

Giving it to God: Jersey County Salvation Army dedicates new building

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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JERSEYVILLE – After a soft opening of sorts on June 30, 2018, the new location of the Jerseyville Salvation Army Food Pantry, located at 831 W. Carpenter Road, celebrated its dedication Thursday morning.

The building is an upgrade from a “trailer to a castle,” Jersey County Salvation Army Chairperson Richard Lott said Thursday. The spacious new building was made possible through a gift from the trust of Jersey County resident Dorothy Westerholdt, who died at the age of 95. The first check of what Lott described as a “substantial amount” was granted to the organization in 2012, and by 2013, after what Lott said was “a lot of red tape,” the full amount had been granted.

This new pantry will replace one built by the Salvation Army in 1995. While it served its needs for more than two decades, Lott said the new and larger facility will be able to help more people. The hours have also changed to 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Lott said those the organization serves suggested the hour changes.

Salvation Army Lt. Colonel Dan Jennings, the Divisional Commander of the Midland Division, which is based in St. Louis, but covers both Missouri and Illinois all the way to the borders of Arkansas and Kentucky, was on hand to take part in the dedication.

Prior to dedicating the building and its mission to God, Jennings recalled an anecdote about the founder of the Salvation Army's daughter being sent to Paris, France, with the mission of finding a place for the organization there. He said she built a mission in an old dance hall and said people could use it for free dancing as long as they volunteered afterward.



“That story goes to show, you just never know what the Salvation Army will accomplish,” he said.

He then led the dedication commitment in which the building and its mission were given to God, who Jennings and Lott said directed the Salvation Army and allowed for its mission to flourish and reach those who have the most needs.

“This building does not belong to the Salvation Army,” he said. “It doesn't even belong to the community it serves. It belongs to God. It is here for two reasons: to glorify God and for the service of humankind.”

Members of Westerholdt's family also dedicated a framed collection, which included a photo of her farm, a pamphlet from her funeral, and a photo of her. They presented these items to Lott, and described Westerholdt as someone who believed in “Family, Faith and Farm.” They said the Salvation Army always had a special place in her heart.

Outside the pantry, Lott said the Salvation Army of Jersey County provides other social services and uniquely presents those in need with “hygiene bags” full of assorted objects needed for basic hygiene.

