

GOOD NEWS FROM THE HILL

Delivering Hope, Healing & Hospitality to our Community

JULY 2016



COURTLAND-OAKFIELD
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

PLAYING WITH NUMBERS

It was a couple years ago when a quick eyeballing of those seated in the sanctuary one Sunday morning suggested that there were more of us on hand than one might have expected to see who were not part of this congregation when I first arrived at Courtland-Oakfield in 2011. (This has nothing to do with me; that's simply a point of reference for what follows.) I took a look at the registration pad and found that, in fact, close to 30 percent of those present that day could be counted as relative newcomers.

It's not something I check with any regularity, but there are times I stop and look at that particular way of tallying worship attendance, most recently on the last Sunday of June when 34 of the 65 souls present were not part of the congregation five years ago. I'd guess this is the first time during that stretch of time when more than half of our number fit into the "recent arrivals" category.

The overall numbers in those five years have not changed much. Our average weekly worship attendance was at 65 in 2011, peaked at 81 in 2013, and slipped back to 77 in 2015. We're at 79 so far in 2016.

But these days, it is congregations similar to ours that are closing their doors. Congregations with a tradition of drawing directly from their local community and sustaining themselves through family connections are the ones that are struggling to make it as the landscapes of their communities change and families disperse.

If as many as half of the people who worship here; who serve here; who give here; who are growing in meaningful relationships here; and who have found here a place where they can settle in and receive gifts of hope, healing, and hospitality are, essentially, new here; then regardless of the net totals, we are a living, breathing, thriving, growing church.

Well done, good and faithful servants, old and new. Never retreat from your passion for becoming people who love as God loves.

*Grace & Peace,
Pastor Robert*

IT'S TIME TO DELIVER HOPE, HEALING AND HOSPITALITY AT ROCKFORD FARM MARKET

Courtland-Oakfield will be present once again at the Rockford Farm Market on **Saturday, July 16!** Typical of past years, we're asking for donations of home-baked goods to sell at the booth. Please deliver your contributions to the church between 10:00 and 11:00 AM, Friday, July 15, or bring them to our booth on Saturday. If you need to make other arrangements, contact Jeannette Greeb, 616-828-9663. Proceeds will help North Kent Community Services combat food insecurity in northern Kent County.

Set-up volunteers, starting at 7:00 AM, and booth attendants, 8:00 AM-1:00 PM, are needed. We've typically had two or more shifts, the first starting early, the second at about 9:00 or 10:00 AM.

This is a great opportunity to let the people of our community know who we are and what we're all about. Prepare by practicing lines like these in front of your mirror:

"Good morning!"

"Are you familiar with Courtland-Oakfield church?"

"We'd love to see you on a Sunday morning and if you don't receive a warm welcome when you come, we'll refund the price of the pie you're buying."

"This is just the tip of the iceberg of how well we eat at Courtland-Oakfield."

PASTOR'S SCHEDULE IN JULY

A combination of vacation days and participation in the upcoming God Squad retreat to Canada Creek Ranch will make Pastor Robert unavailable July 10 (following worship) through July 14 and July 16 through July 20. If you have pastoral care needs during that time, please call Rev. Bill Johnson, 616-366-2421. Isaiah study group will not meet July 12 or July 19.

JULY "SPECIALS"

Rev. Thurlan Meredith will be in our pulpit on **Sunday, July 17**. "Flutique," a flute ensemble from Alma, MI, will provide special music on **Sunday, July 31**.

*Open hearts,
open minds,
open doors.*

10295 Myers Lake Ave • Rockford, MI 49341 • 616-866-4298 • www.coumc.weebly.com

Sunday Service at 10:00 am

GOD SQUAD JR. and then some!

Leaders of our under-age-13 group are planning a picnic with yard games to be enjoyed by all **Sunday, July 31**, following worship. Bring your favorite summer picnic dish to share and expect a few fun surprises.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR SUMMER VACATION?

Are you pitching shut-out innings when not slamming RBI doubles à la Derek Wedge?

Are you bouncing up and down on the waves of your favorite lake and shouting out occasional "ahoy"s to the God Squad when they pass by?

Or are you content to sit back with a drink and a snack and take in a Whitecaps game with friends?

How are you passing the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer? Do you have pictures to share? Pass them on to Pastor Robert at roberte1300@att.net and we'll include them in the August newsletter and/or post them on the church's website, coumc.weebly.com

ADOPT-A-ROAD CLEANUP

What's the point of keeping the lawn mowed and the flowers blooming around the church if a person has to run a gauntlet of trash and litter to get here? Prepare the way of the Lord, anytime from **July 23 to July 31**, by relieving the mile of Myers Lake Avenue that stretches from 12 Mile Road to 13 Mile Road from the oppression of rubbish and refuse.

1. Pick a portion of road for which you will accept responsibility.
2. Recruit a clean-up buddy or two or three.
3. Post the day and time when you will do your good deed by signing up at Guest Central or notifying Kary Scheiern (754-7037; karyscheiern@yahoo.com). Kary will ensure that you have access to vests and bags, provide all necessary guidelines, and track that our entire Adopt-a-Road commitment is being met.

PIE AND PROSE AT THE PARSONAGE

The next month with five Mondays is August which means that the parsonage will be open on **Monday, August 29, 6:30 PM**, for anyone who wants to enjoy some good conversation alongside a tasty dessert. Our selection this time around is *Go Set a Watchman* by Harper Lee. The author's first, and until last summer, only previously published book was *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

In 1960, readers were introduced to Atticus Finch, one of modern literature's most inspiring models of personal morality and legal integrity, who used his gifts as a lawyer to defend a black man falsely accused of raping a white woman in a small Alabama town filled with prejudice and hatred in the 1930s. But in this tale, set two decades later in the 1950s, Atticus is a racist who once attended a Klan meeting and asks his daughter, "Do you want Negroes by the carload in our schools and churches and theaters? Do you want them our world?" We'll see if we can work our way through the contradictions. A slice of pecan or peach pie will help.

Go Set a Watchman is widely available through the Kent District and Grand Rapids library systems in a variety of formats and can be purchased through several online outlets. If you have the time, you might also want to revisit (or visit if you've not already) *To Kill a Mockingbird*, either the novel or the movie

AT A GLANCE

Every Sunday

10:00 AM Worship

Every Monday, Wednesday, Friday

10:00 AM Senior Fitness

Tuesday, July 5

9:30 AM or 7:00 PM Isaiah study group

Wednesday, July 6

8:00 AM Breakfast at Halfway Restaurant

Monday, July 11-Friday, July 15

God Squad Canada Creek Ranch Retreat

Wednesday, July 20

8:00 AM Breakfast at Halfway Restaurant

Thursday, July 21

6:00-10:00 PM Governance Board Meeting

Saturday, July 23-Sunday, July 31

Summer Adopt-a-Road Cleanup

Sunday, July 31

11:30 AM All-Church Picnic



Happy Birthday!

- 2 Luanne Wedge
- 7 Hank Greeb
- 8 Michele Sorensen
- 11 Sherry Ross
- 12 Tracy Streiff
- 17 Dave Kennedy
- 18 Sue Ellis
- 21 Brendon Schippers
- 24 Leona Post



Wedding Anniversaries

- 8 Dave and Judy Dunaven
- 10 Bill Martin & Kary Scheiern
- 10 Chris and Heather Kaufmann

