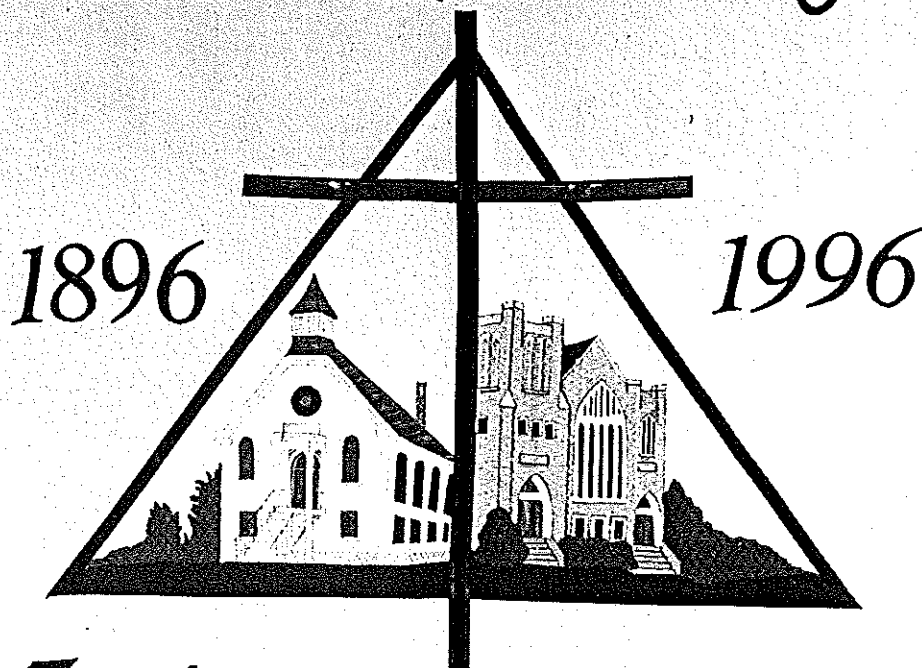


The Pleasant Street
1896
100th Anniversary
1996
Christian Reformed Church

PLEASANT ST.
CHRISTIAN
REFORMED CHURCH
100th Anniversary



For the Lord is good and
His love endures forever;
His faithfulness continues
through all generations.

~ Psalm 100:5

100th Anniversary

September 7, 1896 - September 7, 1996

The Pleasant Street
Christian Reformed Church

Whitinsville, Massachusetts

CENTENNIAL TEXT

Psalm 100: verse 5

*For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

CENTENNIAL SONG

Great is Thy Faithfulness

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with thee;
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
As thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

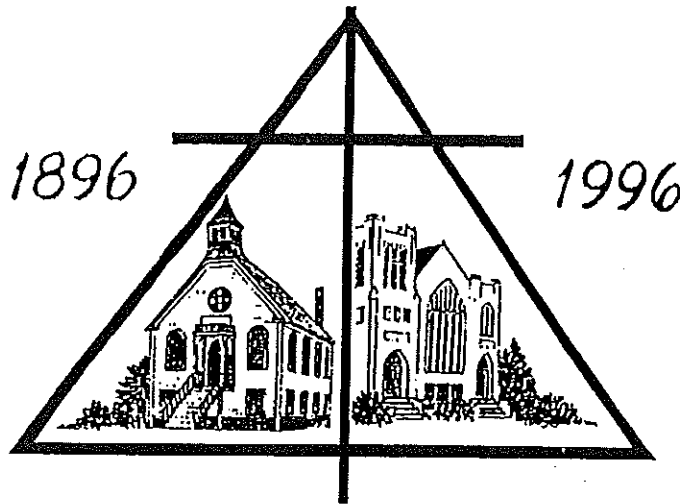
Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

CHORUS:

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed thy hand has provided,
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

A Prayer of Praise, Penitence and Petition. . .



Almighty and Eternal God, one hundred years ago you did in your Divine Providence lead our ancestors in the organization of this church. Today we rejoice and exclaim, "Ebenezer, hitherto has the Lord helped us." We PRAISE you for the Holy Catholic Church of Jesus Christ of which we, by your grace, are members. We thank you for the Pleasant Street Church and for the influence for good it has exerted upon its members and the community. We bless you for the faithful pastors who during these many years have led us in the green pastures of your Word, preaching both its grace and its judgments. We are grateful for all those who have been instrumental in furthering your cause in our midst. We have seen the Banner of Truth faithfully and fearlessly unfurled, even to the fourth and fifth generations. Praise be to you, the Triune God.

We also come to you in true PENITENCE, confessing that we have not always carried out your mandate to preach the gospel in word and deed as you have commanded. Forgive us also for too often receiving and holding for ourselves that which we should have shared with others, for sometimes forgetting the words of our Savior, "Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these, you did it unto me." We have not always ". . . loved you above all and our neighbor as ourselves." We plead for your forgiveness,

trusting in your promise that if we confess, you will forgive. For your redemptive work, O Savior, we praise you.

Oh Lord, we PETITION you to remember and bless our church as long as you tarry. May the Love and Truth of your Holy Word always be heralded by its members in your world. Bless our homes that they may be citadels of righteousness with Christ being the head and the Holy Spirit creating the atmosphere. Grant us, your people, dwelling in a world of war, unrest, and frustration, grace that we by prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving may let our praise and our request be made known to you. Grant also that the peace which passes all understanding may be ours when we keep our hearts and minds on Jesus Christ. May your church here and your church universal press on with faithfulness and fortitude, trusting in the promise of Christ, its head, that ". . . the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." This we pray in our Savior's name. AMEN

The Logo: The Cross, which is the hope of our salvation, emerges from the triangle representing the Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Within the bounds of the Holy Triangle and overshadowed by the Cross of all compassion, the Pleasant Street Church, represented by its earliest and present edifice, reflects upon 100 years of God's blessing.

INDEX

Chapter

Banner	i
Title Page	iii
Centennial Text and Song	iv
Prayer of Praise & Petition	v
1. Pastor's Welcome	1
2. How It All Began	3
3. Original Notes and Documents	7
A Chronology of Early Events	8
Organization of the Congregation	11
The Consistory	11
The First Consistory Meeting	12
4. Our Ministers	13
The Rev. Feike J. Drost	14
The Rev. J. Jansen	16
The Rev. Foppe Fortuin	17
The Rev. Leonard Trap	18
The Rev. Ralph Bolt	20
The Rev. Lambertus Van Laar	22
The Rev. Nelson L. Veltman	23
The Rev. Richard R. DeRidder	25
The Rev. Nelson Vander Zee	26
The Rev. William F. Vander Hoven	27
The Rev. John T. Holwerda	28
The Rev. J. Peter Vosteen	30
The Rev. James Admiraal	31
The Rev. John H. Piersma	32
The Rev. John J. Wiegiers	33
The Rev. Robert W. Eckardt	34
The Rev. William G. Vis	36
Pastor Bruce M. Dykstra	37
An Afterword	38
5. Sons of the Congregation: Servants of the Lord	39
6. The Council	41
7. Ministry Coordination Team	45
8. Our Missionaries	47
John and Carol Berthelette	48
Gordon and Shirley Kooistra	49
9. In the Service of the Nation	51

Chapter

10.	Youth Ministries	55
	Church School - the past, the present	57
	Young Children and Worship	59
	Children's Church	60
	Cadet Corps	61
	Calvinettes and Busy Bees	62
	Junior High Youth Group	63
	Senior High Youth Group	65
11.	Training for Ministry and Christian Living	67
	Library	68
	Couples' Bible Fellowship	69
	Ladies' Fellowship	70
	Tuesday Evening Ladies' Bible Study	71
	Saturday Night Alive	72
	Small Groups	73
	Couples' Club	74
	Men's Tuesday Bible Study	75
	Adult Education	75
	Social Action Committee	75
12.	Outreach and Missions	77
	Women's Missionary Society	78
	Coffee Break	79
	Men's Life	81
	Friendship	81
	Palawan Project	82
13.	Music	85
	Men's Chorus	86
	RESOUND!	87
	Our Organ	88
14.	Memories of Six Pastors and a Widow	89
	Mrs. Lois Veltman	90
	The Rev. Richard De Ridder	91
	The Rev. William F. Vander Hoven	92
	The Rev. James Admiraal	94
	The Rev. J. Peter Vosteen	94
	The Rev. John H. Piersma	95
	The Rev. John J. Wieggers	96
15.	Recollections	97
	Jacob Feddema	98
	Doris E. Koopman	100
	Ms. Annie M. Plantinga	101
	Bernard Van Spyker	101
16.	A Vision for the Future	103
17.	Credits, Staff & Tributes	105

PASTOR'S WELCOME

Greetings and Congratulations

to war and to the mission field. Members of Pleasant Street Church have built businesses and homes that shape the character of our community.

Clearly evident throughout the history of this congregation is the faithfulness of its people to their God. They have built and maintained a Christian School. They have accepted great financial risk in building a new sanctuary in the face of the Great Depression. They have demonstrated a willingness to mold their lifestyle and church activities according to their understanding of God's Word. While some of those lifestyle decisions seem quaint from our perspective, they are certainly a mark of a people whose first desire is to worship and serve their God. May we never lose that focus.

I had an opportunity to read the copy of this Centennial Memorial Book prior to publication. What a thoroughly enjoyable read. You are in for a treat! As I read through the history of the Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church, four things impressed me.

The first is the inevitable reality that the church is affected by trends and events in the society around it. The struggle of the transformation to English is an inevitable part of moving to this new community. Pleasant Street Church would not be the same if not for World War II, and the infusion of new members and new ideas that took place as a result. The impact of the rise and fall of the Whitin Machine Works is undeniable.

But there is also the reality of the impact of the church upon the society around it. Out of a small beginning, Pleasant Street Church has been instrumental in the birth of three other congregations. It has sent its children

The most important impression I developed as I read this history, however, is of the constant faithfulness of our God to his people. As you review this history, you will see again and again how God has provided vision, faith, strength, and leadership as the church has needed them. During my time here, many have said to me that God always sent just the right pastor at just the right time. As I read of the strengths and the integrity of those who have served the Pleasant Street Church, I find I must agree. I am honored to stand in their legacy. The Whitin Machine Works was a behemoth that basically directed the life of Whitinsville. It no longer exists, but by God's grace the Pleasant Street Church continues to thrive and make a difference in our community and in our world.

I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. (Psalm 89:1)

Pastor Bill Vis

HOW IT ALL BEGAN . . .

In the town square of Leeuwarden, the capital of the Province of Friesland in the Netherlands, stands the statue of a large black and white Holstein-Friesian cow. Carved into the pedestal upon which the animal stands are the words: UIS MEM - (OUR MOTHER). It is more than fitting that the first Dutch settlers in this soon-to-be significant, and largely Frisian, colony in New England should have come to the Blackstone Valley in connection with Holstein-Friesian cattle. As Longfellow has said “. . . hardly a man is now alive . . .” who remembers the people and the events of 1886, but many know the story of how Jan Bosma accompanied a herd of Holstein-Friesian cattle across the Atlantic Ocean to Castle Hill Farm in Whitinsville, Massachusetts.

Upon the death of her husband in 1882, Mrs. John C. Whitin took over the management of the Castle Hill property. The farm had a herd of registered Jersey cows which was decimated by tuberculosis. By early 1886, fifteen of the herd of twenty-six animals had died of the disease. Mrs. Whitin decided that she would replenish her stock with the famous Holstein-Friesian cattle from the Netherlands. Jan, upon arrival, saw a “land of opportunity” and stayed. Hendrick De Boer, a friend who had come with Jan, stayed for a short time but returned to the Netherlands, because he was betrothed to a young woman back home. Jan persuaded his sister and her husband, Wytse Feddema, to come from Holland to join him. Soon Wytse’s brother, Pieter, also came to the new land. Pieter’s wife and five children followed. Then came Rienstra, Plantinga, De Boer, Glashouwer, Werkman, Feenstra, Kooistra . . . the colony grew as the arrivals continued.

In 1886, the gigantic statue of *Liberty Enlightening the World* was dedicated in New York Harbor. A gift from the People of France to the People of the United States, Liberty held high her torch beside the “golden door”

welcoming the tired, the poor and the huddled masses of the world who were arriving in increasing numbers.

In Whitinsville, the Whitin Machine Works founded by Mr. John C. Whitin was becoming a gigantic industrial presence along the banks of the Mumford River.

In the same year in the city of Chicago, Dwight L. Moody began his evangelistic career by opening the Bible Institute for Foreign and Home Missions. In May, 1888, a great blizzard dumped 50 inches of snow on New England and drifts as high as 15 feet were reported. Trains were stalled and telegraph lines were felled as communication ground to a halt. In Johnstown, Pennsylvania, a flood snuffed out the lives of some 2,000 people when an artificial dam broke. In the year 1890, an encounter took place between the U.S. Army’s Seventh Cavalry and Sioux Indians on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota which would come to be known as the Massacre of Wounded Knee. The Seventh Cavalry was the same regiment which, under the command of Col. George Armstrong Custer, had been destroyed by the Indians fourteen years earlier at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Old hatreds burst their bonds on that winter day in December, 1890.

In 1892, Annie Moore of County Cork in Ireland became the first person to be processed through the newly opened Federal Immigration Center on Ellis Island in New York Harbor when an unidentified man stepped aside to let her precede him. The new facility replaced the overloaded and corruption-ridden terminal at Castle Garden located in the Battery at the tip of the island of Manhattan. Seven hundred people arrived at Ellis Island that day but only Miss Moore received a ten-dollar gold piece.

American history is full of tales of people who came to the United States to escape

persecution. Some sought to avoid religious persecution; the Puritans, Quakers, Catholics and dissenters generally came early for these reasons. Later Jews from Eastern Europe came to escape the pogroms of the Czar's Cossacks. Others came for political reasons - to escape the tyrannies of totalitarian governments. Some came to escape punishment for criminal behavior. Many came to escape grinding poverty and, sometimes, downright starvation. It would seem, however, that the Whitinsville colony's motivation was not related to such desperate matters of life and death. There was religious disagreement in the Netherlands, but many felt that it was their Christian duty to stay in the place where God had placed them and continue to represent what their conscience told them was right. Of course, Van Raalte and Scholte who led migrations of Hollanders to Michigan and Iowa did not follow that course. There was a perceived lack of economic opportunity and the realization that if anyone had an ambition to own property or rise in the social scale, it was a dream that was unlikely to be fulfilled in the economic setting of nineteenth century Holland. In the Netherlands, however, there was neither the starvation nor the grinding poverty which was being experienced by many in Ireland or Europe; nor was there the outright persecution to which the Jews of Poland and Russia were exposed.

It would seem that a rational decision was made by individuals who were daring and not afraid to strike out for greater opportunity which seemed possible in the New World. Most of those who immigrated were contacted by a family member or friend who had preceded them to the new land and they decided to follow the challenge they were offered. While most of them came from an agricultural environment and might have had ambitions to farm or own property, they generally settled for employment in the factories of the burgeoning industrial America which was reflected in the mills and works which had grown up along the hardworking rivers of New England. This process had begun decades earlier along the rivers of the

Blackstone Valley. Some did seek to own farms and the names on the deeds of many farms in Uxbridge and Northbridge reflected a change from Yankee to Dutch ownership.

The original group had no specific alignment with any religious denomination. With the advice and guidance of their first religious leader, Mr. Feike J. Drost, a teaching elder from Friesland, the Netherlands, they decided to join the relatively new, and strongly conservative, Christian Reformed Church which had been formed after separating from the Reformed Church in 1857.

The group which settled in the Blackstone Valley "circled the wagons" to protect itself and the culture it valued so highly, much like other ethnic groups in the area and the nation. The ingredients of the melting pot were being assembled. One of the new Christian Reformed community's most significant undertakings, the Christian School, was developed not only to educate the coming generations, but also to protect the culture of the group from being diluted by "American" influences.

The most obvious area where the cultural battle was fought was in the sphere of language. The conflict surrounding the use of the Dutch language to protect their heritage and culture continued until 1945 when its use in church services was finally dropped. Another attempt at insulation was in the area of "worldly amusements". In 1928, by decision of the Christian Reformed Synod, motion pictures, dancing, and card playing were declared to constitute amusements of a "worldly" nature which confessing members of the Christian Reformed Church should avoid.

The use of tobacco did not cause health concern in those days. Many Dutch men of the time were very fond of tobacco, especially cigars and pipes, and the atmosphere of smoke in the rooms where early consistory meetings were conducted was notoriously thick. A small drink, a

“slokje”, seemed to most Hollanders one of life's simpler pleasures; they generally did not frown on the prudent use of alcohol.

Participation in the forbidden entertainments, however, was felt to be inconsistent with membership in the church. Generations of young people struggled with this proscription. The veterans who returned from the battle fields of World War II were often bemused by what seemed to them rather simplistic views of life and the world. This culturally identifying practice also gradually disappeared, no doubt hastened by the advent of television which no Synod, Classis, or Consistory could control.

