were invited to a lunch welcoming Rev. Tyler Walworth and his family to the Mill Neck Family. Rev. Walworth serves as a Deaf Missions Facilitator for LFD.

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Lutheran Friends of the Deaf, today part of the Mill Neck Family of Organizations, provides support for educational and evangelistic outreach to Deaf people of all ages throughout the United States and world. For more information, please call 800-264-0662 or visit millneck.org.



Worship services in the John of Beverley Chapel at Mill Neck Manor during the 1950s and 60s included the entire student body and faculty.



The rededication of the John of Beverley Chapel at Mill Neck Manor brought many past and present members of the Mill Neck Family together, among them (from left), William Charon, Mill Neck Manor Board of Trustees member; Rudolph Auslander, President of the Mill Neck Manor Board of Trustees; Michael Killian, President and CEO of Mill Neck Family of Organizations; Susan Killian; Rev. Thomas Dunseth, LFD Director of Deaf Ministry; Rev. Derek Lecakes, LCMS Atlantic District President; Rev. Tyler Walworth, LFD Deaf Missions Facilitator; Deaconess Tiffany Manor, LFD Deaf Missions Facilitator; Deaconess Phyllis Yee and Rev. Timothy Yeadon, LCMS New England District President.

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