

Construction begins on largest Latter-day Saint meetinghouse in Thailand

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What will be the Church's largest meetinghouse in Thailand is under construction following a groundbreaking ceremony Jan. 23. The new building is on a major high-profile boulevard in Moeng Than Thani, a suburb of Bangkok.



Photo by Elder Keith Hardy

Gathered for the groundbreaking for the new Pakkret, Thailand, meetinghouse are Bangkok Thailand Stake President Wisit Khanakham; Mr. Santi Chusri, Pakkret government officer; [Thailand Bangkok Mission](#) President Michael S. Smith; and Pakkret Thailand District President Surakkhaka Chaimongkon.

Approximately 100 members attended the ceremony, beaming attentively. Pakkret Thailand District President Surakkhaka Chaimangkon presided over the proceedings. A girl's choir provided inspirational music. Mr. Santi Chusri, a government official, attended and was presented with gifts — copies of the Book of Mormon in Thai and English, and a Mormon Tabernacle Choir CD.



Photo by Keith Hardy

Priesthood leaders turn the soil during the groundbreaking for a new meetinghouse in Pakkret, Thailand.

The meetinghouse property was purchased under the direction of former Thailand Bangkok Mission President Carl L. Dodge. Michael S. Smith, the current mission president, was the primary speaker at the

groundbreaking. He emphasized that the new meetinghouse will be a house of prayer, a house of fasting and a house dedicated to the Lord. He compared the building to the house in the Savior's parable (see Matthew 7:24-25) that was built on a strong foundation so that it could weather the storms and become a refuge and gospel learning center for strengthening families.

The 16,350-square-foot building will accommodate three branches or wards with offices for the district presidency as well. The chapel will have the capacity for 230 people, increasing to 1,000 when opened up into the cultural hall. There will be 17 classrooms, and the building will be capable of housing a stake in the future. Besides a basketball court inside the building, there will be another outside on the grounds. Parking for 84 cars will be available.

According to Rittrong Wangsuwan of the Church's Thailand Physical Facilities Department, Thailand has 19 Church-owned meetinghouses plus 18 rental buildings for 43 congregations. There is one stake and five districts.