



photo by Ferd Haverly

New Building Dedicated in Albany

The new Emerson Community Hall was dedicated by the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany on Saturday, September 15.

Participants in the dedication service spoke of Albany's commitment, as an urban church, to social justice leadership, to welcoming the stranger, and to seeking and speaking the truth. "We have a strong vision that will fill this new space," said Rev. Sam Trumbore, minister, "A strong vision of the Spirit of Life as interpreted through human minds as our primary source of guidance; a strong vision based on human values as our primary source of action; a strong vision based on respect for and valuing of the interdependent relationship of all life."

Emerson Hall is composed of a 2500-sq.ft. community room used for worship services and large events, two new religious education classrooms, and a library. The Hall's maple flooring and the theatre seats in the balcony of the community room were recycled from two closed Albany public schools, and congregation members helped salvage, clean, and transport the materials. The congregation, which first discussed the need for new space in 1990, raised \$1.5 million toward the building's construction in a 2004 capital campaign. Total costs are expected to exceed \$3 million.

The building expands not just the Society's space, but its presence in the community. According to Amy Lent, administrator, the new space has proved popular with community groups for special events and regular use. "It's already obvious that we're serving a real community need," she said.