In the book, *Netherlanders In America*, Jacob Van Hinte has analyzed Dutch colonies in twenty states. He observes, “Thus I have reviewed many colonies of the most varied types. Some were religious in nature, others were neutral. Some were founded under Protestant auspices, others under Roman Catholic direction.

“I will conclude, therefore, by relating the account of a colony in which

disappointments were at a minimum and where there was no talk of deficits, a colony that may be regarded as a model and one of considerable interest for the future because no promoters in the usual meaning of the word were necessary. There were no governmental involvements or any important or self-important emigration committees. It was the kind of settlement that entailed a minimum of expense and which led to no subsequent criticism. There were no ‘official scapegoats’ because each member held himself individually responsible or, at the most, could only hold a single friend here and there responsible.

“This ideal settlement was the Frisian colony in Whitinsville, Massachusetts . . .”

In June, 1929, the *Boston Sunday Post* ran a feature article about the Whitin Machine Works and the village of Whitinsville. It stated, “Whitinsville is something more than a mere industrial center. It is one of the model villages of the world.”

The Story Continued...

The winds of change, however, were beginning to rustle the leaves of trees which had stood for generations. Less than twenty-five years after the appearance of the newspaper article there would be serious industrial unrest along the Mumford which would end in bitter confrontation between the Whitin Machine Works and its workers.

Jan Bosma came to Whitinsville, Massachusetts, from the village of Nyland near Sneek in Friesland in 1886. He came with the Holstein-Friesian cattle purchased by Mrs. John C. Whitin to replenish her Castle Hill Farm herd. Jan left Whitinsville within five years and moved to Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where he continued farming. He married Ms. Nellie Porter and they had four children. Jan

died on December 9, 1914, at the age of fifty-eight years. He is buried in Dalton, Massachusetts.

The Castle Hill Farm was purchased from the Whitin Machine Works by the Garelick Brothers' Farms of Franklin, Massachusetts, in 1953. Dairying operations were carried on at the farm but were interrupted by a fire in 1957 which destroyed the wooden buildings. Parts of the property were rebuilt and dairying was carried on until 1986, when commercial operations ceased.

Mr. E. Kent Swift, longtime President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Whitin Machine Works died in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, in July, 1959. His funeral was

conducted from the Village Congregational Church in Whitinsville. Many gathered to pay tribute to his memory and to the contribution he made to the history of the village of Whitinsville.

The Whitin Machine Works was acquired by the White Consolidated Industries of Cleveland, Ohio, in 1966. In 1967, the Whitin Machine Works plant and operations moved to Spartanburg, South Carolina. In 1983, the property formerly occupied by the Whitin Machine Works was taken over by Mr. Sidney Covich, an industrial real estate renovator. The buildings are now occupied by twenty different enterprises, and are at about two-thirds occupancy.

The flood of immigrants from all over the world gradually reduced to a trickle. Exclusion acts were passed in 1882 for Chinese and in 1924 for Japanese. In 1921 and 1924, quota laws were passed which

severely restricted all immigration. Among the last to leave Holland in the "...great migration," was Mr. Jacob Wiersma. Mr. Wiersma left Cherbourg, France, on the SS Orbita in September, 1922. After eleven days at sea, he sailed into New York harbor at night to see the Statue of Liberty brilliantly decked out in a display of lights. After passing through the formalities of Ellis Island, Mr. Wiersma's boat trip from Hoboken, New Jersey, to Providence, Rhode Island, was interrupted by a fire at sea in which he lost all of his belongings.

The Pleasant Street Church has grown in size from thirteen families in 1896 to 176 families with 504 professing members and 216 baptized members. In 1994, it decided to institute a one-million-dollar building expansion program.

Truly, God is good.

ORIGINAL NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

*A Chronology of Early Events
Organization of the Congregation
The Consistory
The First Consistory Meeting*

A Chronology of Early Events . . .

Leading to the Organization
of the First Christian Reformed Church
in Whitinsville, Massachusetts,
as Described in Notes Originally Written
in the Dutch Language . . .

Whitinsville, Mass.
De 27 Januarij 1895

Eerste vergadering als hollanders te bespreken
om samen Godsdiensst te houden
Den 3 Februa rij eerst samen te preek lezen

~~Den 30~~ Den 30 Maart vergadering
Bespreking over een leeraar

den 30 Junij vergadering over leeraar
trac te ment vast ge steld 8 doll. wiffe kuis
den 8 september om 40 doll. reis geld onter senden

Den 27 december 1895
is Fr. J. Drost als pre diker over komen
van hol land, Friesland van warte na

Den 7 september is hier een kerkeraad be noemt

January 27, 1895 - first meeting of Dutch immigrants in Whitinsville to discuss the matter of holding worship services.

February 3, 1895 - first reading service (preeklezen).

March 30, 1895 - first meeting to discuss the calling of a teaching elder.

June 30, 1895 - decision to pay a teaching elder eight dollars (\$8.00) per week plus living expenses.

September 8, 1895 - The sum of forty dollars (\$40.00) sent to Brother Feike J. Drost for travel expenses.

December 27, 1895 - Brother F. J. Drost arrives in Whitinsville from Wartena, Friesland, the Netherlands.

Whitinsville Mas 7 september 1896
is de eerste kerke raad hier gekoren
Door Douwe Costen van Coile
Douwe van Constant

ge koren tot audeuling
Pieter Glashouwer
Hendrick smit
tot deakers oepke Plantinga
Mink Beinema

P. J. Drost is als leeraar toege latten
den 12 november te pater son
En is bevestigd te whitinsville den 6 Desember
Door Ds Gosten van pater son
tot tekst 2 the moten 4:7
Des na midclays J. J. Drost syn in de abel lingen
tot tekst 2 corint 4:7

September 7, 1896 - a consistory is appointed by the delegates from Classis Hudson, the Rev. Koster and the Rev. Douwe Constant. Chosen as elders were Brother F. J. Drost, Mr. Pieter Glashouwer, and Mr. Hendrick Smidt; chosen as deacons were Mr. Oepke Plantinga and Mr. Mink Beinema.

December 6, 1896 - the installation service of the Rev. F. J. Drost. Rev. Koster preached a sermon from II Timothy 4:2. At the evening service, the Rev. F. J. Drost preached his first sermon as the ordained pastor of the Whitinsville Christian Reformed Church. His sermon was from II Corinthians 4:7.

November 12, 1896 - Brother F. J. Drost is granted license to preach in Classis Hudson.

De leden die de gemeente gekozen hebben
waren te gen voor die
F. J. drost
Oetjen Lynus houwwer
Hendrick smidt
Oepke Plantinga
Mink beinema
Oetjen opperwal
Pieter Glashouwer
Klaas sieswerda
Willem harkema
Jan hoekstra
Myndert Dykstra
Lambert Hoogendyk
Harmen haringa

Members of the congregation who were
present:

F. J. Drost
Pieter Glashouwer
Hendrick Smidt
Oepke Plantinga
Mink Beinema
Pieter Opperwal
Pieter Haringa
Klaas Sieswerda
Willem Harkema
Jan Hoekstra
Myndert Dykstra
Lambert Hoogendyk
Harmen Haringa

Organization of the Congregation

The committee appointed by Classis Hudson on the 19th - 20th of August, 1896, met with the brothers of Whitinsville who came with the request to organize as a congregation of the Christian Reformed Church. This committee was warmly received on September 7 by brothers of Whitinsville. Brother Drost opened with prayer. Rev. Constant was President, Rev. Kosten, Secretary. The president explained the purpose of the meeting to the brothers present and asked if it was still their desire to organize. In response, all answered in the affirmative.

The brothers also requested that Brother Drost be ordained as minister of the Word. The president asked if they would withdraw their request since the classis could not grant such a request. The president declared in the name of the committee that they were a legal congregation in Whitinsville and a council was chosen with the following: two elders, two deacons. They were ordained into their respective offices by Rev. Constant after which Rev. Kosten spoke a brief word

and closed the meeting with thanksgiving. We then sang Psalm 134:3 and Rev. Kosten pronounced the benediction.

Charter Members

- a.b. Mr. & Mrs. F. J. Drost
- b. Mr. & Mrs. Pieter Glashouwer
- b. Mr. & Mrs. Henry B. Smidt
- b. Mr. & Mrs. Oepke Plantinga
- Mr. & Mrs. Klass Sieswerda
- Mr. & Mrs. Pieter F. Oppewal
- b. Mr. & Mrs. Mink Beinema
- Mr. & Mrs. Willem Harkema
- Mr. John Hoekstra
- Mr. Harmen Haringa
- Mr. Jouke Twynstra
- Mr. Meindert Dykstra
- c. Mr. & Mrs. Pieter Haringa
- c. Mr. Lambert Hoogendyk

a. Ordained as minister of the gospel, December 6, 1896.

b. First members of the consistory installed September 7, 1896.

c. With membership papers accepted from the established church, the Netherlands, at the meeting of the formation of the congregation September 7, 1896.

The Consistory

(The form for Subscription)

Minute Book of the Holland Christian Reformed Church
of Whitinsville, Massachusetts, Classis Hudson. . .

We, the undersigned servants of the Word of God, elders and deacons under Classis Hudson declare in good faith before the Lord with our signatures here below that we wholeheartedly believe that all the articles in our confession and the catechism as well as the explanation given by the National Synod of Dordrecht in 1619, completely agree with the Word of God. We promise to uphold this teaching and reject all teachings against it. If we change our minds, we will submit our teaching to Council, then to Classis and to Synod so that they may

examine us and we promise to submit to their judgment. When the Council, Classis or Synod asks for further explanation of our feelings or belief, we promise to always be ready and prepared to do so.

signed:

F. J. Drost

Pieter Glashouwer

Henk Smidt

Oepke Plantinga

Mink Beinema

The First Consistory Meeting...

September 28, 1896

...the president spoke of the tremendous importance of the office and of our own weaknesses. However, he also pointed to the faithfulness of God and that we are administering his business. God has promised that he will fulfill his strength in our weakness... (the president) ... ended with (a prayer of) thanks to the Lord for strength

and leading for the evening and he pleaded with the Lord that he would continue to look in love on the council, and the congregation.

Signed:

T. J. Drost.

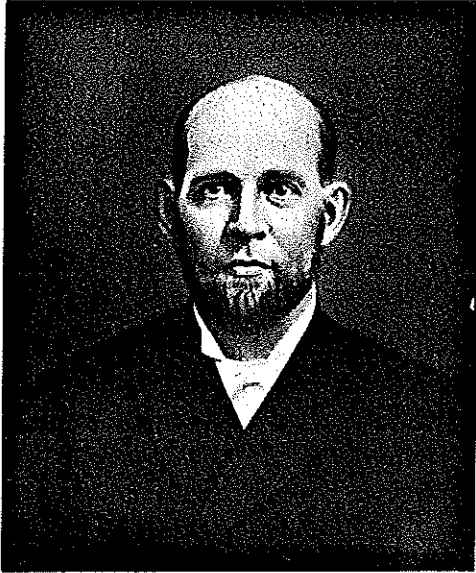
The text of the previous original documents was translated from the Dutch by Mr. Sander Silvis.

Editor

OUR MINISTERS

- The Rev. Feike J. Drost, 1896 - 1902*
The Rev. J. Jansen, 1904 - 1906
The Rev. Foppe Fortuin, 1906 - 1921
The Rev. Leonard Trap, 1921 - 1926
The Rev. Ralph Bolt, 1927 - 1939
The Rev. Lambertus Van Laar, 1939 - 1945
The Rev. Nelson L. Veltman, 1947 - 1953
The Rev. Richard R. DeRidder, 1953 - 1956
The Rev. Nelson Vander Zee, 1955 - 1960
The Rev. William F. Vander Hoven, 1957 - 1962
The Rev. John T. Holwerda, 1963 - 1969
The Rev. J. Peter Vosteen, 1970 - 1975
The Rev. James Admiraal, 1976 - 1980
The Rev. John H. Piersma, 1981 - 1984
The Rev. John J. Wiegers, 1984 - 1992
The Rev. Robert W. Eckardt, 1984 - 1993
The Rev. William G. Vis, 1993 -
Pastor Bruce M. Dykstra, 1995 -

The Rev. Feike J. Drost *1896 - 1902*



The Rev. F. J. Drost

The end of the 19th Century was a feverish period of trying and testing in the United States. William Jennings Bryan was railing against the special privileges of the rich and the powerful. He electrified the nation with his "cross of gold" speech advocating the abandonment of the gold standard. Immigrants from Europe were arriving at the newly opened Ellis Island reception center at the rate of 7,000 per day. In the village of Whitinsville, the struggles of the nation were played out in the individual lives of Dutch families, largely from Friesland, who came to New England in search of a better life for themselves and their children. They brought dearly held religious beliefs reinforced by a way of life which gave them a unique community identity which they were very determined to maintain.

On the Sabbath, the observance of which they took very seriously, they gathered together in individual homes. The size of the expanding group soon made this impractical. The United Presbyterian Church offered them meeting space in the church basement which they gratefully accepted until remodeling plans of the congregation forced them to seek

other quarters. New quarters were found in the Northbridge Town Hall which had been constructed as a Civil War Memorial around the year 1872.

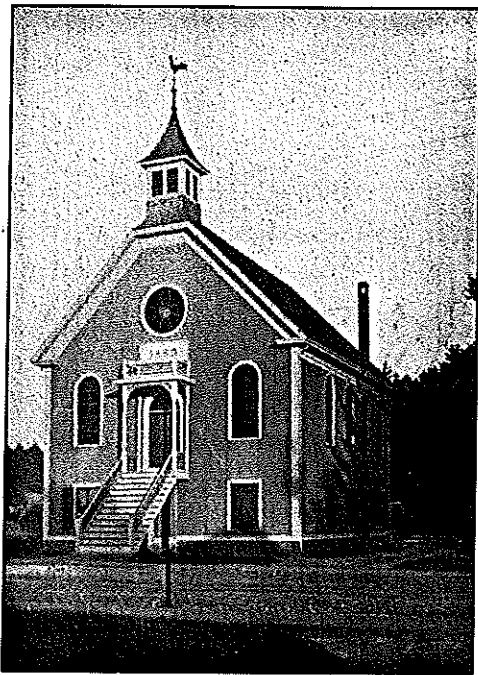
An interest in immigration to the New World piqued the interest of Brother Feike J. Drost, then the teaching elder of a church in Warfena, Friesland, the province from which many of the dwellers in the Whitinsville community had come. When approached about becoming the spiritual leader of a church to be formed by the members of this new community, Brother Drost accepted and in the fall of 1895 he and his family arrived in Whitinsville.

The arrival of the new spiritual leader raised questions of organization and affiliation. It was decided that the newly established congregation should join the Christian Reformed denomination. The Christian Reformed Church had separated from the Dutch Reformed Church in April, 1857, over questions which included membership in secret societies and concern that the Reformed Church was abandoning a unique religious heritage by adapting too freely to the American society in which it found itself. It was a separation probably more about culture than about religion.

In the fall of 1896, the Brother F. Drost and Mr. Mink Beinema were delegated to attend their first meeting with Classis Hudson. At this meeting, a petition for the Whitinsville congregation to join the Christian Reformed Church was acted upon favorably. On October 20, 1896, the Whitinsville Christian Reformed Church was formally accepted into the Christian Reformed denomination. Representing Classis Hudson at the ceremony were Rev. Constant, the Rev. P. Koster, and Elder Cook. The membership consisted of thirteen families. When the congregation was officially accepted into the Christian Reformed denomination, the church

council's request that Brother Drost be ordained was honored, and on November 12, 1896, as Rev. Drost, he was licensed to preach in Classis Hudson. His installation service was held on December 6, 1896.

Members of the church's first consistory were Mr. P. Glashouer, Mr. H. Smidt, elders; and Mr. O. Plantinga and Mr. M. Beinema, deacons. The newly organized church felt that it needed its own sanctuary, and three years after organization, in 1899, the first Christian Reformed church building in New England was completed.

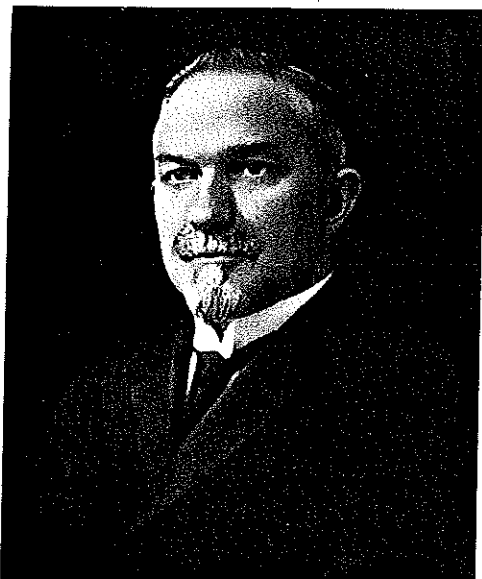


· First Church

The year 1896 marked the first running of the Boston Marathon. It was an important period in the history of the United States. William McKinley triumphed over William Jennings Bryan in the election of 1896 and the United States soon found itself embroiled in a war with Spain. There was great discussion about America's role in the Philippines. President McKinley said that he was much in prayer about the question. In 1901, President McKinley was assassinated and Theodore Roosevelt became president of the United States.

