

Vineyard Church opens its doors

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

A new church has opened its doors locally: The Vineyard Church of Farmington Hills. Pastor Steve Whitney said church members actually pray for other churches and the local government and its goal is to bring unity to the many different sects in the area.

The Vineyard Church at 29200 Shilohvassie used to be a daycare, before that, it was an Assembly of God church built in 1968.

"We purchased it last fall," said Whitney.

The small congregation first met at a rented facility in Southfield and has been together more than three years.

The building's drop ceiling was taken out to reveal the ceiling beams and arch. New lighting and fans were installed as well in the sanctuary.

"We have 30 adult members and 30 kids," said Whitney.

The Vineyard church started in California in the early 1980s, said Whitney, who himself was raised Catholic.

There are now 500 such churches nationwide. Vineyard bridges the evangelical with the Pentecostal, said the pastor.

There will be a dedication of the building on Sept. 15, with a church service at 10:30 a.m. and entertainment and refreshments at 1-3 p.m. The dedication is at 5 p.m.

Whitney said the church prays for other churches and has called local places of worship to see if Vineyard congregation can help them. A former postal service employee, Whitney went to seminary to be a Protestant pastor.

After being certified as a counselor, he worked in a mission in Pontiac and this eventually led him to planning the Vineyard Church.

"This is all I'm going to do," Whitney said. Because the congregation is small, "we're very close and we all work hard."



Whitney

"We want to reach out to the community," he said. The congregation wants to be a help spiritually and otherwise, he said.

"We gave away 20 percent of the money we collected to missions or other benefactors," the pastor said.

"We'd love to have more members," he said.

Sunday service is 10:30 a.m.

"We dress casually," Whitney added.

As far as the future, the pastor said he hopes to have the church grow in membership, and there's room to enlarge the sanctuary.

For information, call the church at (248) 442-7854.

VELA helps get cable TV programs on the air

Magically, your favorite TV programs show up at their scheduled times. Did you ever wonder "how" your local cable access programs get on air?

(Government channels: Farmington 15; Farmington Hills 8; and Novi 13 and Public Access: INFO TV-12). You would think that in today's age of cell phones, laptops, and instant messaging, a single press of a button did it. But until recently, that was definitely not the case at Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission studios.

Remember the old cartoon where a giant locomotive forges its way up the steep mountain?

The reader assumes it's the mighty diesel engine that did the job when in fact it was a little mouse running on a treadmill.

Who woulda thunk? And, who would think that one person did a massive job like TV playback manually every day all year long.

That's right. Each day, a programmer would pull some 20 tapes and stack them on a shelf in play-order. Using two tape decks, he could play one and pre-load the next. However, he had to set his alarm to let him

CABLE CONNECTION

know when to come back and change tapes. This archaic playback ritual was repeated for all channels all day long until the programmer went home. When his day was done, so was programming. There was no back-up mouse "so-to-speak" to run the machine.

There had to be a better way and SWOCC Studios found it. It is called VELA, a computer hardware and software system that essentially digitizes program tapes, generates play-lists, and provides for automatic playback.

Now, through advanced technology, playback can be round-the-clock. Plus, the system has the capability to run short fillers such as promos, PSAs, and station IDs that was not possible before. They in turn help give the government and public access channels a slicker, more commercial broadcast look. In fact, one viewer recently called to tell us she thought she was watching network TV.

Best of all, the VELA, or file server as it is commonly called,

runs on a MPEG2 (digital) format which results in improved broadcast quality. Yet another reason why cablevision looks more like network television today.

Perhaps the biggest and most welcome advantage of the new system is that tapes can be changed out at any time. For example, if there was an emergency broadcast that needed to get out, SWOCC could pre-empt current programming to show it. The Windows-based operating system allows changes to be made more easily and more timely. That's good news not only for the government channels but for public access users as well.

The bottom line is that it means the potential for increased programming on each channel and a fresher mix. A new look, a new way of doing things, and new proof that cable does not have to look like cable. It's the 21st century and the sky is the limit.

Marsha Oraz is Community Producer for the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission (SWOCC). The next Cable Access Committee meeting is Sept. 10. The next SWOCC meeting is Nov. 6.

RECREATION NEWS

For more information on the following programs contact the Farmington Hills Department of Special Services at (248) 473-1800.

Hay, Hot Dogs & S'mores

Spend an evening in Heritage Park, eat hot dogs around the fire, enjoy the fall colors as you cruise along the park trails, and then come back to the campfire for s'mores. Sept. 14; session 1, 4-6:30 p.m.; and session 2, 5:30-7 p.m.

Cost is \$7 per person and pre-registration is required.

Preschool Classes

Brand new preschool classes begin the week of Sept. 9.

Fall Program Registration

Fall program registration for

residents and non-residents is now open.

Parkey's Halloween Programs

Kids ages 3-5 can have fun with Parkey's Pumpkin

Painting 10-11:30 a.m.

Saturday, Oct. 26 and kids ages

6-10 can enjoy Parkey's

Pumpkin Carve 12:30-2 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 26. The cost is

\$10 per child. Pre-registration is required.

Haunted Hike Stations

The Recreation Division is looking for groups that would be interested in creating a station for the annual Halloween Haunted Hike.

The event will be held 7:30-9:30 p.m. p.m. Friday and

Saturday, Oct. 25 and 26 in

Heritage Park. Interested parties should contact Cathy at (248) 473-1802. Participating groups will be paid a stipend of \$150 for participating both days.

Open Gym

Get your exercise at the Costick Activities Center Gym (11 Mile between Middlebelt and Inkster).

Adult basketball, 9-11 a.m.

Sundays; adult volleyball, 11

a.m.-1 p.m. Sundays; teen basketball, 1-3 p.m. Sundays; ping

pong, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sundays.

The cost to participate for

residents 17 and under is \$2;

non-residents at \$4.

Eighteen and over is \$4 for residents and \$5 for non-residents.

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