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## Growing Triad church moving into former industrial buildings

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It doesn't look like a traditional church, but the [Chatham Mill](#) location has what a new, contemporary congregation in the Triad wants.

The new \$2.8 million location for [Two Cities Church](#) has a lot to offer: a central location near downtown Winston-Salem and a diverse group of neighborhoods; two completely renovated, 7,800-square-foot buildings (854 and 870 West Northwest Blvd.), including a contemporary sanctuary/worship center that can seat 400 with a new sound system and video boards; and a separate building for classrooms and offices.

There's even a generous parking lot along West Northwest and adjacent spillover parking. Lead pastor [Kyle Mercer](#), 34, said the church hopes to be ready to open for services Nov. 4, the anniversary of the date last year when church leaders announced the move to the site. For the past two years, the church has held services on Sunday nights at Goler Memorial AME Zion Church.



JOHN BRASIER

Cleanup still remains to be completed on the large parking lot, but Two Cities Church hopes the new location will be ready for Sunday services on Nov. 4.

Baldwin Properties' Lou Baldwin, who represents Ken Reiter and Joey Deakle, said the owners/developers spent about \$1 million upfitting the church buildings, which would have been better described as warehouses. Baldwin said almost everything but the shells are new. The church, which raised about \$381,000 for the project, put much of that into furnishings.

"Everything you see inside is new," Baldwin said.

Most of the funding at 854 and 870 came from a \$1.2 million loan by First Community Bank and \$1 million from American South Real Estate Fund.

Mercer said the church had a 10-year lease on the buildings with extension options.

Through Chatham Mill Ventures, in 2012, Reiter and Deakle purchased the former Chatham Mill plant campus and about 300,000 square feet of warehouse space for \$645,000.

Baldwin said Reiter and Deakle made a significant investment in Two Cities, considering the church that has met for only two years. Baldwin said Reiter and Deakle were confident due to their knowledge about Two Cities' parent church, The Summit Church, which averages about 10,000 in weekly attendance at multiple sites in the Triangle.

"To custom upfit for a two-year-old church is a unique real estate development deal," Baldwin said.

Windsor Commercial of Greensboro is the general contractor on the project and did the final drawings. Though some cleanup is still to be done, Mercer said the church will be ready soon, though service from Duke Energy has been delayed by work required by Hurricane Michael.

The church complex is Phase II of three phases for the six acres of the former textile mill location near the intersection of Northwest and Chatham Road. The first phase was 170 apartments the former main mill building, now known as Mill 800, behind the church at 800 Chatham Road. Phase III will be 46 additional apartments in another building used by Western Electric during World War II.

Funding for the Chatham Mill project came from a variety of sources, including around \$14 million from federal and state historic mill-rehabilitation tax credits. The project is eligible for a \$750,000 loan from the city of Winston-Salem. More than \$2 million has been generated through grant and loan funding.

Mercer said the church's new location in renovated buildings in a neglected, former industrial area fits the church's mission of serving the underserved.

The classroom/office building features a long, wide, carpeted hallway leading to a row of brightly painted meeting rooms for children and staff offices. New windows were cut into the buildings.

The entrance to the other building spills into a lobby/gathering area with another entrance to the sanctuary, which has a stage up front and four sections of seating. On the other side of the sanctuary are a "green" room for staff, a bathroom and a prayer room. At the back of the sanctuary is a small, enclosed room where parents can feed or comfort their children with a window that allows them to view the service.

Mercer said Two Cities attracts about 700 worshippers for its two Sunday services. He said the new location will allow the church to add two Sunday morning services.

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