The Rev. Feike Drost remained pastor of the Whitinsville congregation during six of these eventful years. In 1902, he received a call from the Christian Reformed Church of Eastmanville, Michigan. Pastor Drost accepted this call and left Whitinsville after a pastorate of seven years.

The Rev. J. Jansen *1904 - 1906*



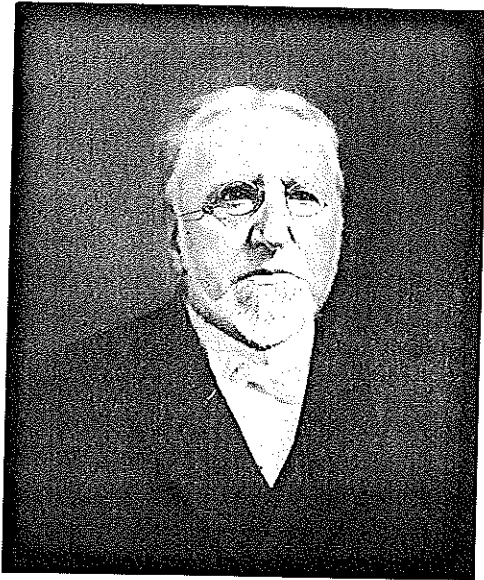
The Rev. J. Jansen

The relative isolation of New England's only Christian Reformed church may have been a reason the pulpit of the Whitinsville Church was vacant for a period of two years following the departure of the Rev. F. J. Drost. In the year 1904, however, the Rev. J. Jansen of the Netherlands agreed to come to Whitinsville to serve as pastor. His tenure was brief and after only one year and a half, he returned to the Netherlands, ostensibly to continue his studies for a theology degree. There is little upon which to base an

evaluation of Pastor Jansen's time in Whitinsville. There had been some tension regarding objections raised by a prominent church personage who had been a charter member and a council officer which reached back to the Rev. Drost's tenure. The reason for the tensions and disagreements is not clear. There is some indication that the new minister felt uncomfortable in the primitive ambience of the New World. The foreboding mood of the wooded landscape beyond Meadow Pond seems to have made him uncomfortable. This discomfort, coupled with the rowdy atmosphere generated by the denizens of the bar beyond New Village, seems to have made him question the wisdom of his decision to serve the Lord in the developing Dutch community in New England.

Perhaps, a note in the council minutes that the church would bear the cost of a stove for the parsonage but not the cost of the coal for heating suggests some of the atmosphere which made Pastor Jansen's time in Whitinsville relatively short. He left with the understanding that upon completion of his study for a doctoral degree in theology he might return to Whitinsville; it never happened.

The Rev. Foppe Fortuin 1906 - 1921



The Rev. F. Fortuin

In 1906, the Rev. Foppe Fortuin of Hull, Iowa was extended a call to become the pastor. He accepted and arrived in Whitinsville in October of that year. Thus began a pastorate of an extremely intimate and personal nature which lasted for fifteen years. It was an active period in the life of the church. A Sunday School was established, catechism classes were conducted, and membership increased. The increase in membership brought the realization that at some point in the near future, church growth would require a larger building for the expanding congregation.

The Rev. Fortuin was plagued with ill health and was frequently absent from the pulpit by reason of illness. In 1908, the council authorized the purchase of a *prekboek* which could provide sermons to be read for services in the absence of the *Dominee*. During that year, the Rev. Fortuin was absent from the pulpit for a period amounting to five months.

In 1908, Mr. Pieter Plantinga was appointed the first Superintendent of the Sunday School. In the same year, the barn

behind the church was cleaned and space for keeping horses during the Sunday services was expanded to twelve stalls. As a part of this remodeling, the janitor's quarters were moved to the coal bin. In the year 1908, the salary of the organ pumper was increased to five dollars per month even though it was noted that he fell asleep at his duties from time to time. In November of 1909, the problem of the drowsy organ pumper was solved by the purchase of an electric motor. In 1911, certain jovial young men in the balcony were warned that if they did not behave during the church services, it would be the duty of the janitor to remove them from the premises.

During this period a tension developed in the congregation regarding the question of language. Catechism and Sunday School were being taught in the Dutch language. In the year 1908, the classical visitors encouraged the council to increase the efforts to begin a Christian School. If the congregation waited too long, they said, "... the Holland language would be lost." Of course, in the public school, which all those attending school went to in those days, the language of instruction was English.

The debate about language continued. It was stated that many did not attend catechism because they did not understand the Dutch language. The discussion of the use of the Dutch language in the Sunday School focused further when an elder requested that the English language be used more often. The council responded by saying that there was no one qualified to fulfill that request.

In what could be viewed as a providential turn of events, at about that time the Rev. Clarence Bouma, a recent graduate of Calvin Seminary, began postgraduate studies in theology at the Divinity School of Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. At the request of the council,

Rev. Bouma responded to the challenge of providing English language services for the congregation, and in August, 1920, he began conducting English language services every other Sunday. In September of that year, a request was made that English as well as Dutch Psalms be sung in church services. In 1921, Rev. Bouma completed his studies at Harvard and was awarded the degree of Doctor of Theology. Dr. Clarence Bouma went on to an illustrious career in the life of the Christian Reformed and wider Protestant religious circles. For many years, he distinguished himself as a professor at Calvin Seminary. In addition, he was the widely read and deeply respected editor of the *Calvin Forum*, a journal for Reformed writers.

In 1918, the council received a request from the Board of Health of the Town of Northbridge to suspend church services during the influenza epidemic which was ravaging the country and the world. The

council responded by saying that the church should not be told how to conduct its affairs by "...the world." As a compromise, however, they did suspend services for one Sunday.

When the United States entered World War I, fifteen members of the congregation responded to the country's call and entered the military service of the nation. At the end of hostilities, all were able to return to home and family.

In 1921, the Rev. Fortuin retired from the ministry. The family remained in Whitinsville, entering into the life of the community which they had come to love and which had come to love them. In January, 1928, the Rev. Foppe Fortuin passed away. Members of the family continued to live in the area and for decades were respected members of the community and faithful participants in the life of the Pleasant Street Church.

The Rev. Leonard Trap 1921 - 1926



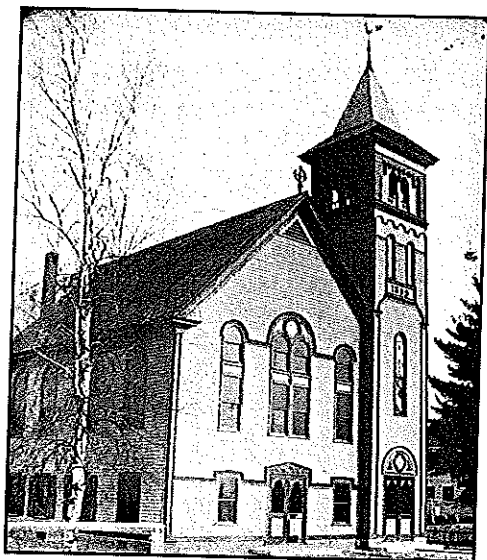
The Rev. L. Trap

The Rev. Leonard Trap, then pastor of the Christian Reformed Church in West

Sayville, N.Y., accepted the call from Whitinsville and formally assumed the duties of his pastoral office in September, 1921. The Rev. Trap was a dynamic minister and an energetic leader. Under his guidance the language issue was gradually resolved. He introduced English language services and determined that classes in the catechism and Sunday School were to be conducted in the English language. The membership of the church under his guidance continued to expand and it was evident that sooner or later a new and larger building would be necessary. The council did not feel that it could begin such a program at the time and voted instead to install a new heating system and to remodel the existing structure.

With an eye to the future, the Rev. Trap guided the church to the purchase of the property upon which the current Pleasant

Street Church stands. The need to establish a school for Christian instruction for the children of the congregation was ever on the minds of the council and the congregation, but this did not take place during the tenure of the Rev. Trap.



Remodeled Church

An important element of the ministry of the Rev. Leonard Trap was that he reestablished contact with the young people of the congregation. They were beginning to wonder what their place was in a church where they felt less and less comfortable because of language and because of a way of life which increasingly, they felt, contrasted with the cultural patterns they encountered at school, work, and in many of their social encounters.

Many older members recall the Rev. Trap's "Singing School" as a significant part of his ministry. Choirs of one hundred and more voices presented concerts in the Northbridge Town Hall. His influence has endured in the reputation the Pleasant Street Church has for being a singing congregation.

The church's position on worldly amusements also caused problems for the young people. The movies were becoming more and more the entertainment mode of the American society. New and spectacular movies were discussed by schoolmates and

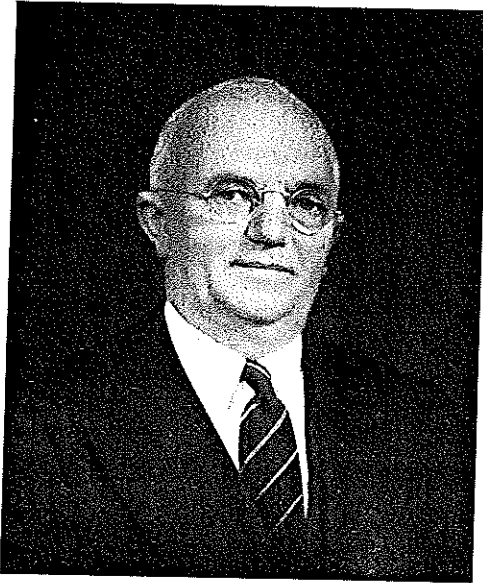
friends. The movie stars of the day made the news and were the topics of conversation both serious and scintillating. The general opinion throughout the Christian Reformed denomination was that movie attendance, along with dancing and card-playing, should be considered as "worldly amusements". The implication was that as Christians, they should not participate in such "worldly" activities.

The church also took a very Puritanical stand with regard to those couples who conceived a child before marriage. As the years went by, attitudes softened on this and other issues, and a more compassionate approach which many perceived as more in keeping with the spirit of the New Testament rather than the Old was adopted.

The American scene from 1921 to 1926 was marked by events of tragedy and folly. The first Miss America beauty contest was held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in 1921. One of the most disappointing and disgraceful elements of American life in the early twentieth century was that of violence against black people. In 1922, lynchings took place in the United States at the rate of two per week. An anti-lynching bill being debated in the Senate was defeated by a filibuster of Southern senators. The Yankee Stadium was opened in New York City in 1923. Babe Ruth celebrated the occasion by hitting a home run on opening day. The Teapot Dome scandal which reached into the presidential cabinet rocked the nation in 1924. The Space Age began in 1926 when Prof. Robert H. Goddard of Clark University launched his first rocket from a cow pasture in Auburn, Massachusetts.

The Rev. Trap served the Pleasant Street Church at a very crucial time and he served it well. During his pastorate, the young people found a renewed vitality in their relationship with the church and church membership grew. In September, 1926, Rev. Trap accepted the call extended to him by the Second Roseland Christian Reformed Church in Chicago, Illinois.

The Rev. Ralph Bolt *1927 - 1939*

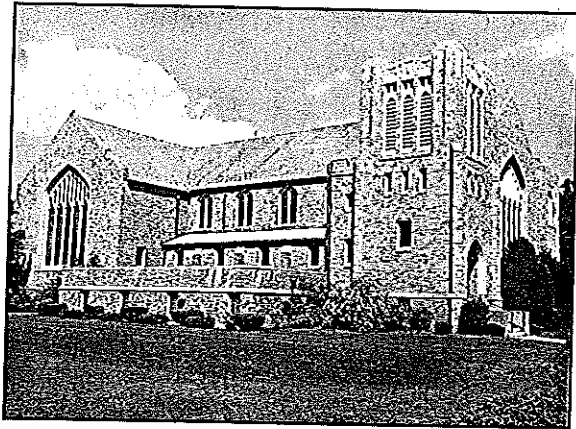


The Rev. R. Bolt

The Rev. Ralph Bolt of Sully, Iowa, accepted the call extended to him by the Whitinsville congregation in August, 1927. In September, 1928, the first classes of the newly organized Christian School were held in the basement of the church. The faculty consisted of Miss Delia Bolt, daughter of the pastor, and Mr. Richard Hommes.

The pressure of an enlarging congregation brought about a decision to build a new and larger church. Construction on this building began in July of 1929, with the cornerstone being dedicated on October 27 of the same year. What has become known as the Great Depression began two days later on October 29 on what history knows as Black Tuesday, the beginning of the Wall Street "Crash." Strong in their faith and firm in their purpose, the leaders and members of the congregation persisted with their building plans even during the bleak days of the depression. Despite unemployment, loss of personal fortunes, and economic stress beyond telling, the building was completed and June 25 and 26, 1930, were devoted to the dedication ceremonies for the new building. The date on the cornerstone of the

church, 1929, will always stand as a tribute to the faith of a faithful people in the goodness of the Lord of All even in time of adversity.



Whitinsville Christian Reformed Church

The Rev. Bolt was a devoted and skillful pastor. His expression of Christian mercy and understanding guided many through trials of sickness, adversity, and stress. His compassion in dealing with the sick and the bereaved was acknowledged and appreciated throughout the congregation. His expressions of Christian hope, love and faith supported many who mourned the loss of loved ones. Those who remember Pastor Bolt on the pulpit remember the rolling crescendos of his delivery as he proclaimed the covenant promises; they also remember the tears which welled up in his eyes when he contemplated the fate of those who ignored God's offer, Christ's sacrifice, and the consequences thereof.

In 1928, the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church formalized its stand on worldly amusements. By decree of Synod,

attendance at movies was declared to be a form of entertainment which was incompatible with membership in the Christian Reformed Church. (Those interviewed by consistories throughout the denomination were queried about movie attendance.) Further, they were asked to abstain from further attendance as a condition of membership in the church and participation in the sacraments. This stance on worldly amusements caused much tension and soul-searching by sincere people who questioned the prudence of the intrusiveness which the church was exercising over individual lives and personal behavior. The question remained unresolved until the 1950's when the leadership of the church gradually changed; new attitudes generated by the war and generally changing times seemed to render the perception of such prohibitions as naive and antiquated. Certainly the problem of what constitutes wholesome entertainment remains, but it is now a problem shared with all of American society and especially the Christian community.

The years in which the Rev. Ralph Bolt occupied the pulpit in the Whitinsville Christian Reformed Church were years of triumph and tragedy, of absurdity and prudence, for the United States of America. In 1927, Charles A. Lindbergh added to a wave of national euphoria with his triumphant flight across the North Atlantic. The euphoria persisted in 1928 when Herbert Hoover was swept into the White House because of prosperity and the dream of "...a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage." The dream exploded in 1929 when the cruelty of the Great Depression descended upon America and the world. Hard times give birth to hard people, and it was the time of Dillinger, Capone, Bonnie and Clyde, Pretty Boy Floyd, and Baby Face Nelson. The tough guys brought forth J. Edgar Hoover and the G-Men. Nature, it seemed, had joined in the conspiracy against the battered people of the nation as spectacular dust storms devastated great portions of the country's farmland, destroying hope and creating the Dust Bowl.

In 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt, elected as decisively as his predecessor was in 1928, tried to rally a despondent nation by declaring, "...the only thing we have to fear, is fear itself," but the shadow did not disappear. In 1932, the family of Charles Lindbergh was caught up in the terror of the times when their infant son was kidnapped and murdered.

Of course, there was a lighter side also. Social Security was born in 1935. Shirley Temple enchanted millions with her childish charm; so did Snow White and her seven diminutive admirers. When Rev. Bolt left Whitinsville, the World of Tomorrow, the New York World's Fair, had opened and was being visited by millions.

In the church, there arose passionate discussion about the use of the common cup in the communion service. This proved to be one of the most divisive issues to face the denomination. After much discussion, individual glasses were introduced for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. For a time, however, some who felt this was not a proper way to celebrate this most sacred of all sacraments were given the opportunity, during the service, to partake of the elements using the familiar common cup. Gradually, however, with the passage of time, the practice disappeared.

Towards the end of his ministry in Whitinsville, the Rev. R. Bolt was shepherding a congregation of over 200 families. The seriousness with which he took his responsibilities added to the weight of the load. Aware that his energies were waning as the duties of the position increased, Rev. Bolt requested that the council recommend him to classis for emeritus status. On October 1, 1939, as events in Europe were casting their dark shadows over the entire globe, the Rev. Ralph Bolt preached his farewell sermon to the congregation which he had fervently loved and which had loved him bounteously in return.

The Rev. Lambertus Van Laar *1939 - 1945*



The Rev. L. Van Laar

The Rev. Lambertus Van Laar preached his first sermon from the Pleasant Street pulpit a mere two weeks after the Rev. Ralph Bolt's farewell. Lambertus Van Laar was a large man with a quiet and dignified demèanor who moved easily into his position as "shepherd of the flock." During the period of Pastor Van Laar's ministry, the church installed a public address system and purchased a more powerful organ. An expansion program at the Christian School was also undertaken.

