

New Murfreesboro hospital will carry out healing ministry

Theresa Laurence

MURFREESBORO. It was a joyful celebration Sept. 26 as the new Middle Tennessee Medical Center in Murfreesboro was blessed and dedicated.

Administrators and employees from throughout the Saint Thomas Health Services system were on hand for the celebration, along with area clergy and other supporters of the hospital.

"We have truly been blessed by this beautiful new facility," MTMC President and CEO Gordon Ferguson told the crowd of about 350 people gathered on Sunday for the dedication.

MTMC is a part of Saint Thomas Health Services, which is a member of Ascension Health, a Catholic organization that is the largest not-for-profit health system in the United States.

The brand new \$267 million hospital will officially open Oct. 2, and will replace the hospital's aging facility near downtown Murfreesboro. Administrators envision the new MTMC as a regional medical center treating patients from Rutherford County and beyond.

The new 550,000-square-foot facility will have 60 more patient beds than the old hospital, for a total of 286 beds.

Patient rooms are much larger at the new MTMC, and include small but distinct areas for patients, visitors and medical staff. Also, rooms on the fourth through seventh floor are identical, and administrators say this will eliminate time-waste and confusion for caregivers.

The new hospital boasts \$32 million in new medical equipment, including \$9 million in imaging technology. A high tech communications system is also part of the new MTMC as it moves toward a completely automated medical record database.

Of course, "the facility is part of a healing ministry," Dr. Mike Schatzlein, president and CEO of Saint Thomas Health Services, told the crowd at the Sept. 26 dedication ceremony.

The hospital's core values of creativity, integrity, service to the poor,

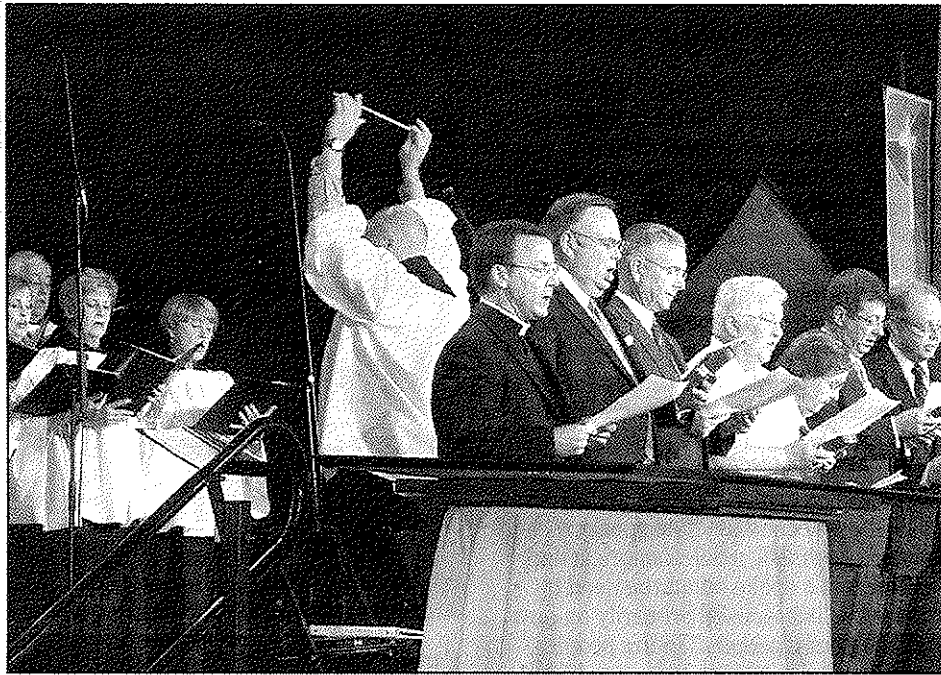


Photo by Theresa Laurence

Elliott Peterson of First United Methodist Church in Murfreesboro directs the choir as clergy members and St. Thomas Health Services administrators sing along to the opening hymn at the blessing and dedication ceremony of the new Middle Tennessee Medical Center on Sept. 26. Pictured from left are: Father Mark Sappenfield of St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church; Rev. Michael O'Bannon of First UMC; Gordon Ferguson, president and CEO of MTMC; Sister Mary Kay Tyrell, DC, sponsor liaison to Ascension Health; Sister Mary Francis Loftin, DC, St. Thomas Health Services board chair; Dr. Mark Schatzlein, president and CEO of STHS; and Rev. Mike Smith, pastor of First Baptist Church in Murfreesboro.

reverence, dedication and wisdom... were touted on banners displayed at the ceremony. The chapel, designed with input from Bishop David Choby and Sister Mary Frances Loftin, D.C., is front and center in the new hospital, and will provide a sacred space for patients, visitors and employees.

