

Church Profile

Who Are We?

The First Church of God of Alma, Michigan, is a congregation of approximately 325 adults. Founded in 1914, the church has used its central location (in the downtown area of Alma) to serve the community for many decades. The congregation is diverse economically, socially, and denominationally. Worshipping together are business people, farmers, maintenance workers, correction officers, executives, college and public school teachers, CPA's, professional counselors, college students, physicians, retirees, and more—a true cross-section of the community. The congregation ranges from new-borns to senior citizens, includes many young families, and consequently many children and teens.

Our Facilities

The facilities housing our congregation include the following three structures: Our main structure is a well-maintained, 100-year-old structure containing a beautiful sanctuary with stained-glass windows and a pipe organ. Attached to this structure is an addition (built in the mid-sixties) that houses Sunday school rooms and offices. Our second structure is our Family Enrichment Center, called **His Place**, that we built in 1983. This building and its many programs have been serving the community for over three decades. The **Filling Station**, built in 2000, is our third structure, and it has several class rooms, a kitchen, and a large open area. This building is used primarily by our youth.

Our Schedule on Sunday Morning

On Sunday mornings, we begin with a coffee and fellowship time from 8:45 to 9:15 in the gym at His Place. We then have our Christian Education hour from 9:15 until 10:15. During this time, Sunday school classes are provided for pre-K through adult. Typically, our adults have 3-4 different classes from which to choose. Our worship service runs from 10:30 to 11:30.

Our Staff

During the last sixty years, our congregation has been served by three senior pastors - Pastor George Bush (22 years), Pastor Brian Wickes (18 years), and most recently, Pastor Steve Wimmer (18 years). Since the early 1990's, our staff has also included a full-time youth pastor and a full-time worship pastor. Though we are presently without a full-time worship pastor, the plan is to begin a search once we've filled the senior pastor position. During this interim period, we have hired Past Jim Horn as our interim pastor, and we are using members of our congregation to organize and lead our worship services. Our youth pastor, who has been serving our church for the past eight years, is Ben Kreider.

Our other paid staff members include: Christine Sipka, Director of His Place, her two assistants, Connie Bieske and Jessica Ackerman; our church secretary, Audra Devine; our tech and communication specialist, Bryon Shaw; and our three part-time custodians, Doug Humphrey, Juan Ramirez, and Larry Hamp.

A Sunday Visit

Let's attend a Sunday morning service. You would be welcomed by greeters, handed a worship bulletin, and ushered to your seat. Taped music might provide a prelude. Typically, the choir might sing. Sometimes the orchestra might accompany congregational singing or play an offertory. Guitars, traps, piano, keyboard, and organ could be part of the music of worship. The church is amply blessed with quality vocalists that morning. The congregational music typically would be a combination of worship choruses and traditional hymns conducted at a "try-to-get-your-breath" pace which lends a sense of excitement and anticipation. The music and other activities will be keyed carefully to the theme of the morning sermon. Sunday night activities consist primarily of our children's choir programs, our 5th and 6th grade program (called Planet 56), and our junior/senior high youth activities.

Youth Activities

Youth programs include Sunday school classes for junior high and senior high. Both junior and senior high youth groups meet Sunday nights. Youth attend youth conventions and concerts, and they have been challenged on wilderness trips and service projects. Several members of our youth have been on work teams building churches in Honduras.

We have a fair number of young adults (post high school) in our congregation. Some work in the area, some attend college, and some do both. On Sunday morning, we have a class for this group.

Missions

Our church supports a variety of missionaries, both home and abroad. Our missionaries are located in Kenya, Haiti, Turkey, Honduras, as well as central Michigan and Indiana. We support agencies as diverse as the state camp-meeting, the Gideons, Youth for Christ, Inter-Varsity, and Pregnancy Services.

Our congregation has maintained a very special relationship with Pastor Donny Allen, a Church of God pastor in Honduras. That relationship has allowed our church to send numerous work teams to Honduras over the years. Well over one hundred members of our congregation have participated in these visits to Honduras.

His Place Ministries

His Place was built on faith in 1983 and has become a success story. The gymnasium complex includes a kitchen, conference room, meeting rooms, and storage facilities. While it is an extension of ministries of First Church of God, it functions, too, as its own organization and serves the church and community in a large variety of ways.

During the week, His Place is very busy. It offers a place for morning walkers, a coffee hour on Wednesdays and Thursdays, sponsors open-rec basketball on Thursday evenings, Pickle ball on Tuesday evenings, and sponsors His Kids—a popular elementary after-school program for Alma children. One of its main activities during the week are its FREE exercise and fitness classes, all of which provide FREE childcare. During the month of June, His Place provides two FREE summer camps for kids: a basketball camp and an art camp.

His Place is used for church and community dinners and receptions. It has served as a polling place and site for Red Cross blood drives. When the whole congregation must assemble, His Place is the location that houses everyone.

Other Activities

Other groups and ministries that that serve and meet regularly include: our Stephen Ministers, intercessory prayer groups, senior citizens Teamagers, Christ-care groups, and numerous other small groups.