The children and the young people of the congregation were attracted to the Rev. Van Laar because of his sincere interest in them. He was an accomplished pianist and he is remembered for the energy he displayed at the piano when he accompanied the singing of his catechism classes.

The devastating impact of the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the world-shaking events of World War II which followed, had their reverberations in the quiet Whitinsville church community. In World War I, fifteen sons of the congregation had gone off to war. All had returned safely. In World War II, ninety-one young men donned

their country's uniforms. One young hero, PFC Edward H. Haringa, lost his life in the fierce fighting of what has come to be known as the Battle of Europe. PFC Haringa died in Germany on April 9, 1945; a memorial service for him was held in the church on April 25, 1945.

The effect of the war on the congregation, however, was not only that many young men departed for military assignments. The same arbitrariness of war brought hundreds of young people to the Whitinsville community. The most lasting effect on the congregation came from the service men and women who made Whitinsville their church home while stationed at military facilities in the area. They came from Fort Devens, Camp Edwards, Quonset Point, Navy bases in Boston and Charlestown, Otis Air Base, and other nearby military facilities. Sundays saw a collection of all ranks, from all service arms, take their places in the church for Sunday worship. These young people were treated as guests and entertained in the homes of the congregation, and provided with meals and lodging while they were on their weekend passes. Some service men from the Netherlands in the area for training or pre-embarkation sometimes joined their American comrades-in-arms for these weekends away from camp.

Clearly, the years covered by the ministry of Rev. Van Laar were dominated by life conducted in the shadow of a world at war. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, a succession of somber events in early 1942 like the fall of Singapore reinforced in everyone's mind the seriousness of the times. In June, 1942, the Battle of Midway would prove to be the turning point in the Pacific War, although this was not realized at the time. The invasion of fortress Europe began in June, 1944. General Douglas MacArthur returned to the Philippines in

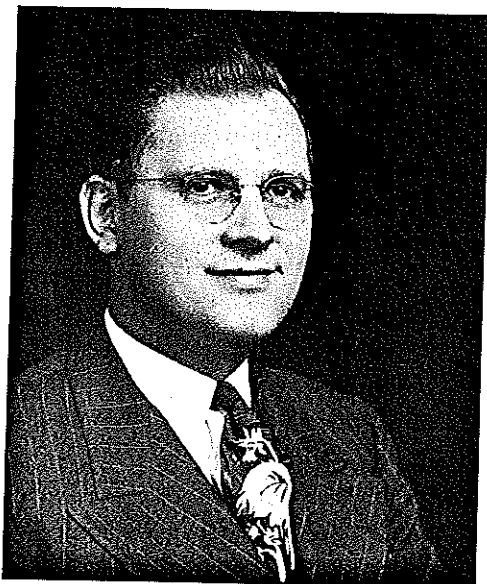
October of the same year. President Franklin D. Roosevelt attended the Yalta Conference, meeting with Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin on February 11, 1944. On April 14th, nine weeks later, he died at Warm Springs, Georgia. The Atomic Age began on August 6, 1945, with the dropping of the first atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

During the war years, several romances developed and many current church families are the result of relationships formed during the anxious days of World War II. With the dawn of peace, a more normal pattern of life returned to the Blackstone Valley. The United States which, despite its war casualties, had emerged essentially unscathed from the terrible war, launched upon an era of expansion and prosperity such as it had never known in its history.

In the church, the language question, as one might expect, became less and less of an issue as the years went by. Services in the Dutch language continued to be offered two times each month but the number who attended became fewer and fewer. Finally, on April 1, 1945, church services in the Dutch language were discontinued altogether.

In late 1945, the Rev. L. Van Laar accepted a call to the Second Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan. He preached his last sermon from the Pleasant Street Church pulpit in November, 1945. He had presided over the congregation with great dignity and skill during a dramatic period in the life of the church and of the nation.

The Rev. Nelson L. Veltman *1947 - 1953*



The Rev. N. Veltman

In August, 1945, the United States dropped the first atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. It was an act which changed the history of the world and precipitated a moral debate which continues

to this very day.

The year 1946 was when the Western democracies discovered that the peaceful world they had hoped for at the end of hostilities was still an elusive goal. Winston Churchill declared in Fulton, Missouri, that an Iron Curtain had descended across Europe as the Soviet Union demonstrated with painful clarity that it had no intention of cooperating with the nations of the West in the interest of global peace. In October of that year, two landmark events took place, the consequences of which are with us to this very day. In Nuremberg, Germany, the War Crimes Tribunal met to adjudicate the crimes of the German Nazis who were accused of Crimes Against Humanity. Several death sentences were carried out. In Queens, New York, the United Nations General Assembly held its first meeting as it looked forward to attempting to make the world a more orderly and peaceful place.

In the early 1940's according to a story which is probably apocryphal, a priest in one of the Catholic churches in town asked his catechism class, "Who made the world?" One of the young boys in the class answered, "The Whitin Machine Works made the world." The Whitin Machine Works had always been a powerful force in the community, but all was not quiet in Eden. In 1946, the United Steelworkers of America had called the first strike against the company. In 1952, there was a second bitter strike which lasted from August to October. On at least one occasion during this strike, the Northbridge Police used tear gas to maintain order.

The Pleasant Street Church remained without a pastor for the year 1946. During this period the congregation welcomed home its veterans who had served their country around the world during the last terrible war. The congregation also welcomed and benefitted from the new members who, during the war, had met young women of the church who became their wives. Other veteran members of the church brought into the fellowship young women whom they had met and married during the time of their service away from home. It was a time of gratitude to God for his benefits bestowed and a period of optimism for the future.

In April, 1947, the Rev. Nelson L. Veltman, responding to a second call, came to Whitinsville from Drenthe, Michigan. The Rev. Nelson Veltman was a large man whose physical size was matched by a largeness of soul and spirit. The nature of his character was reflected in a friendly face which always wore a ready smile. Persons who knew Nelson Veltman describe him as a kind and humble man who possessed great warmth of person and a capacity for understanding which uniquely equipped him to lead a congregation of God's people. He was always faithful in the proclamation of the Word. In catechism classes, he presented the gospel to the youth in a manner which they understood and could respect.

Many of the veterans of the church began to attend Calvin College, where they were among the four million veterans who were taking advantage of the benefits accorded them under the provisions of the G.I. Bill at colleges and universities across the country. Enthusiasm and loyalty for Calvin College were at high tide and the "Forward in Faith" fund-raiser found the congregation responding by giving an amount well over its assigned quota.

The consistory for some time had felt the need to begin the process of organizing a second church and in November, 1947, the congregation gave its approval. The goal was not immediately realized, however, as practical considerations such as location, acquisition of property, approval of classis, and other important issues were considered. The matter of location was decided in 1948 when the Chairman of the Board of the Whitin Machine Works, Mr. E. Kent Swift, generously offered the congregation several sites for the new church. In November the congregation voted to accept the beneficent offer of a site of approximately three and one quarter acres on Goldtwaite Road. The deed of ownership of the property was recorded on August 30, 1949. When the Pleasant Street congregation was surveyed, sixty-one families and nine individual members elected to become the charter members of the Fairlawn Christian Reformed Church. Progress on the new facility was slow, however, and the new church did not become a reality until 1958.

For the United States, the march of history continued. In April, 1951, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were sentenced to death for performing espionage for the Soviet Union. In that same month and year, President Harry Truman fired General Douglas MacArthur when he challenged presidential authority over disagreements on how to deal with the threat of Chinese involvement in the Korean War. As spokesman for a new generation, J.D. Salinger's book, *Catcher In the Rye*, with its antihero Holden Caulfield, burst upon the scene. In the presidential election of 1952, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower defeated

Gov. Adlai Stevenson to become the 34th president of the United States.

The congregation was reminded of the passage of the years when it received notification of the death of two of its faithful former pastors. The Rev. Leonard Trap passed away in April, 1950. In 1951, the much loved Rev. Ralph Bolt was called to his glorious reward. The passing of the Rev. R. Bolt reminded the congregation of his gentle demeanor when, as a humble servant of Christ, he had faithfully served the Pleasant Street Church. It also reminded the congregation that during his pastorate, the Christian School, which now occupies a prominent place in the education community of the area, was started so modestly in the basement of the old Willow Street church building in the year 1928.

During the years of 1949 and 1950, the church auditorium was redecorated and a new automatic oil heating system was installed. In 1950, the congregation voted to sell the old parsonage and to purchase the

Liberty property at the corner of Cross and Pleasant Street which now serves as the home for the ministers of Pleasant Street Church.

The congregation, ever mindful of the church's missionary mandate, in the year 1951 extended a call to the Rev. and Mrs. Peter Dekker to serve as missionaries in Africa. The Evangelism Committee sponsored a mission ministry in Worcester under the direction of Mr. James Bultman, a Calvin Seminary student.

On March 30, 1952, the Rev. Peter Eldersveld, Radio Minister of the Christian Reformed Church, backed by the Radio Choir, preached the *Back to God Hour* message from the pulpit of the Pleasant Street Church.

Pastor Nelson Veltman accepted a call from the Boston Square Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in January, 1953, ending his pastorate. It had been a period of growth and of significant accomplishment.

The Rev. Richard De Ridder 1953 - 1956



The Rev. R. De Ridder

When the Rev. Richard De Ridder came to Whitinsville in 1953, the United States was breathing a sigh of relief as the Korean War had come to an end. In July, General William K. Harrison, representing the United States, and General Nam Il, representing North Korea, signed an armistice agreement ending the hostilities. It should have been a time of relief but, in reality, the stress and the tension of the Cold War continued. President Dwight D. Eisenhower defined a mind-set for the coming decade when he introduced the "domino theory" to describe the Communist challenge in Southeast Asia, especially as it dealt with South Vietnam. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles reinforced the point when he declared, "If you are scared to go to the

brink, you are lost . . .” When the popular television drama, *Guns, Smoke*, roared into living rooms across the nation, however, the towering Marshal of Dodge City reinforced everyone’s belief in simple justice and homespun decency. At home, the Supreme Court decision struck down the “. . . separate but equal” doctrine in the case of *Brown v. the Board of Education*, laying down the groundwork for some very decisive later civil rights action. In Montgomery, Alabama, a very brave lady named Rosa Parks refused to move to the back of a bus as had been the custom for black people in the Deep South. The civil rights climate for black citizens of the United States was changing.

The Rev. Richard De Ridder brought a mission concern and a mission emphasis to Whitinsville. On June 3, 1954, the Rev. Henry Evenhouse, Director of Missions for the Christian Reformed Church, presented a program in the Pleasant Street Church which described the Church’s activity on the Nigerian Mission Field.

This mission interest of Pastor De Ridder coupled with the congregation’s desire to establish an effective outreach program led the congregation to extend a call to the Rev. Nelson Vander Zee to begin a mission program in the Framingham area. Study of the demographics of the area led to the decision to discontinue the evangelistic work in Worcester and to concentrate instead on the Framingham region where dynamic population and economic changes were taking place. In the year 1956, property was purchased in Framingham which became the location of the Hope Christian Reformed Church. Members of the Pleasant Street Church assisted in canvassing neighborhoods to invite residents to the new church. They also provided leadership for the Daily Vacation Bible School and assisted in the Sunday worship services. In 1960, the Rev.

Nelson Vander Zee accepted the call to be the first pastor of the Hope Church in Framingham, Massachusetts.



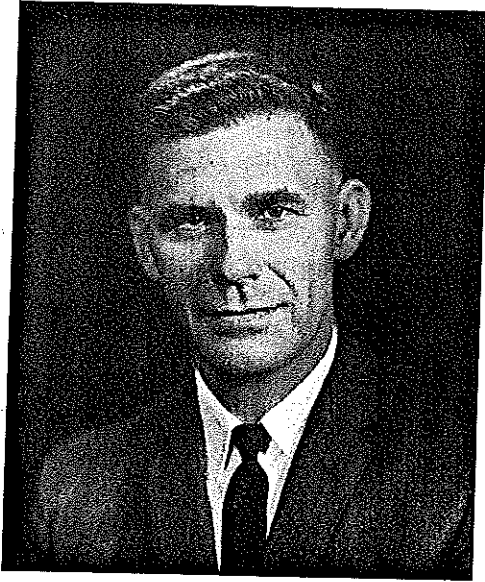
The Rev. Nelson Vander Zee

In September, 1956, a group of twenty-two families applied to Classis Hudson for the privilege of organizing a second church in Whitinsville. The request was turned down by Classis, however, because it felt that the recommendation for the project from the Pleasant Street Consistory was not sufficiently definite.

On October 20, 1956, a special service was held at which Professor John Kromminga, President of Calvin Seminary, was the featured speaker. On the same day, a Boy’s Club which later became the Calvinist Cadet Corps was organized.

On October 18, 1956, the Rev. Richard De Ridder, responding to a long felt missionary challenge from the Lord, accepted a call from the Wyoming Park Christian Reformed Church of Wyoming Park, Michigan, to be missionary to Ceylon.

The Rev. William Vander Hoven *1957 - 1962*



The Rev. W. Vander Hoven

During the hiatus between the pastorates of the Rev. Richard De Ridder and the Rev. William Vander Hoven, two significant events took place. On December 6, 1956, twelve families petitioned Classis to organize a church in Framingham, Massachusetts. The second event took place on April 7, 1957 - Centennial Sunday. On that day, the Pleasant Street congregation conducted its service of celebration and thankfulness to God for his 100 years of blessing and guidance of the Christian Reformed denomination.

The Rev. William Vander Hoven of the Wyoming Park, Michigan, Christian Reformed Church informed the congregation at Pleasant Street in April, 1957, that he would accept their call to serve as minister to their congregation. Rev. Vander Hoven was installed in a service which took place in May, one month later.

Nineteen fifty seven was the year that Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin, who had caused so much confusion a few years before, passed away. It was the year that the book, *Profiles in Courage*, by then Senator John F. Kennedy, won a Pulitzer Prize. In

Little Rock, Arkansas, that year, Central High School was integrated with the help of 1000 U.S. Army paratroopers and 10,000 Arkansas National Guardsmen. On the Broadway stage, the story of Romeo and Juliet was retold in a musical play by Leonard Bernstein entitled *West Side Story*.

Pastor Vander Hoven brought a notable warmth of heart and deep concern for his flock to the pulpit in Whitinsville. He was much appreciated for the faithfulness and the zeal of his preaching and the humility with which he approached life and his pastoral duties.

In July of 1957, a committee was formed which negotiated the purchase of a twenty-eight acre tract of land in North Uxbridge which has come to be known as Fairwoods. The beautiful pastoral area of woods and water was ideal for a summer outing. It was a great place to picnic, swim, or just enjoy basking in the summer sun. It has become an ideal place to relax for young and old. Fairwoods proved to be a perfect place to locate the annual Mission Fest, the tradition of which stretched back to the earliest days of the church. Many senior members of the congregation can recall the pleasant days of what almost seemed another era when the annual Labor Day Mission Fest was held at Picnic Point.

In July, 1958, the formal organization of the second Christian Reformed Church in Whitinsville took place. Sixty-four families and two individuals expressed their interest in being members of this new church. On September 17, church officers were elected and the group decided to meet in the Northbridge Center Congregational Church. In March, 1959, the Pleasant Street Church voted to borrow \$40,000.00 which was given to the new church named the Fairlawn Christian Reformed Church.

During this period, several families from the Netherlands emigrated to the area around Vergennes, Vermont. Because of the subsequent relocation of some of these families, a group of only three families and two individuals remained of the original Christian Reformed community. The Eastern Home Mission Board recommended that the membership papers of these individuals be transferred to the Pleasant Street Church. This group provided a nucleus for future church growth, but they also required regular visits to Vermont by the pastor and an elder to celebrate the Lord's Supper.

The Calvinettes were organized in October, 1959.

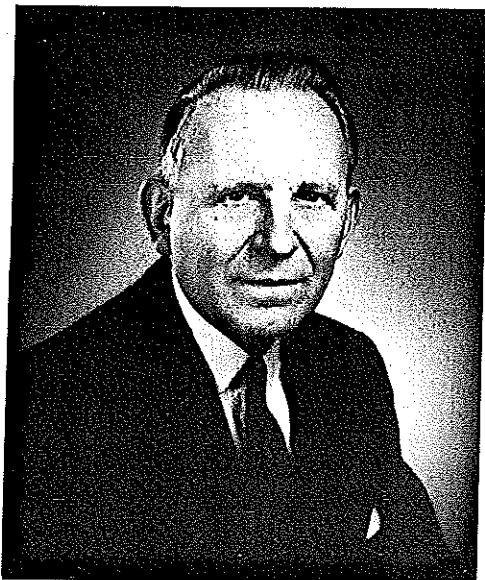
In February, 1960, the Rev. Nelson Vander Zee accepted a call to serve the Christian Reformed congregation in Framingham. He was installed on April 6th of that year. This terminated the status of Rev. Vander Zee as Minister of Evangelism of the Pleasant Street Church. It established the Hope Christian Reformed Church of Framingham, Massachusetts, as a historic

missionary achievement for the Christian Reformed Church in New England.

