

# COTTONWOOD CHURCH



October 2023

# Who We Are

A very short history:

1970- Cottonwood was begun by people from a variety of churches who desired to begin a new church presence in Jenison.

1983- The building which now is **Cottonwood Christian Learning Center** was built.

1990- *Stephen's Ministry* began. (Now our variation is called *We Care*)

1996- **Cottonwood Christian Learning Center** was opened.

1998- The first full-time youth director was hired.

2008- *The Gathering* (community and youth center building) was built.

2019- Connected **The Gathering** building to the main building and added nurseries and additional classrooms to the main floor.



# What We Believe

We usually say we are Cottonwood or Cottonwood Church, but our longer name is Cottonwood Christian Reformed Church. A few words about who we are and what we believe:

## We are Cottonwood

Cottonwood is a local church in Jenison, Michigan. We are located “down the hill” next to Maplewood Park. Our desire, and God’s will, is for us to be a community actively involved in our community sharing good news with our neighbors through what we say and do.

## We are a Christian church

We believe the Bible is the Word of God: It leads us to God; shows the way of salvation and reveals how God calls us to live. We believe in a Triune God: Father, Son and Spirit. God is our perfect heavenly Father, creator of everything. Jesus is the eternal Son of God; the Son who died on the cross and rose from the grave. He is Savior and Lord. And the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Lord present with the church. The Spirit leads us into God’s truth. The Spirit enables us to believe and empowers us to serve our God. And we believe in grace. God’s grace. “By grace are we saved through faith.”

## We are a Reformed church

Saying we are Reformed means we are part of that historic branch of Christianity. We believe the teachings of the historic Christian creeds (especially the Apostles’ Creed) and the Reformed confessions (especially the Heidelberg Catechism). Being Reformed also means we believe our world belongs to God and all of life is to be lived to His honor and glory. And, finally, to be Reformed means that the church is to be ever-reforming; listening and submitting to the Spirit of God.

## We are a Church

God has called us to be a people that worships and serves Him. We are called to do this together. We are a community of believers desiring to grow in God’s grace together. We say that Cottonwood is a church where we ***gather community and grow in Christ***. Our purpose is to grow in our faith and to continually invite others to join with us in seeking God.



# Our Structure, Leadership, & Ministries Staff

Pastor Matt Palsrok

Pastor Since 2000

Preaching, leadership, pastoral care, outreach

Pastor Wes Milleson

Began as youth pastor in 2018

Youth ministries, preaching

Pastor Ben Tol

Calling Pastor since 2021

Eric Gladding

Joined staff in 2012 as part time Youth & Worship Coordinator

Currently, full-time Worship Coordinator

Bernie VanDer Klok

Church Administrator since 2018

Kathy Feenstra

Ministries Coordinator since 2015

Hailey VanLaar

Youth Administrator since 2021

Kim Mulder

Director of Cottonwood Christian Learning Center since 1999

Ron and Bev Jipping

Cafe, Gym, Youth Area custodians

Vicki DeKoning

Church custodian



# Council

The council is what some churches call a church board and others refer to as the consistory. It consists of elders and deacons. Elders are responsible for the spiritual health of the church. Deacons' ministry is focused on caring for the material needs of the church and community and overseeing the financial concerns of the church.

Elders and deacons are both elected and selected. The congregation votes for those they believe will serve well in these positions. After the vote, names are drawn from the votes cast.

# Committees

Building & Grounds--oversees the properties and facilities

Executive--officers of the church

Finance--develops and oversees the budget

Missions--supports outreach locally and globally

Worship--helps coordinate Sunday worship

Christian Education Assistance--administrative help with tuition costs for families sending their children to Christian schools

Fellowship & Service--coordinates church meals and fellowship times

Community Connections--outreach to our community

Safe Church-develop and implement policies and procedures to provide a safe church environment

Vision--develop long range planning and goals

Education--oversees the teaching ministry of Cottonwood Church

# Our Commitment To Our Members

## **A place to worship**

- We seek to bring joyous worship that honors God and brings us closer to God our Father and Jesus our Savior.
- We seek to use a wide variety of gifts and talents of the people of our congregation.
- We desire to be a welcoming community; we want people to know we want them to join with us.

## **A place where members (and our greater community) are cared for**

### **We Care**

We Care is the primary way members care for members. A team of volunteers spend time visiting members in their homes, in the hospital, and in other times of joy and need.

### **We Serve**

We Serve is a ministry with a focus to help members of our church and the community with tangible needs. We have a large group of people willing to assist with home projects, yard work, transportation, meals, etc. We ask people from our congregation to bring needs to our attention.

### **Pastoral Visits**

The Senior Pastor and Calling Pastor, with the help of Shepherding Elders and Deacons, meet with people to offer spiritual support and guidance.

### **Small Groups**

One thing that we truly value at Cottonwood is community and one of the best ways to get connected with our family and start meeting others is through small groups. Small groups are where you can develop real and lasting relationships that go beyond Sunday morning. Many groups meet together once a month, some gather socially and some gather to do Bible study.

### **Elders and Deacons**

Groups of elected members who offer spiritual, personal, material, and financial care to the congregation and community.

# A Place To Grow

*Nursery* (Sunday mornings, ages 0-2)

*Walk With Me* (children's worship, ages 3-5, meets during morning worship services)

*Sunday School* (preschool- 8th grade, meets 10:00-10:45am on Sunday mornings)

*Vacation Bible School* (takes place in the summer)

*GEMS* (Girl's club, 2nd-5th grade: Monday night 6:30-8:30pm)

*Cadets* (Boy's club, 2nd-5th grade: Monday night 6:30-8:30pm)

*Middle School Youth Group* (Wednesday night 6:30-8:30pm)

*High School Youth Group* (Sunday night 5-7pm)

*Bible Studies:*

Men's:

Monday nights at church at 7:30pm

First and third Wednesday mornings at 6:30am at Russ' in Grandville

Women's:

Tuesday nights at church at 7:00pm

First and Third Wednesday afternoons at church at 1:00pm

Thursday mornings at church at 9:30am

*Over 50 and Single* (fellowship group)

*Men's Softball* – summer leagues



# A Safe Place

Policy

Background checks

Safe Church Team

# Our Members Commitment To The Church

## Willingness to Serve

Cottonwood only exists because of volunteers

Diversity & Unity of Gifts

Volunteer Surveys

Discover Your Gifts Survey

## A Commitment to Grow

Finding a place that fits for you

Practice Spiritual Disciplines

Faithfully join in worship

Follow Christ daily

Mutual submission/Church discipline

## Willingness to Support the ministries

Servant's heart

Stewardship

Time, talent, treasure

How Cottonwood's finances work

Supporting Cottonwood financially



# How To Connect

**Mobile-friendly website**



**Online giving**



**Cottonwood Weekly email**-includes announcements, calendar, and bulletin.



**Prayer email**- sign up to receive requests and updates throughout the week.



**Mail slot**-contact Bernie at [bernievk@cottonwoodcrc.com](mailto:bernievk@cottonwoodcrc.com) to request a mail slot.

**Breeze account**- our online directory. Contact Bernie to request an invitation to join.