Both hospital administrators and clergy made it clear at the dedication ceremony that MTMC's mission is rooted in faith, and driven by its dedicated staff members. After proclaiming Mark's Gospel about Jesus healing the paralytic, Father Mark Sappenfield, administrator of St. Rose of Lima Church in Murfreesboro, said the sick will be brought to MTMC just as they were brought to Jesus for healing.

"Every individual healing at this facility will be a greater healing for the city of Murfreesboro and beyond," he said.

"The entire community will benefit in some way," Father Sappenfield added.

The new MTMC has already fueled growth in Murfreesboro, from creating jobs to anchoring an entire new part of town known as the Gateway area. Twenty new physicians and 200 additional hospital personnel have been hired to staff the new hospital.

Since MTMC purchased the property to build the new facility in 2001, the city has built a new interstate exit and road, Medical Center Parkway, which has greatly increased visibility and accessibility to the hospital.

After all current patients are transferred from the old MTMC at 400 N. Highland Ave. to the new one at 1700 Medical Center Parkway on Oct. 2, the old one will be shuttered. It has still not been determined what will happen to the Highland Ave. facility.

Administrators have been ironing out the logistics of the big moving day for months, including having several dry runs of the move with mannequin patients.

Around 150 patients will be transported from the old hospital to the new one on Saturday, necessitating as many as 300 ambulance round trips.

There have already been five major moves of equipment and offices with more to come throughout the weekend.

More information about the new Middle Tennessee Medical Center is available at www.thenewmtmc.org.

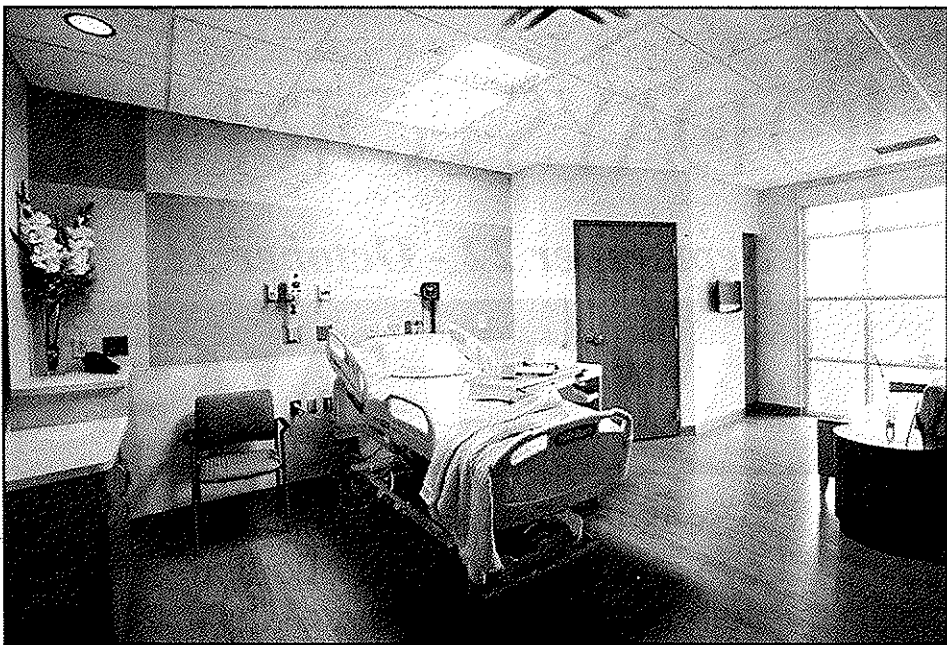


Photo courtesy of MTMC

The new 550,000 square foot Middle Tennessee Medical Center in Murfreesboro has 60 more patient beds than the old MTMC, and features much larger rooms. All patients will be transferred from the old facility near downtown Murfreesboro to the new one, located at 1700 Medical Center Parkway, on Oct. 2. Middle Tennessee Medical Center is part of St. Thomas Health Services, a regional network of four hospitals and a number of clinics and specialty practices.



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