The Vergennes group, meanwhile, exhibited a potential for growth and engaged a ministerial candidate, Mr. Stanley Vander Klay, to assist in its plans. A Daily Vacation Bible School project brought an encouraging response from the local community. The group continued its growth under the temporary guidance of the Rev. John Dykstra and Seminarian Adrian Den Haan. In August, 1966, it decided to constitute itself as a congregation calling itself the Ferrisberg Christian Reformed Church.

In June, 1962, the Rev. William Vander Hoven accepted a call to the Fuller Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In December of the same year, the Rev. Nelson Vander Zee, the pastor of the Hope Christian Reformed Church of Framingham, accepted a call to become the Home Missionary for the Eastern Seaboard of the United States for the Home Mission Board of the Christian Reformed Church.

The Rev. John T. Holwerda *1963 - 1969*



The Rev. J. T. Holwerda

The Rev. John T. Holwerda of Bellflower, California, accepted the call to occupy the pulpit of the Pleasant Street Church and was installed on February 28, 1963. Rev. Holwerda was a congenial and outgoing man who soon developed a cordial relationship with the young and old of the congregation.

During the pastorate of the Rev. J.T. Holwerda, there was considerable effort put forth to consolidate and establish the Christian Reformed Church in Vermont. Seminarians Riemer Praamsma and Edward DeHaan served the congregation at various times. The organization of the church was accomplished in August, 1966. On September

15, 1967, the Rev. Hiram Vander Klay was installed as its first pastor.

In 1965, the Rev. and Mrs. Holwerda made a visit to the Holy Land and Nigeria. During this period, the Rev. and Mrs. Lambertus Van Laar returned to Whitinsville to occupy the pulpit and to renew old acquaintances.

In June, 1966, Mr. Gordon Kooistra, who had prepared himself for a career as a missionary pilot, left for Nigeria with the support of the well wishers who saw him off at the Logan International Airport in Boston. The Rev. Alan Jongsma spoke words of farewell and the group sang, "God be with you till we meet again."

The period during which the Rev. J.T. Holwerda occupied the pulpit in Whitinsville was a tragic period in American history. It was the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Tonkin Gulf episode, and the bloody Tet Offensive in the dragged-out Vietnam War. Most lamentable of all, it was the time of the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy. In the aftermath of the assassinations, the Civil Rights Bill was passed. On a lighter note, the first Superbowl game was played in 1967. Vince Lombardi's Green Bay Packers defeated the Kansas City Chiefs by a score of thirty-five to ten.

The years 1966 and 1967 shook the confidence of the village of Whitinsville. In 1966, the Whitin Machine Works, which had

given the community its name and had provided a livelihood for generations of its citizens, including many members of the Pleasant Street Church, was acquired by the White Consolidated Industries of Cleveland, Ohio. In 1967, the Whitin Machine Works was moved to Spartanburg, South Carolina. It was truly "... the end of an era."

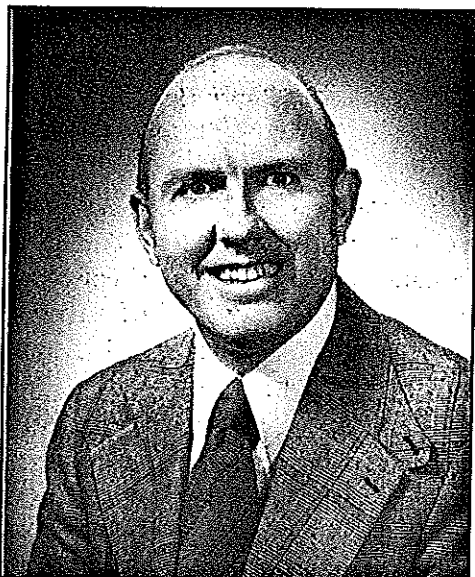
The pastorate of the Rev. J. T. Holwerda was characterized by the lively nature of his personality and the dynamic nature of his proclamation of the gospel of salvation. In December, 1968, Rev. Holwerda accepted a call to become the pastor of the Christian Reformed Church of Allendale, Michigan.

In July, 1969, while the Pleasant Street Church was without a pastor, the message, "The Eagle has landed," was received at the Houston Space Center in Houston, Texas. A short time later, the voice of Astronaut Neil Armstrong crackling through space declared, "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." The first human being had landed on the moon and was walking on its surface.

In August, 1969, the counterculture movement in America reached its highwater mark when 400,000 members of the Woodstock Nation met on Max Yasgur's farm in Bethel, N.Y., for a weekend of good vibes and pot. The atmosphere of protest was clear, but after the crowds had drifted away, the answers to life's fundamental questions were as distant and as near as they had ever been.

The Rev. J. Peter Vosteen

1970 - 1975



The Rev. J. P. Vosteen

Upon the departure of the Rev. John T. Holwerda, the Pleasant Street congregation was without a pastor for one year. Several ministers and professors from the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary preached during this vacancy. Ten calls were extended by the congregation before the Rev. J. Peter Vosteen of Smithers, British Columbia, accepted the call which was extended to him. The Rev. Vosteen became pastor at Pleasant Street in March of 1970.

The revised blue Psalter Hymnals appeared in the pew racks in June, 1970. The sanctuary was given a fresh coat of paint after the decision was made to redecorate but not to change the color scheme.

The 75th anniversary of the church was celebrated in September, 1972. On this happy occasion, former pastors, the Reverends Lambertus Van Laar, John T. Holwerda, Richard De Ridder, Nelson Veltman, and Nelson Vander Zee, came to celebrate and preach from the pulpit with which they were so familiar. Pastor Vosteen reminded how God has blessed a church which had begun in 1896 with thirteen families and which had

now grown to the number of 189. He also called attention to the daughter church of Fairlawn. The Rev. Vosteen observed that it was no longer the Dutch heritage which kept the group together but a common desire to hear and praise the Lord. The anniversary credo was, "Ebenezer, hitherto has the Lord helped us."

At this time, the Evangelism Committee evaluated the West Millbury area for a mission outreach program. The Rev. Brent Averill, a minister in the Congregational Church from Medway, Massachusetts, was recommended for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church. To implement the goals of the outreach program, Mr. Paul Ingeneri was hired as evangelism leader jointly by the Pleasant Street and Fairlawn Christian Reformed churches.

As 1971 drew to a close, the Rev. Peter Vosteen was granted a leave of absence when it was discovered that he suffered from a heart condition which would require surgery.

In 1972, it was decided that elders should no longer sit together in the wing but should join their families during the church service. The congregation voted to hire a Minister of Evangelism in 1973. A year later, Pleasant Street and Fairlawn once again joined to hire Mr. Rick Sikma to fill this position. In 1974, The Rev. and Mrs. Oren Holtrop came to live in Whitinsville for six months. The Rev. Holtrop ministered to and visited the sick and elderly from January to June.

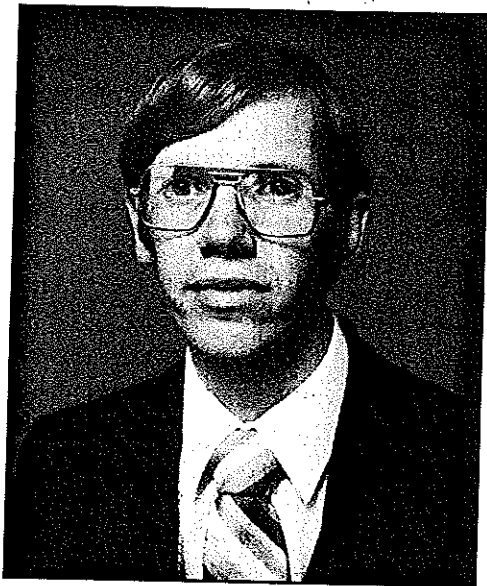
The years of the Rev. J. Peter Vosteen's tenure in Whitinsville were troublesome years in the history of the United States. As the Vietnam war wore on so did the protests of those who disapproved of the military action the country was taking. The New York Times printed the Pentagon Papers and the Nixon presidency became mired in Watergate. In 1972, the Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade*

declared that "... the right of privacy... is broad enough to encompass woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy." Richard Nixon declared in 1973 that he was not a crook but he was forced to resign from office in 1974. Gerald Ford became president of the United States. In April, 1975, the long night of the Vietnam conflict ended with the sobering spectacle of a helicopter evacuation from the roof of the American Embassy taking place as the North Vietnamese army occupied the city of Saigon.

The Rev. Peter Vosteen announced in May, 1975, that he had accepted the call he

had received from the First Christian Reformed Church of Paterson, New Jersey. Pastor Vosteen will be remembered for his energetic style of preaching. He was the first pastor in the pulpit of Pleasant Street to use a portable microphone which allowed him to move freely about on the pulpit while preaching. The Rev. J. Peter Vosteen had not grown up in the Christian Reformed Church but he impressed all with the vigor with which he preached the whole counsel of God from a thoroughly Reformed point of view.

The Rev. James Admiraal 1976 - 1980



The Rev. J. Admiraal

Before accepting the call which he had received from the Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church, the Rev. James Admiraal met with the council in a get-acquainted interview in January, 1976. The council members were impressed with the maturity and the steadfastness in the faith demonstrated by the man of youthful appearance before them. Following a period of mutual questioning which included an

exploration of goals and purposes on both sides, Rev. Admiraal was led to accept the call from the Pleasant Street Church. The installation service was held on March 11, 1976. Assisting in the service were the Rev. George Cooper, the Rev. J. Peter Vosteen, the Rev. Edwin Walhout, and Mr. James Vander Kam.

Prior to the arrival of the new pastor, the parsonage was renovated so that it would be ready and presentable for the new pastor, wife Rita, and children, Julie, Beth, Eric, and Melanie.

At the time of Rev. Admiraal's arrival, Operation Reach-out under the direction of Mr. Rick Sikma was being co-sponsored by the Pleasant Street and Fairlawn churches. In March, 1977, the Champlain Valley Christian Reformed Church was dedicated in Vergennes, Vermont. During this period, a group of church members sympathetic with the neo-Pentecostal approach to church life left the congregation after much serious discussion and conscientious prayer.

In the church building, the basement was remodeled, a new heating system was

installed, and the organ was completely overhauled. A planning committee was formed to consider how to provide more classroom and meeting space for the expanding activities of the church.

In 1976, with the end of hostilities in Vietnam, the mood of the nation became more relaxed as the United States celebrated 200 years of independence. President Jimmy Carter, in a conciliatory gesture, granted pardon to all Vietnam-era draft evaders who were not involved in violence. The dark side of human nature was exposed in the jungle of Guyana where, in Jonestown, 900 followers of the Rev. James Jones committed suicide by drinking Kool-Aid laced with cyanide. Elvis Presley died at age 42 years, the victim of his own self-indulgence. There was a ray of hope in the Middle East as Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty. This was counter balanced by activity in Iran where the revolutionary Iranians seized control of the American Embassy and took fifty-two Americans hostage, wounding the presidency of Jimmy Carter.

During the period when the Rev. J. Admiraal occupied the pulpit, many new members were added to the rolls of the church. In the pastor's family, two sons, Philip and Nathan were born while they were in Whitinsville. Pastor Admiraal approached his duties in a quiet but deliberate manner. He is remembered for his faithful preaching, his conscientious visiting of the sick and shut-ins, and his faithful teaching of the young of the church.

In the summer of 1980, Pastor Admiraal accepted a call to the Second Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan. In his last meeting with the council, its members encouraged him to continue to follow Paul's advice to Timothy to "...preach the Word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching." The Rev. James Admiraal and family bid their farewell to the congregation on August 3, 1980.

The Rev. John H. Piersma 1981 - 1984



The Rev. J. H. Piersma

After a vacancy of fourteen months and many calls, the Rev. John H. Piersma answered God's call to become pastor in October of 1981. He came to Whitinsville from Sioux Center, Iowa, with his wife, Genevieve, and his mother, Grace. He was installed as pastor of the Pleasant Street Church of Whitinsville on October 11, and preached his first sermon entitled "Preach the Sound Doctrine of the Word." The Rev. Piersma is remembered for his constant allegiance to the Word of God and the doctrine of the church. The Rev. Piersma made it his goal to visit the home of every member of the congregation. He was always available for a visit in time of need. He enjoyed a popularity with the young people of the congregation and was an enthusiastic

supporter of the Whitinsville Christian School. He followed the athletic teams and wrote the sports articles for the area newspapers. Many who attended his catechism classes speak with enthusiasm of the spirit and interest which they generated.

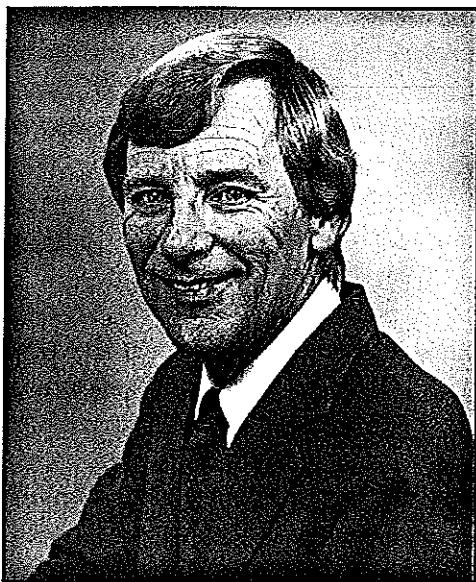
During the pastorate of the Rev. John H. Piersma, the Men's Chorus was formed. The physical structure of the church, also, was not neglected. Steps were constructed in front of the pulpit, the sanctuary was repainted and the blue carpeting was installed. The Rev. Piersma encouraged relationships with others of the Reformed faith in New England. He started a relationship with the Fall River Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

During the years of his ministry, the people of the United States struggled with the question of equal rights for women. An Equal Rights Amendment, which passed the Congress, failed because of lack of ratification by three states. In 1984, however, Mrs. Geraldine Ferraro was the first woman to run

as candidate for the office of Vice President of the United States. The nation was convulsed by the bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1983. Over 200 Marines died in the explosion. During this period, IBM set the stage for the eclipse of the Wang Corporation by its decision to focus on the manufacture of personal computers. In a lingering salute to the tears of the Vietnam era, the somber Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in the nation's capitol.

In March of 1984, the Rev. Piersma asked for his release from his responsibilities as pastor of the Pleasant Street Church. He expressed his desire and intention to move to Lansing, Illinois, where his aged mother could spend her final years in a Christian rest home with old acquaintances in familiar surroundings. He preached his farewell sermon, "Jesus Christ and Him Crucified" on April 1, 1984. This ended his three years as pastor in Whitinsville and thirty-seven years of faithful ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.

The Rev. John J. Wieggers *1984 - 1992*



The Rev. J. J. Wieggers

The Rev. John J. Wieggers came to the Pleasant Street pulpit from the Cragmor Christian Reformed Church of Colorado Springs, Colorado. The installation service was held on September 30, 1984. Pastor Wieggers brought a creative and vigorous spirituality to the pulpit and to the life of the Pleasant Street Church. He was deeply committed to the power of prayer in the life of the church and in the life of the individual church member. Pastor Wieggers instituted weekday morning and evening prayer meetings in the church. He also inaugurated a prayer network which brought together churches up and down the Blackstone Valley. On March 3, 1989, the first Blackstone Valley Prayer meeting was held in the sanctuary of the Pleasant Street Church.

The Reverend John Wieggers was a Christian of intense spirituality. That spirituality was communicated to the congregation which, in turn, expressed it in many ways. The Coffee Break program was started during his ministry, as was Men's Life. Also initiated was the Adopt-a-Family program. This period of ministry also marked the beginning of yearly Maundy Thursday Communion services.

The church office was moved from the parsonage to the Baker Building. Critical for the future plans of the church was the purchase of the Clarke School property in December, 1991. At this time, the Rev. Robert W. Eckardt came to Whitinsville to carry out his much appreciated and highly compassionate ministry with the elderly, the shut-ins, and the sick.

With the guidance of the Rev. Wieggers, the Pleasant Street congregation examined its strengths, its weaknesses, its goals, objectives,

and vision when it decided to submit to the analysis of the Congregational Master Planning process. This analysis opened the door to a program of building expansion, to the Small Groups approach to the ministry of the church, and to a reorganization of many aspects of congregational life and administration.

The ministry of the Rev. John J. Wieggers contributed substantially to a deeper understanding of the meaning of the Gospel of Jesus as it applied to the Christian life for many members of the congregation. His vision of the place of the individual church in the life of the Church of Jesus Christ worldwide led many church members to a broader vision of their duties and responsibilities as Christians.

In August, 1992, the Rev. John J. Wieggers accepted a call to the Fox Valley Christian Reformed Church of Crystal Lake, Illinois.

