

Sermon: A Delightful Heritage  
Psalm 16  
Deuteronomy 8:11-18

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Orchard Lake, Michigan

### *A Delightful Heritage*

This message is given on the 136<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dedication of Orchard Lake Chapel held on July 18, 1874! Pealing of the church bell before each service today in honor of the day.

#### **Psalm 16**

<sup>1</sup>Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge. <sup>2</sup>I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you." <sup>3</sup>As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight. <sup>4</sup>Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names upon my lips. <sup>5</sup>The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. <sup>6</sup>The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage. <sup>7</sup>I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. <sup>8</sup>I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. <sup>9</sup>Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure. <sup>10</sup>For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit. <sup>11</sup>You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

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"That day of dedication will never be forgotten by the people who arrived on foot, on horseback, and in carriages and by boat. Among them were many whose hands had helped to hew the timbers and erect the building which, now complete, stood proudly on the little knoll between the toll road and Orchard Lake, in its grove of young oaks and hickories.

On the lake, a thirty-one foot two-masted gaff rigged sail boat which had cast off from Apple Island neared the dock. Its pilot was Forrest Campbell, known as the most skillful sailor on these lakes.

Among the first to step ashore were the architect of the building Henry T. Brush and his wife, Jeannie Campbell Brush. Then followed Colin and Caroline Campbell with Professor Charles Louis Loos of Bethany College, who was to preach the dedicatory sermon. Dr. Loos had brought his daughter Louise with him, which proved to be the beginning of a romance as she later became Mrs. John Campbell.

John Harvey and his wife Jessie Campbell Harvey were in the group, and other guests who had shared the hospitality of the Campbell home. A young girl named Caroline, after her mother, was called "Tina" by her family. She too was in the group. On her the mantle of her mother's faith and devotion was destined to fall. With warm fervor known to pioneers in a sacred cause, Colin and Caroline Campbell greeted those that were arriving. Even Michigan's Governor John J. Bagley came.

A whistle blast announced the approach of the little steamer "Pride of the Lake" and as the reeds off shore waved in the back wash from the reversed screw propeller the gang plank was lowered and some forty people gathered from the two summer hotels came ashore.

As the hour set for the services approached, the entire company led by Mr. and Mrs. Campbell filed into the Chapel, filling it to capacity. In this congregation with her parents was a little girl named Nettie Dickie who later became Mrs. Frank Watchpocket.

The fulfillment of Mrs. Colin Campbell's dream came largely through her own faith, courage, and hard work. Three years earlier the cornerstone had been laid, the site donated by then State Senator Peter Dow. That canny Scotsman made provision in the deed that the property revert to him if it should cease to be used for a church.... It is well for our generation to pause here and pay tribute to the devotion of the Campbells during those years."<sup>1</sup>

And so it is well for us today, 136 years to the day from when this dedication service was held here on this property, to pause and remember and celebrate not only the Campbell's devotion which planted the seeds for this faith community, but to remember the faithfulness of God and those whom Psalm 16 calls "noble ones", those faithful saints who have worshipped and learned and served in the name of Christ in this place ever since. Today we pay tribute to them and give thanks to God for a delightful heritage!

Briefly let me highlight three things which are both foundation stones upon which the heritage of this faith community rests and building blocks to help us sustain and grow a vital ministry over the next 136 years and more, God willing. The first is **worship**.

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<sup>1</sup> This quotation taken from The Story of Orchard Lake Community Church, Presbyterian compiled by J.A. Coevering and authorized by the Session in 1958 in honor of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this faith community. (pp. 6-7)

Psalm 16:2 states "I say to the LORD, 'You are my LORD; I have no good apart from you.'" For 136 years people have been gathering here to declare they belong to the Lord. They have gathered to worship the one true God known in Scripture and revealed most clearly in the person of Jesus Christ who lived, died, and rose again for their salvation. Jesus Christ has been, is, and we pray will continue to be the foundation upon which this faith community lives and moves and has its being. Through hard times and good times people have gathered here to worship Jesus Christ for 136 years. ***As we look to the future, it is our continuing commitment to be a worshipping faith community that will sustain and grow the Lord's work in this place.***

The second is ***faith development***. Psalm 16:7-8 states "I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand I will not be shaken." For 136 years people have been gathering here to grow in their knowledge and understanding of what faith in Jesus Christ is all about. We enjoyed a wonderful celebration of our 2010 VBS ministry this morning. It is the handing on of our faith tradition to each new generation which keeps this faith community alive. Beginning with the Campbells and down through the years, this community has remained strong because people wanted to learn more about faith through bible study, sermons, Sunday school classes and other activities which encourage people to grow in their faith in Christ. The Lord gives us instruction in the understanding of what our faith is all about.

I was blessed in service to my first congregation after seminary to work alongside Henry Jones. Henry served the Orchard Lake congregation back in the years when the full time ministry was being established here in the early 1940's. I have always remembered one of his favorite sayings: "You only grow old when you think you are too old to grow." There is great wisdom in those words from our past and for our future. People here in the past were not content to simply mark time. They committed themselves to growth in faith and ministry. ***As we look to the future, it is our continuing commitment to faith development that will sustain and grow the Lord's work in this place!***

The third foundation stone and building block for this faith community is ***mission***. Psalm 16:4 states "Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows..." affirming the need to reach out to others and draw them into a relationship with God and with the

community of believers where they can worship and grow in faith in the one true God. We were also privileged this morning to hear the report of those who participated in our youth mission team outreach to Nashville last month. This congregation has a strong heritage of serving others in the name of Christ locally, nationally, and internationally. It is in our service to others in Christ's name that we allow our worship and faith development to be expressed as God desires, in serving the needs of others so they too may embrace faith in the God we know and serve. Faith was never meant in God's plan to simply enrich and provide for us personally. Israel, from the very beginning of God's interaction with his children, was blessed to be a blessing to all other nations. We are celebrating a wonderful faith heritage today, but we must always remember it's not just about us. We are blessed in so many ways so we can reach out to others and do what Christ has called us to do – feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, release those captive to sin, and do all we can in Christ's name to bring the practices of his kingdom to life in our lives and our homes and our communities. ***As we look to the future, it is our continuing commitment to mission that will sustain and grow the Lord's work in this place!***

These are the foundation stones of our delightful heritage. These are the building blocks which will sustain and grow a vital ministry in the name of Christ long into the future. Now let us together offer ourselves once again to the Lord in dedication and service as was done 136 years ago today, praying together the prayer of dedication printed in your bulletins today:

*Forasmuch as it pleased God to put into the hearts of his servants to build these facilities for the worship and service of God, let us fulfill God's purpose by obeying Christ's commands, through the power of the Holy Spirit. For the worship of God and the proclamation of the Gospel, the giving of comfort to those in need, the teaching and guiding of young and old, caring for Christ, the Church, and the community, we dedicate anew ourselves and these facilities. Amen.*