



JULIE BLUM, THE COLUMBUS TELEGRAM

Kody Salak, 17, paints a wall in the youth area Friday in First United Methodist Church's new outreach center at 3602 16th St. The church bought the building that used to house Rainbow Center last month and is converting it into a center for contemporary worship services and other outreach programs.

Local church changing former Rainbow's colors

Church center being moved to former site of Rainbow Center

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COLUMBUS — Sarah Borgman called in reinforcements. About an hour later, five youths

arrived ready to assist her with painting the basement walls of the new First United Methodist Church Outreach Center.

There were already splashes of color in the commons room and touch-ups were needed in a few of the adjoining rooms in the basement where the youth area is located. Cleaning, painting and a few other chores need to be done

throughout the building at 3602 16th St. before an open house is held at the end of the month.

When all the tasks are complete, the facility will be a more-spacious place for contemporary worship and other outreach programs than the church has been able to offer.

For the past five years, the church had an outreach center in

the strip mall north of McDonald's. It was originally leased for office space and Sunday school while First United Methodist was undergoing renovations before more programs were held there, including contemporary worship, youth groups, a quilting club, morning Bible study and

Please see **Outreach**, Page A2

Outreach

From A1

coffee group, attracting more people to the center.

"We just outgrew it with all the activities and outreach programs that we have," said Borgman, the church's youth and Christian education director.

The lease for that location was coming up and grant funding used to cover the rent was about to run out. A decision had to be made on whether to continue operating out of that space, move all the programs and services to the church at 2710 14th St. or find a new location.

"We knew we couldn't move everything back to the church. We could try, but it wouldn't be pleasant," Borgman said.

Finding another location was a viable option. The building that previously housed Rainbow Center, which moved to 17th Street and Howard Boulevard in May, became available and fit the church's needs.

"It is a facility that takes us 180 degrees from where we were," said Keith Riley, who was part of a committee tasked with finding a new site.

The building cost \$496,000 and has nearly four times the space compared to the strip mall lo-



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This is the contemporary worship area inside First United Methodist Church's new outreach center at 3602 16th St. An open house for the facility will be held 4-6 p.m. July 31.

cation, providing adequate room for all the current programs and future growth.

The main floor includes space for the contemporary worship service with a balcony, as well as a meditation/prayer room, coffee area, kitchen, room to store supplies and stuff bags for the Food for Thought Weekend Backpack Program, pastor's office space and community room. The community room will be available to rent for public use and is already used by the American Red Cross for blood drives.

The basement is where the youth programs for middle school, junior high and senior high students will be held. There is a commons area, separate rooms for youth group meetings and areas for pool tables, table tennis and foosball. Rooms for quilters and office space called "partnership rooms" that can be rented out to nonprofit groups are also in the lower level.

Riley said the move will give more visibility to First United Methodist Church and the outreach center.

"We hope that it will become a facility where we can offer more programs and attract more people to use them," he said.

The lease for the strip mall location runs out at the end of the month. Youth programs will be offered at the new location in August and contemporary worship services start in September.

An open house and ice cream social will be held at the new center from 4-6 p.m. July 31. Tours of the facility will be available as well as an opportunity to learn about the programs.