The Rev. Robert W. Eckardt 1984 - 1993



The Rev. R. W. Eckardt

1984. We had visited here on a weekend in August of that year. Gilbert J. Baker, who was acting for the council in securing a retired minister who could serve as a part-time minister of calling, invited us to come. I had been in touch with him for several months after I had read a notice that was being circulated in the Orthodox Presbyterian denomination. I was ending my service as O.P. pastor in Cedar Falls, Iowa. We were to be in the East on vacation for the month of August, and it was during that period that I agreed to come to Whitinsville. After preaching at the evening service, I was interviewed by the Council. On the following Wednesday, while still on vacation, I got a phone call from Gil telling me that I was being offered the job.

Mary and I arrived here on October 10,

My job description provided for me to

visit each shut-in of the congregation once a month. (Throughout my time of service, the shut-in list always contained about thirty names.) Also, I was to call regularly on the widows and widowers of the congregation. Usually there were about 55 widows and 20 widowers at any one time but, of course, some of these would also be shut-ins. Moreover, if any elderly person (Pastor Wieggers and I considered those who were about 75 or older to be in that category) was in the hospital, I would visit him or her three times a week. At first, my job description provided for me also to call on couples of advanced age. But it soon became clear that most *couples* did not consider it necessary for me to call on them. Therefore, I tried to carry out this part of my duty with a measure of finesse.

As can be imagined, I conducted a number of funerals for those whom I got to know during my stay here. During the nine-year period of my ministry here, I conducted 40 funerals - on average, about one every three months.

Throughout my years at Pleasant Street, I conducted a ladies' Bible class once a week from September to May. The class first met in the council room and later at the retirement home. There were usually about 20 ladies present, varying in age from 60 to 90 years.

My ministry ended on September 30, 1993. I had become 70 years of age in March of that year.

Several years previously, Mary and I had purchased a condo apartment in Heritage Park and rented it out until we occupied it at retirement. During all the years of my ministry, which began in 1947 upon my graduation from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, we had always lived in church-owned property. This made it necessary to secure a place to live after retirement.

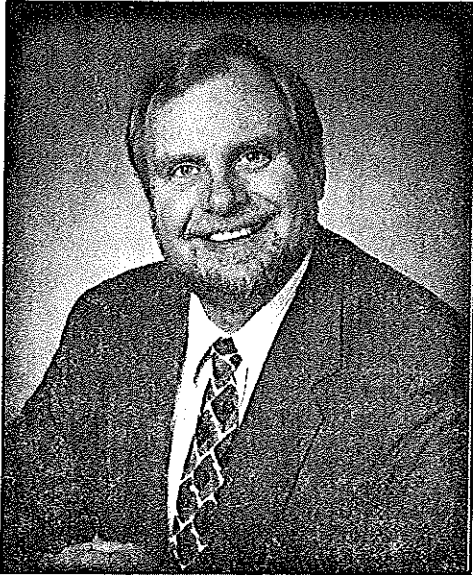
Throughout my ministry in Massachusetts, I have been a ministerial member of the Presbytery of New York and New England of the O.P.C. The council permitted me to serve the O.P.C. on both the presbytery and denominational levels by granting me permission to be absent to attend meetings and serve on committees. Since 1988 I have also been on the Board of Trustees of Westminster Seminary.

Pleasant Street Church graciously recognized two milestones in my life-time ministry. They gave me a money gift and my wife flowers in November of 1987 on the fortieth anniversary of my ordination, and presented me with a plaque (and my wife with flowers) in 1992 on the forty-fifth.

Mary and I consider our time at Pleasant Street to have been one of the most blessed periods of our life.

The Rev. William G. Vis

1993 -



The Rev. W. G. Vis

In the period following the departure of the Rev. John J. Wieggers, the council chose Allan and Jayne Hanscom to work with the congregation in the continuation of the Congregational Master Planning process. The analysis of the results as they gradually became available revealed some areas of weakness and others of opportunity for the congregation. The areas of weakness included an aging church membership, a slow but steady decline in the size of the congregation, and a church building which did not provide sufficient space for church programs and activities. In 1994, the congregation decided to respond to the challenges of Congregational Master Planning and go ahead with a million-dollar building program.

The Rev. William G. Vis, a person with the willingness to respond to challenge and lead in the situation of a perceived goal and a shared vision, accepted the call extended to him by the Pleasant Street congregation in 1993. He came to wintery Whitinsville, Massachusetts, from balmy Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

The Rev. Vis is a man richly imbued with

the vision of the potential of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and confidence in its ability to change individuals and society. He also has a knowledge of church administration, polity, and finance. His familiarity with these aspects of church life caused him to accept the challenge for ministry which he saw at the Pleasant Street Church. With the council, he advanced programs which sought to relieve the elders and deacons of the purely administrative aspects of church life. The objective was to allow the elders to spend their time in the nurture of the spiritual life of the members of the congregation. A second objective was to allow the deacons the time to attend to the financial and physical needs of the congregation and community as appropriate. A vehicle by which much of this was accomplished was the Ministry Coordination Team. Under the design of a Ministry Coordination Team, members of the congregation assumed responsibility for the administration of organizations through which the church provided activities for its members and contacts with the greater community.

In November, 1994, the congregation began a Small Group ministry in which about one-third of the congregation is involved. In addition, an increasing number of members participated in programs of sharing the gospel like Coffee Break, Men's Life, Friendship, as well as expanded programs for youth of all ages.

In 1995, it was decided that there should be an increase in the focus on the youth of the church. To further this goal, a call was extended to Mr. Bruce M. Dykstra who accepted the invitation to become the Director of Congregational Life and Youth Pastor.

In 1996, the council instituted the formation of congregational visiting teams consisting of an elder and a deacon. For

sensitive and specific elder concerns, the tradition of two elders as visitors and spiritual counselors was continued.

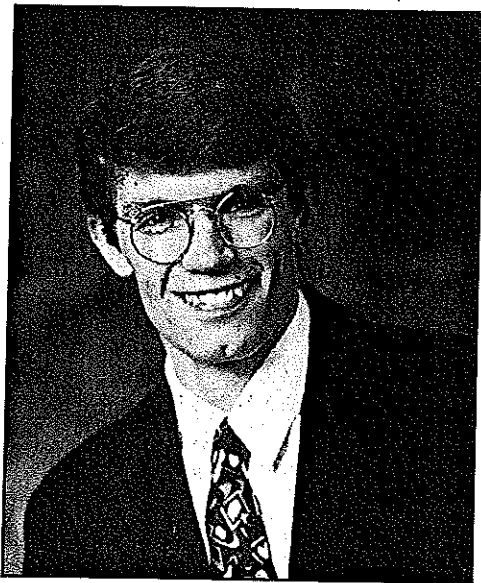
During the three years of the Rev. William Vis' ministry a spirit of spiritual vitality and vigor has been maintained which has attracted the attention of the community. There has been a noticeable increase in church attendance, and a significant growth in church membership. The worship services have been a mixture of the maintenance of tradition and a willingness to try new modalities. The musical group RESOUND! was introduced. An active prayer ministry for members of the congregation which focuses not only on concerns of health and

circumstance, but also upon matters of thanksgiving and praise, has been an important part of congregational life.

The Rev. William G. Vis presides over the march of the Pleasant Street Church into the 21st Century. The potential of a new building and the energy of a congregation convinced that all things are possible for those who follow Jesus Christ with conviction and faith, will form a bridge which firmly connects the accomplishments of the past and the hopes of the future.

The Pleasant Street Church looks forward in faith to its second century.

Pastor Bruce M. Dykstra 1995 -



Pastor Bruce M. Dykstra

One of the main reasons why I am involved in Church ministry work is related to the first time I read the book of Philemon. Philemon 1:6 is the verse in the Bible that more than any other changed my life. "I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ." When

I read this verse, I realized that I needed to be active in sharing my faith. This verse showed me that I was not doing that in my pursuit of a career in architecture. I felt that I needed to turn myself around and find the avenue in which God wanted me to be active. Because of a series of doors which closed and by reason of many others which opened, I went to Calvin Seminary and concentrated on an education which would prepare me for working with youth.

At the Pleasant Street Church, youth ministry looks to foster the "full understanding" of what a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is all about. Starting with Cadets and Calvinettes, a contact is made with the youth of the church and the community. The next step is to make positive relationships with each youth on an individual basis. The next steps are Junior and Senior High School programs in which the youth are challenged to find where God fits into their life, to make God Number One, and to look to understand the "good" that God has in store for each one of them. The goal of these programs is that each youth will

develop spiritual skills - prayer, devotions, worship, praise, and a serving heart - so that a lasting and empowering understanding of the Good News of Jesus Christ is nurtured which will encourage a further growth in Christ for the rest of their lives. A small group is then a catalyst for further growth which should occur as the youth enters the college scene or the working world.

A youth program already in existence plus a congregation with a positive attitude drew me to the Pleasant Street Church. I saw an opportunity here for this vision to be caught and developed so that a full

understanding of every good thing we have in Christ could unfold in the Blackstone Valley. I arrived in Whitinsville with my wife, Mary, and sons, Andrew and Jesse, on July 1, 1995, to take up my duties as Director of Congregational Life at the Pleasant Street Church. I was commissioned as the second pastor on July 9, 1995. In my role as Director of Congregational Life, my duties include directing the programs which develop out of the church's youth and small group ministries. On February 29, 1996, I was granted a license to exhort from Classis Atlantic Northeast.

An Afterword. . .

In the decade leading up to our Centennial and its celebration, the cascade of history has continued. There has been drama in every year. In 1986, the world looked on with horror and helplessness as the Challenger spacecraft exploded and plunged into the sea. In the same year, Surgeon-General C. Everett Koop issued a frank report on the subject of AIDS with the message, "The silence must end." It was a tragic decade for TV and radio evangelism as both Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart were disgraced because of involvement in sexual scandal.

In the Spring of 1989, the People's Republic of China was convulsed by a student uprising which captured the attention of the world. On Tiananmen Square, the idealism of youth collided with the intransigence of age and, in a bloody confrontation, hundreds perished. The Communist government of the most populous nation on the earth, however, maintained its power.

Decency seemed to get a boost in South Africa when Nelson Mandela was released from prison to go on to become President of that rich but troubled country. This ray of hopefulness was cast in shadow by the reports of "ethnic cleansing" which emerged from the turmoil of the Balkans, kindling

memories of the Holocaust. The dismantling of the Berlin Wall seemed to end the long night of the Cold War, but the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait sent American servicemen to the Middle East in the military operation, Desert Storm.

The events and the issues of the times reach into our consciences, our hearts, and our homes. We are forced to think of our duties and responsibilities as Christians in a troubled world longing for answers and direction.

Over the years, our pastors have faithfully guided us through the troubles and the trials of the times. We are thankful to these faithful men of God, who have guided our thinking by keeping us focused on that which is Truth for time and eternity. The issues, at times, seem unclear and may well be matters upon which men and women of good will may differ. As Christians, however, we are unified by our faith in the nature and the certainty of our salvation in Jesus Christ. For 100 years, the pastors of the Pleasant Street Church have faithfully lifted up the Cross and that Truth.

By God's grace, they will continue to do the same in the century ahead.

SERVANTS OF THE LORD

Sons of the Congregation

The Rev. Ralph Baker
The Rev. Andrew Banning, Th.D.
The Rev. Howard De Vries
The Rev. Joseph De Vries
The Rev. Gerrit De Young
The Rev. Allen Jongsma

The Rev. Kenneth Nydam
The Rev. Ronald Nydam, D.Min., Ph.D.
The Rev. Raymond Oppewal
The Rev. Joseph Vanden Akker
The Rev. Richard Wynja

The congregation of the Pleasant Street Church is proud of every member who serves the Lord in whatever capacity. It reserves a special pride for those who have dedicated their lives to being ministers of the Gospel.

THE COUNCIL

In every church there shall be a consistory of office-bearers. The consistory is responsible for the government of the church. Article 35 - Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government.

