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## Church will dedicate new plaza to late Arlington councilman

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**ARLINGTON** — -- Longtime Arlington Councilman Gene Patrick will be memorialized Sunday as part of a newly renovated plaza area at First United Methodist Church of Arlington.

The church will hold the grand opening for the new Gene Patrick Plaza at noon on the North Street side of the church. The Rev. Jarrod Johnston said the plaza is in partnership with the city and the Arlington Tomorrow Foundation to bring the “downtown vibe” into the north area and honor the late councilman.

Patrick served as the at-large District 8 City Council representative from 2003 to 2011. Before joining the council, Patrick served on the Downtown Arlington Revitalization Committee, Downtown Arlington Inc., Arlington Chamber of Commerce, the Planning and Zoning Commission and multiple arts organizations.

“Gene was instrumental in getting the downtown transformation rolling,” Johnston said. “The area has amazing curb appeal and the celebration will be wonderful.”

The plaza was part of a [nearly \\$800,000 capital campaign](#) that started in August. It features a redone traffic circle, making for a safer drive through the neighborhood, revamped entrances to the church and steps, more accessible handicap parking and sidewalk streetscape to match downtown, said Bart Thompson, chairman of the church’s Building and Grounds Committee.

Improvements to the sanctuary have been made as well.

Thompson said the project started as improvements on Division Street three years ago and that Patrick’s vision helped it expand. Thompson said he worked with Patrick on the Planning and Zoning Commission and in the church.

“This is really Gene’s vision,” Thompson said. “It seemed appropriate we honor Gene in his name as a plaza area.”

Thompson said he hopes to soon start the Center Street phase of renovations and views the project as “expanding the footprint of the downtown streetscape.”

The grand opening will feature food and drinks from local restaurants, live entertainment and appearances from city leaders.

This report includes material from the Star-Telegram archives.

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