

Developer, church plan neighborhood

By JENNY BURNS
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A Franklin church has teamed up with Parkside Homes to build a neighborhood of old-homes situated around a small central church with meditation gardens and pocket parks for all residents to enjoy.

The \$20 million Parish Park project was the vision of Pastor George Grant of Parish Presbyterian Church and its members. His congregation needed more room, and no longer fit in the circa 1849 chapel they'd been renting on Franklin's town square.

They wanted to build a new church, but didn't want to build a huge campus detached from neighborhoods like many churches today.

After looking at more than 100 potential sites, church member and developer Joey Smith bought a piece of land on 23 acres for \$1.4 million in April and enlisted the help of Randy Chastain, president of Parkside Homes, to create the neighborhood.

Chastain plans to build 52 affordable single-family

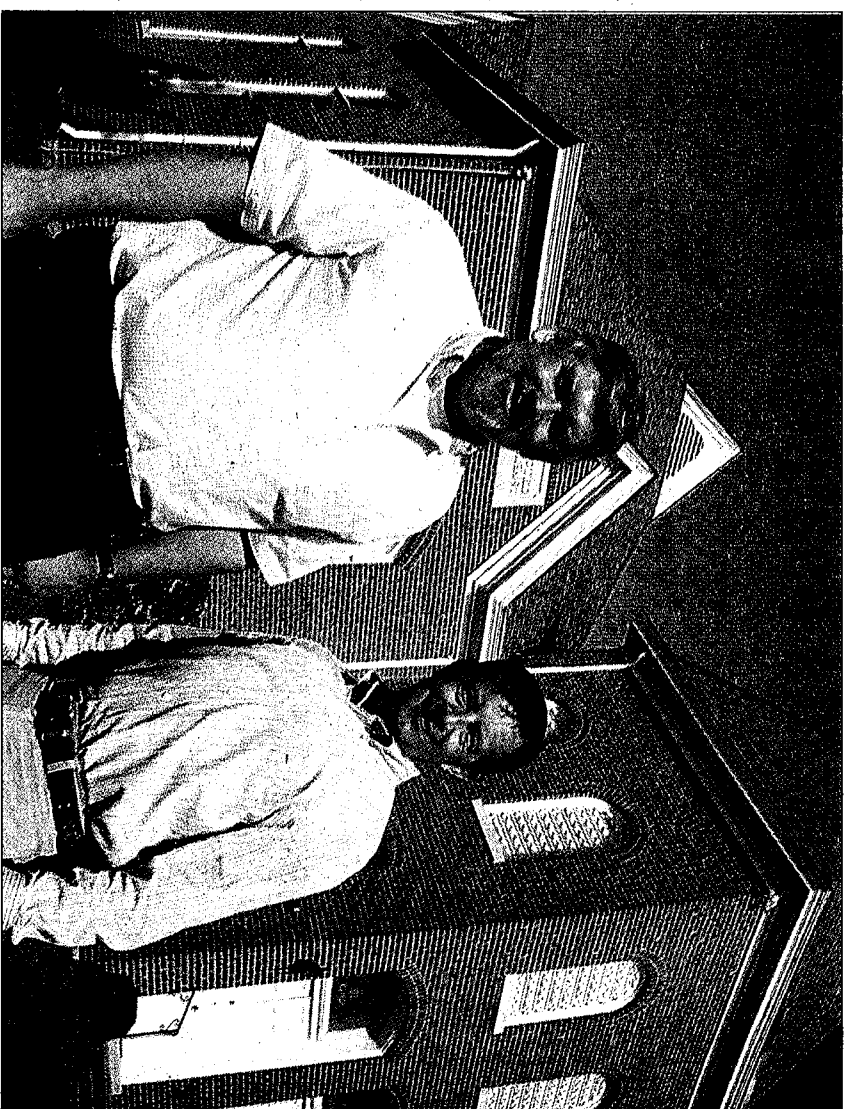
homes ranging from the mid \$200,000s to the mid \$300,000s. The site is on Downs Blvd. next to New Hope Academy.

Chastain has been working with the city of Franklin to make the homes as affordable as possible. They have allowed for more density which allowed him to meet the price-point, a hard goal on land only two miles from downtown Franklin.

The project is awaiting a final approval vote.

"This will be the first time a church will be built inside a neighborhood in Franklin since before World War II, we're told," says Grant, the pastor. "What we're trying to do is resurrect what was a really, really good idea."

And the partnership with Chastain seemed like a perfect marriage. Chastain has been finding ways to build neighborhoods like those of old and hoping buyers will pay extra upfront for a home that is energy-efficient and sustainable, and will save them money over time. He is the first developer in Middle Tennessee to build a community of affordably



Randy Chastain, president of Parkside Homes and Parish Presbyterian member Joey Smith.

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priced homes with the goal of LEED certification.

"It's really refreshing just to see people thinking outside what we see everywhere," says Kelli Friedman, a manager at LandDesign, which designed the land plan for Parish Park. "It's refreshing that they are looking to create a place that feels and looks like Franklin. You can

start to create places that aren't the status quo."

Some church members do plan to buy homes in the community, but Parish Park is open to all buyers.

"It's our intention to allow the church to be a blessing to a wider community," Grant says.

His philosophy has been influenced by the writings of a Scot-

tish evangelical leader named Thomas Chalmers, who believed in church planting, or forming new churches when congregations grow.

"And it's really healthy for me to minister in the context of a living neighborhood," he says.

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