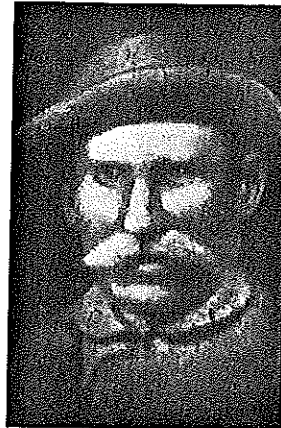
The First Consistory



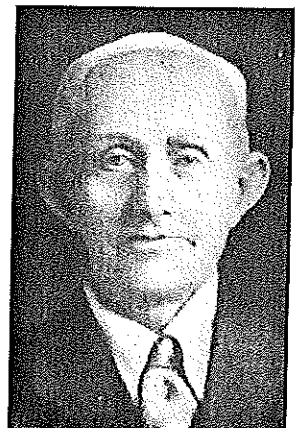
Mink Beinema



Pieter Glashouwer

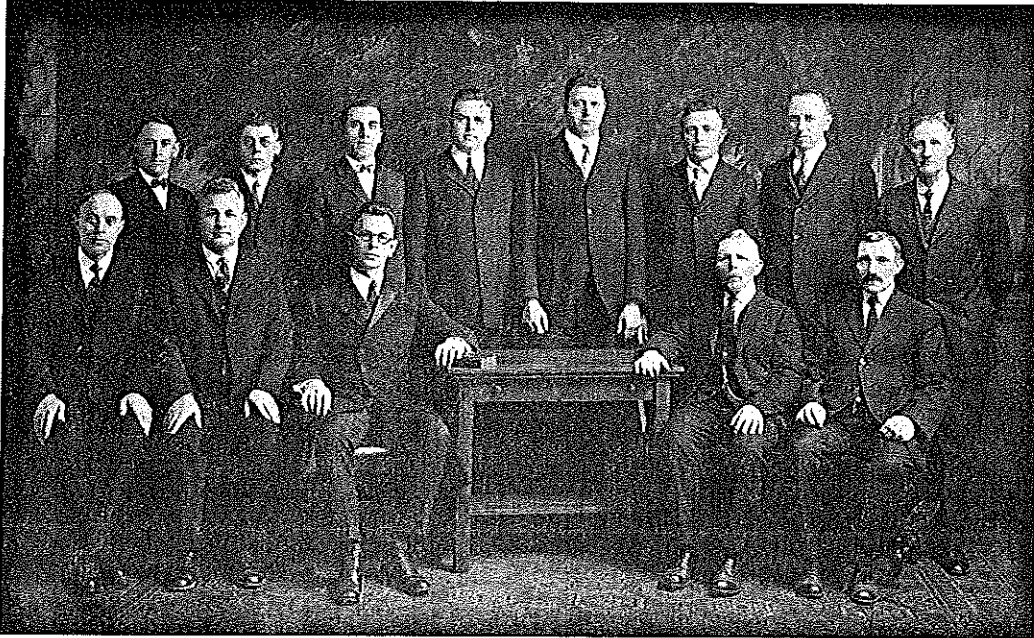


Oepke Plantinga



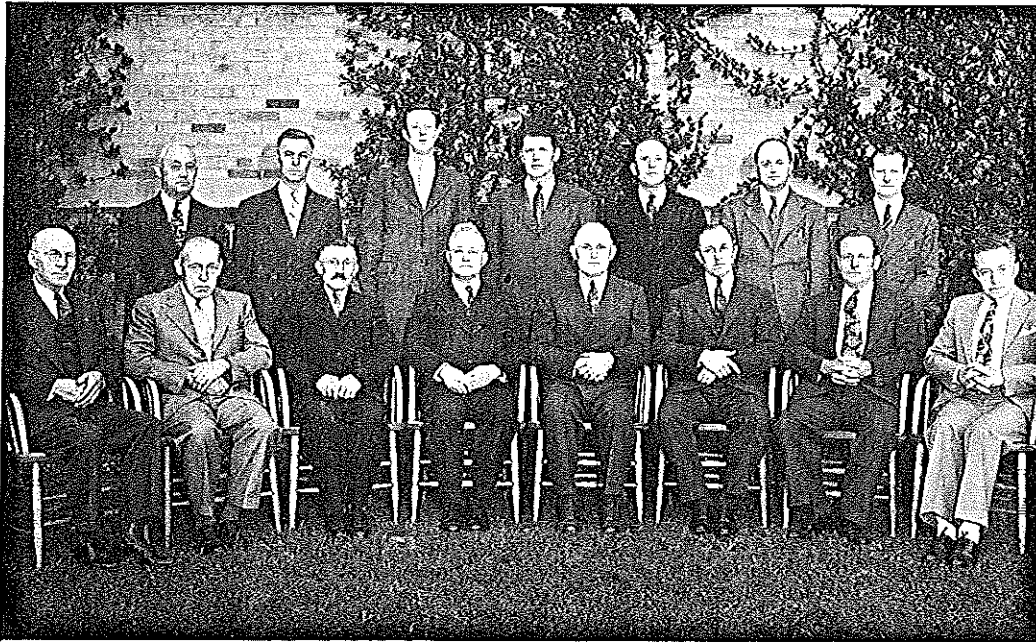
Hendrick Smidt

1925 Consistory



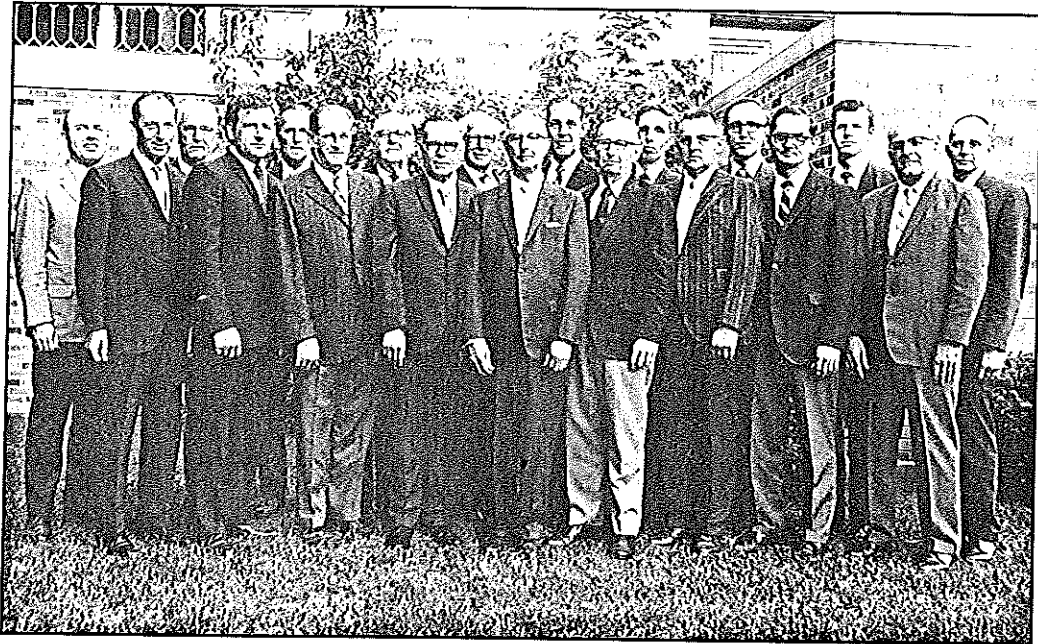
Front Row: D. Zylstra, J. Vander Baan, Sr., Rev. L. Trap,
R. Osterman, R. Haringa
Back Row: H. A. Kooistra, A. La Fleur, H. Vanderbrug, T. Oppewal,
Y. Haringa, D. Miedema, J. Vander Zee, G. Youngsma

1946 Consistory



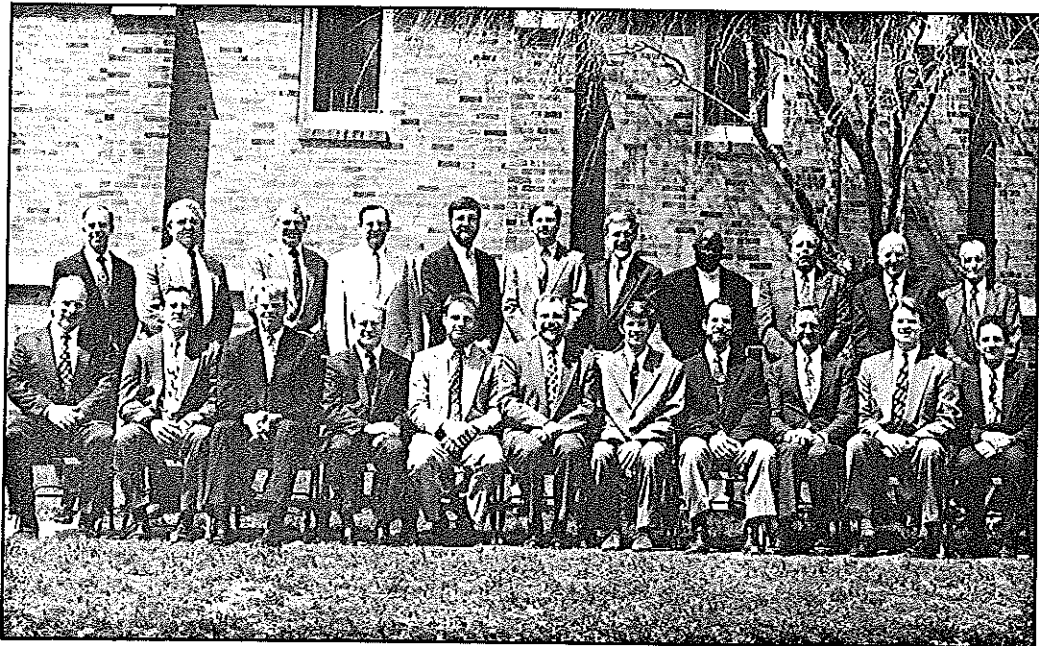
Front Row: M. Zylstra, H. Wynja, R. Haringa, J. Vander Baan, Sr.,
H. R. Osterman, C. Baker, S. Vanden Akker, G. Dykstra
Back Row: P. Kooistra, P. Feddema, O. Plantinga, G. Burgess, G. Ebbeling,
S. Visser, J. Wassenaar

1971 Consistory



Front Row: A. Wiersma, E. Oosterman, F. Jackson, G. Wynja, C. Frieswyk,
S. Wiersma, G. Haagsma, B. Wiersma, H. Heerdt
Back Row: Rev. J. P. Vosteen, A. Vanderbrug, P. De Vries, W. Vander Sloot,
F. Bosma, G. Ebbeling, H. Youngsma, R. DeMaster, R. Plantinga, L. Bangma

1996 Consistory



Front Row: D. Nydam, D. Wassenaar, D. Koopman, B. Buma, K. Wiersma,
Rev. Wm. Vis, Pastor B. Dykstra, N. Lopez, R. Bol, M. Plantinga, J. Buteyn
Back Row: A. Hanscom, J. Kuik, E. De Vries, P. Wassenaar, T. Cooper, W. Groot,
A. Youngsma, W. Lewis, W. Jorritsma, O. Kuipers, W. Bangma
Not Pictured: A. Baker, J. Woudenberg

MINISTRY COORDINATION TEAM . . .

The Ministry Coordination Team directs the ministries of the church within the guidelines established by the council. Its directors oversee Adult Education, Care, Fellowship, Missions, Outreach, Publicity, Resources, Small Groups, Worship, Youth Education, and Youth Ministries.



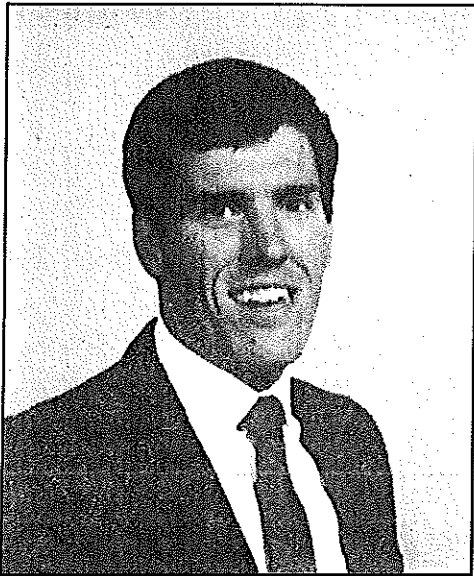
Front Row: M. Kenbeek, Rev. Wm. Vis, L. Bors-Koefoed,
Pastor B. Dykstra, T. Barnatt

Back Row: W. Banning, J. Kuik, D. Kenbeek, J. Vriesema, J. H. Baker, J. Buteyn
Not Pictured: D. Godeke, J. Godeke, W. La Fleur, B. Zylstra

OUR MISSIONARIES

*John and Carol Berthelette
Gordon and Shirley Kooistra*

John and Carol Berthelette



J. Berthelette

Note from the Editor: John and Carol Berthelette are currently involved in a language survey project for the Wycliffe Bible Translators/Summer Institute of Linguistics. In a letter to readers of this Centennial Book, John describes the kind of work this activity involves:

In principle, language survey is the groundwork for Bible translation. Our visits to various and far-flung people-groups form the basis of our organization's decisions about translating for these groups. The basic question: Does a people-group need a translation of the New Testament in their own language, or can materials in another language reach their hearts with the Truth? The responsibility, if it weren't so great, would be "heady stuff." On our recommendation, a language team invests fifteen years among a people-group. On the other hand, upon our

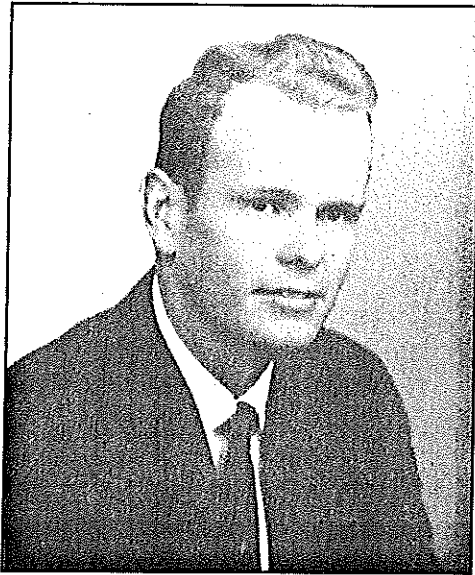
recommendation, a people-group is considered reached by materials in another language.

I mentioned what our work is in principle. In practice, though, the work seems more a cross between soliciting, bribing, and coercing, none of these being actions traditionally held in high esteem by our society. How to persuade a 15-year-old girl, for example, to listen to stories from other dialects? She has never talked with a white person; in fact, has probably only seen a handful of us. She has never put on headphones. She's not comfortable with testing situations, in fact, she's not happy with anything that might make her look foolish. In any case, for you who know Carol and me as introverts, you would be shocked at how we act on a survey trip.

Let me shift the attention to where it belongs. I'm wise enough to know that if we accomplish anything on our trips, it is literally God's grace overcoming countless potential obstacles. We are nearing the end of our time in survey; it is not a permanent assignment. At the end of 1996, we hope to begin a "classic" Wycliffe language project. We hope to begin our own fifteen-year investment in reaching the unreached with the only liberating and hope-inspiring Truth that exists. Carol and I are very thankful that our work is backed by your prayers and gifts.

With love,
John & Carol Berthelette

Gordon and Shirley Kooistra



G. Kooistra

In response to being asked to share a little bit about ourselves for the Centennial Book, we say a big "Amen" to the choice of Psalm 100:5 as the dedicatory Bible verse. *For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.* This very much describes our lives also.

As I think back to the day when God called me to be a missionary pilot-mechanic, I felt it would mean I would no longer be able to do what I wanted to do. As I considered those plans, though, the thought of Jesus, and what He had done for me, flooded my mind, and with tears of joy I said I would go. For thirty-seven years now I have been going and I would not trade those years for anything.

Jim Elliot, one of the five missionaries who was killed in Ecuador back in 1954, once wrote, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." I find that so very true, and it applies to all areas of our lives.

God has given me a supporting family through all my years. As I left to go as a missionary pilot-mechanic, God gave me you - my hometown church. As my first and main supporting church, you have continued faithfully to be supportive through all these years. How we thank you and God for that. Through the years, God also brought Shirley into my life and then our two children, David and Sheryl. Presently David is finishing his training as a missionary aviation mechanic and Sheryl is starting her training as a potential missionary Bible translator. My cup overflows with God's goodness. His promise is that his love endures forever, and his faithfulness continues through all generations.

This all began as I grew up in a small but very special place called Whitinsville, attending the Pleasant Street Church where life is centered in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes, these have been a tremendous 100 years, but the best is still to come. One day Jesus is coming back in the clouds and then we shall see him face to face. Oh what a day that will be! In the meantime, let us keep on going.

Love in Jesus.

Gordon, Shirley, David & Sheryl Kooistra

IN THE SERVICE OF OUR NATION

Spanish American War

Auke Vander Brug

World War I

Lawrence Beinema
Oliver F. Frieswick
Jacob W. Feddema
William P. Feddema
Kemp O. Feenstra

Ynte P. Haringa
Ynte J. Haringa
George Kuindersma
Teake T. Oosterman
Sipke G. Oppewall

Teake P. Oppewall
Herman G. Oppewall
Abraham Twight
Andrew Vierstra
Charles B. Wiersma

World War II

In Memoriam

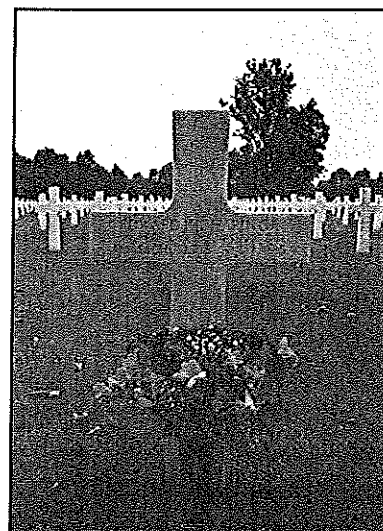
EDWARD H. HARINGA

*Killed in Action
April 9, 1945*

*PFC Edward H. Haringa
was killed in
Lutgen-Dortmund,
Germany.*

*His division at the time
was fighting in the
Ninth Army Sector
and was engaged in
clearing the enemy from
the Rhine pocket.*

*His body lies buried in
the land of his forefathers,
Margraten, the Netherlands.*



George Bailly
Edward Baker
Hilka Baker
John C. Baker
John H. Baker
Ralph Baker
Richard D. Baker
Robert Baker
William Bangma
Marvin Beinema
Cornelius Bosma
Frank Bosma
Frank G. Bosma

Richard Bosma
Walter Bosma
Roger Branowicki
Elmer Buma
Everet G. Burgess
Herman DeBoer
Frank DeJong
Martin DeJong
Sidney DeJong
Edward DeVries
Peter De Vries
Edward G. Ebbeling

Elmer Ebbeling
Floris Ebbeling
Leonard Feddema
Maynard Feddema
Otto K. Feenstra
John Ferwerda
Louis Foppema
Charles Foppema
Herbert Gjeltema
Raymond Gjeltema
Richard Gjeltema
Andrew J. Haagsma

Gerhardus Haagsma
 Herman Haagsma
 Edward H. Haringa
 Harold Haringa
 Martin Haringa
 Hertsen Heerdt
 Martin Jorritsma
 Raymond Jorritsma, Jr.
 Andrew Kooistra
 Philip Kooistra
 Jacob Kooistra
 Fred Kramer, Jr.
 Maynard J. Krull
 Nicholas La Fleur, Jr.
 William La Fleur
 David Miedema, Jr.
 Harmon Miedema

Edward Nydam
 John H. Nydam
 John P. Nydam
 John Nyenhuis
 Chester Oosterman
 Gerald Oostermañ
 Harry Oosterman
 Henry S. Oosterman
 Herman Oosterman
 Sidney Oosterman
 William Oosterman
 Donald Oppewall
 Gerrit G. Oppewall
 Gerrit S. Oppewall
 Joseph Oppewall
 Peter Oppewall
 Raymond Oppewall
 George Packard

Samuel Roorda
 Sidney Smith
 Ivan Stahl
 Louis Valk
 Maynard VandenAkker
 Richard VanderBaan
 Walter VanderPloeg
 Sidney VanderSluis
 Jacob Van Dyke
 Bernard VanSpyker
 Bernard Vierstra
 Matthew L. Vierstra
 Minne G. Visbeek
 Job J. Visbeek
 Arthur Wiersma
 Harold Youngsma
 Peter Youngsma

1946 - 1996

Ambert Baker
 Gerald Baker
 Herman Baker
 Harold Banning
 Willard Banning
 Alan Bol
 Leonard Bosma
 Thomas Brouwer
 Adrian Buteyn
 Richard Cook
 Derek DeJong
 Stuart B. DeJong
 Ronald DeVries
 Ralph Dykstra
 G. Garrit Ebbeling
 Jacob L. Feddema
 Peter J. Feddema
 Donald Godeke
 Dale Hackathorn
 James Hackathorn
 Wayne Hughes
 Harold Jongmsma
 Robert Jongmsma

Donald Jorritsma
 Kurt Jorritsma
 Randy Jorritsma
 Richard Jorritsma
 Rodney Jorritsma
 William Jorritsma
 Gordon Kooistra
 Thomas Koopman
 Everett Kuindersma
 Charles Kuipers
 George Kuipers
 Marvin Kuipers
 Oscar Kuipers
 Peter Kuipers
 William La Fleur, Jr.
 Henry G. Nydam
 Paul Nyenhuis
 Aileen Oosterman
 Ernest Oosterman
 Gordon Oosterman
 James Oosterman
 Ralph Oosterman
 Raymond Oosterman
 Sidney Oosterman

