Congregation celebrates 100 years

The Lake Orion congregation of the Community of Christ church, at 531 East Flint Street, recently celebrated the 100th anniversary of the founding of the congregation. On Saturday, Aug. 13, the congregation hosted an old fashioned hymn festival service with singing of the hymns that were popular one hundred years ago along with the narration of the stories behind the hymns. Afterward, family and friends enjoyed an ice cream social.

On Sunday morning, the congregation formally commemorated the anniversary with a worship service featuring testimonies by members of the congregation who shared their memories of the many years of the church. The service concluded with a special congregational prayer by Evangelist Tom Smelser.

The first service held in Lake Orion was on July 10, 1912. That same year, the small group decided to rent the two-story hall on the corner of Broadway and Shadbolt streets from a Mr. Hoffman. A half year's rent was $24.

In August, 1916, members of the church in Lake Orion attended a district conference in Detroit and requested to formally organize as a congregation.

The ten charter members were Dur Taylor, Frank Davis, Olga Davis, Julia Hammond, Lillian Forbes, Clarence Taylor, George Hugill, Josephine Jewell, Louis Oliver and Orville Howard.

On August 16, 1916, the Lake Orion congregation of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was formally established. In 2001, the RLDS church changed its name to Community of Christ.

In 1919, the congregation purchased the hall for $1,200 and continued to worship there until they outgrew the building in 1945. In 1949, a new church building was opened at 531 East Flint Street and the building was expanded in 1961 to its present state.

The congregation has had 23 pastors over the one hundred years with Gary Perria as the current pastor.

Since 2009, the church has hosted Remnant Project Ministries food pantry, which donates between 2,000 to 2,500 lbs. of food a week to needy families in the community.