Gerald Oppewall
 Casper Schotanus
 Edward Schotanus
 Harold Schotanus
 Peter Schotanus
 Raymond Schotanus
 Thomas Schotanus
 Robert Taylor
 Raymond VandenAkker
 Roland VanderBaan
 Richard VanderBrug
 Richard VanderSluis
 Mark VanderZee
 Richard Wassenar
 Bernard Wiersma
 Louis Wiersma
 Arthur Wynja
 James Wynja
 Alvin Youngsma
 Cathleen Youngsma
 Lester Youngsma
 Michael Youngsma
 Thane Youngsma

**James F. Kramer
 Gerrit DeYoung
 Sidney DeYoung**

**Myron Oosterman
 Thomas Oosterman
 William Vander Brug**

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Church School - the past, the present

Young Children and Worship

Children's Church

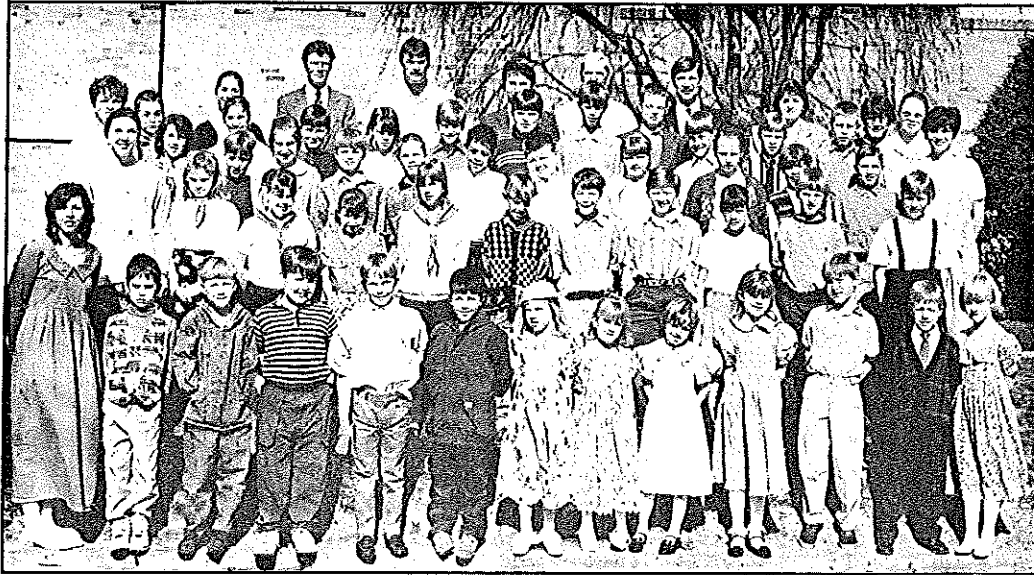
Cadet Corps

Calvinettes and Busy Bees

Junior High Youth Group

Senior High Youth Group

Church School 1-6



First Row: J. Nydam, O. Cooper, H. Nydam, S. Kenbeek, E. Bangma,
 D. Westbury; K. Vriesema, C. Ouwinga, B. McGrath, O. McGrath,
 D. Jorritsma, T. Bangma, C. De Vries
 Second Row: E. L. Anderson, S. Koopman, M. Nydam, M. Ebbeling, A. Stinson,
 J. Groot, J. Vander Baan, M. De Vries, R. Westbury, K. Engbers, M. Bol
 Third Row: K. Westbury, G. Smith, B. Cooper, D. Mainville, S. Bangma,
 C. Youngsma, A. E. Kuipers, A. M. Kuipers, K. Bangma, B. McGrath,
 A. Stinson, S. Plantinga
 Fourth Row: M. Bangma, I. Cooper, C. Bangma, B. Ouwinga, S. Oosterman,
 J. Jorritsma, L. Kenbeek, P. Groot, J. Oosterman, A. Vander-Baan, M. Bangma,
 J. Jorritsma, M. Buteyn, J. Oosterman
 Fifth Row: E. R. Anderson, S. Stinson - Supt., D. Ouwinga, S. Lariviere,
 J. Barnatt, R. De Vries, K. Lariviere

Junior High Catechism



Front Row: M. Bol, G. Godeke, B. Youngsma, B. Bangma, K. Bangma
 Back Row: A. Groot, E. Wierenga, J. Engbers, B. Barnatt, W. Groot

Senior High Catechism



Front Row: B. Youngsma, J. Engbers, B. Vis, M. Haringa, T. Bol, M. Barnatt
Back Row: Pastor B. Dykstra, J. Hendrikse, S. McClure, M. McClure, C. Bol,
M. Schotanus, M. Jenkins, Rev. Wm. Vis

The Church School. . . the past

Soon after the establishment of the Whitinsville church, a Sunday School was organized to teach the children the truths of the Bible "...in accordance with the teachings of the denomination." Classes were taught in the Dutch language. When the use of the English language in the Sunday School was proposed, a group organized to prevent this, but this effort gradually lost momentum and English language instruction in the Sunday School was inaugurated in 1917.

Mr. Peter Plantinga, a son of a charter member of the church, was the first superintendent. For several years, he had two teachers to assist him. Mr. Gerrit Visser, Mr. J. P. De Vries, Miss Bouke Wiersma, Mr. Hans Plantinga, Mr. John P. Glashouwer, Mr. Bernard De Vries, Mr. Rein Workman, and Mr. Joseph Visser also served as Sunday School superintendents over the years. Each Sunday, the children contributed to a collection and over the years, the Sunday School was able to send approximately \$4000.00 to support the work on the

church's Indian Mission Field in the American Southwest.

During the pastorate of the Reverend Leonard Trap, the Consistory decided that the English language should be used exclusively in the teaching of the Sunday School and Catechism classes. As noted, this was a very important step as the language question had engendered much debate and differing opinions over the years.

In the early years, teachers were required to attend Sunday School teachers' meetings every Friday evening. Either the pastor or the Sunday School superintendent conducted these sessions at which the lesson for the following Sunday was discussed. At that time, all grades were taught the same lesson.

During those earlier years, all children were required to memorize a Bible verse each week. Also the Sunday School met fifty-two Sundays per year; there was no "summer vacation." It was said, "Satan never takes a

vacation." At Christmas time, the children presented a program in the church auditorium. The program consisted of Christmas songs, a short play or skit, and recitations. Sometimes one of the small children from the lower grades would recite, from memory, the Christmas message found in Luke, Chapter 2. They had been taught this by Miss Nellie Pals in the Christian School.

For many years in the past, the Sunday

School children, teachers, and parents would meet together at some nearby lake, such as Lake Pearl or Solomon's Pond, for the annual Sunday School picnic. Races, contests, and games were the entertainment and, of course, there was swimming for all. The children were all given a gift of some free tickets with which they could buy a few goodies. Over the years, Sunday School attendance grew from 130 to 220 students.

. . . the present

Sunday School may very well be a program that carries on year after year, seemingly unchanged. In some ways this could be viewed as a compliment since the children are being instructed about our God and His Word which, of course, is changeless. Change or transition does take place, however. Today, the "Life" curriculum from CRC Publications is used in the Sunday School. This series emphasizes a living, practical approach to understanding Jesus Christ and being obedient to Him.

Seventy to seventy-five children attend Sunday School from grades K through six. They spend the entire period of time (8:45 AM - 9:45 AM) in their individual classrooms. Together as small groups they will have group prayer, a time of worship (adoration), and their Bible lesson. In addition they will have a time to express their understanding of the lesson artistically.

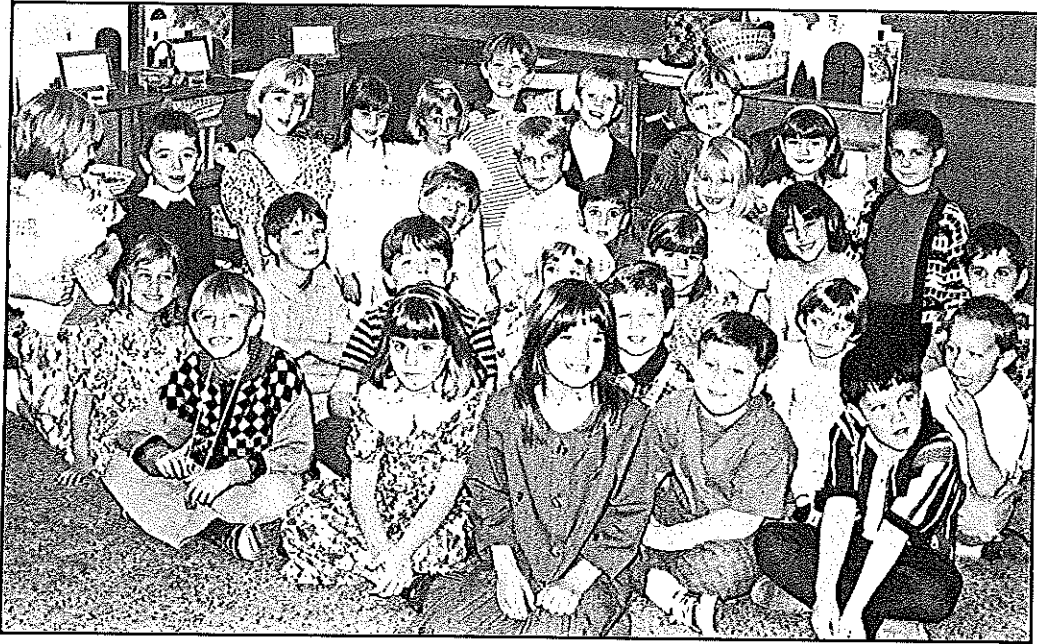
Many generations have now gone through our Whitinsville Christian School

and, as a result, many children have an exceptional knowledge of the Bible. The object of the Sunday School continues to be the teachings of a practical living application of this knowledge. Stressing the person of Christ and the sacrifice that He made for each child pays off in the area of spiritual growth.

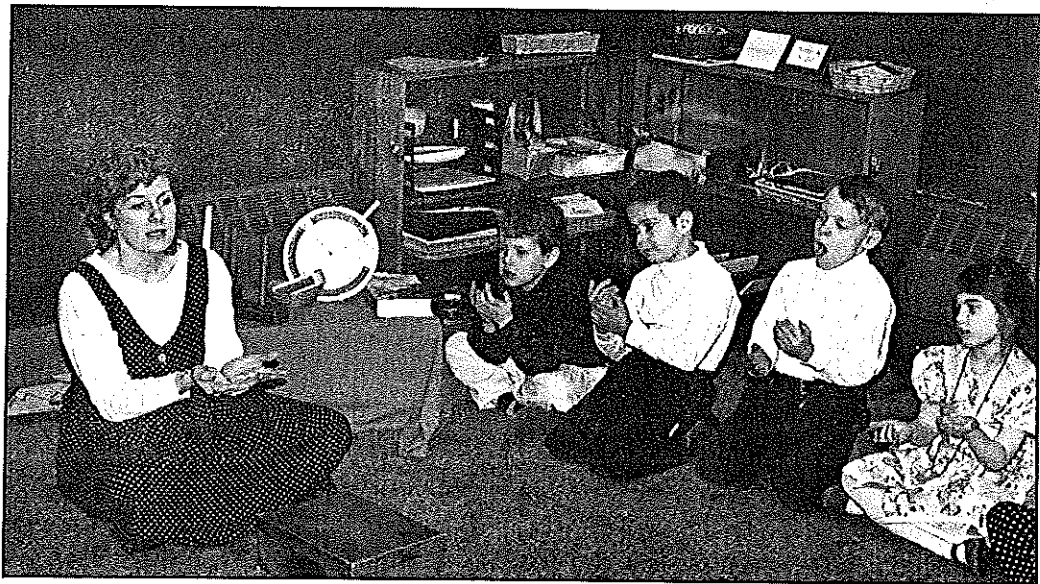
For seven to eight years, Sunday School collections went to support a physically and mentally impaired child in Korea. The children have seen this child grow to a young man as Jesus has used them to provide for him. This year, Sunday School funds will be used closer to home. They will provide material things for those in need in this community - food, clothing, etc. In this way it is felt the children will be able to feel a more direct hands-on type mission for the Lord.

The current Sunday School Superintendent is Mr. Steven E. Stinson.

Young Children and Worship



Young Children and Worship



V. Kuik presents a lesson

The Young Children and Worship program began in the Fall of 1991. The purpose of the program is to provide an environment where children come to experience the presence of God in worship. Young Children and Worship goes beyond the simple storytelling by introducing the concepts of reverence, prayer, and an overall

respect for the things of God. In addition, this curriculum meets the children at their level. It not only uses visual aids to tell each story, but also allows the use of these materials to retell and further experience the story in the way of a child. Each story is concluded with a few "wondering" questions. This encourages the children to think about the

story and to reflect. By drawing from their own experience, the children are better able to feel a personal relationship with the elements of the story and reach a deeper knowledge of God.

Children in kindergarten and first grade join together in the Worship Center during the morning worship service from September

through May. The five Worship Center leaders rotate but always work in pairs, teaching one week and assisting the next.

The Worship Center is a place dedicated to the children's worship service where they are encouraged to feel the presence and the power of God's love.

Children's Church

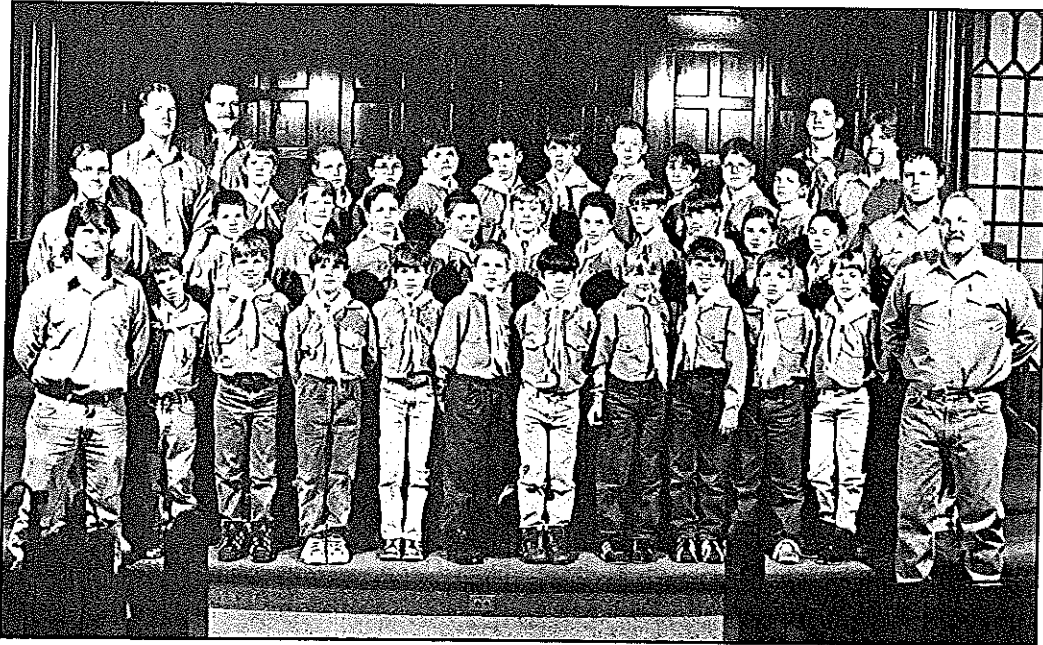


A. Hanscom presents a lesson

Children's Church began in 1970. It was initiated to lessen the burden of the nursery. The children are between three to five years of age. The children sing; for most, it is the first time they sing with a group. There is also a Bible Story. The children also engage in small crafts such as the coloring of a Bible story-oriented picture. They are sent home

with a story card which can be read to the children by their parents. There are five teams which take turns leading the lesson with the help of a teenager. This activity takes place during the church hour. On most Sundays, between twenty and twenty-five children participate in the program.

Cadet Corps



First Row: C. McGrath, K. Bors-Koefoed, D. Mainville, S. Bangma, B. McGrath,
M. Ferwerda, D. Gjeltema, T. Freitas, D. Martin, G. Smith,
C. Miedema, D. Nydam

Second Row: D. Epplett, J. Wierenga, L. Krygsman, J. Roy, R. Roy, M. Bangma,
J. Malo, A. Vander Baan, B. Ouwinga, A. Stinson, S. Lombardo, K. Wiersma

Third Row: D. Plantinga - Head Counselor, J. Williams, J. Jorritsma, K. Wood,
I. Cooper, L. Kenbeek, J. Jorritsma, P. Groot, J. Oosterman, D. Jellesma,
A. Labonte, P. LaFleur, J. Buteyn, S. Hackathorn

Not Pictured: M. Hackathorn

The Pleasant Street Cadet Corps was organized in 1954. This organization is for boys in grades three through six. The goal of the Cadet Corps is to promote Christian fellowship and to prepare young boys to be future leaders in the church and the community.

Regular Cadet activities range from Bible study to merit badge work and include crafts and Christian service projects. Cadets also engage in an extra recreational project each month. This may be roller skating, a hockey game, monster truck competition, or similar activity.

At the present time, the club has ten counselors and thirty-nine boys, of whom eleven are not from the Pleasant Street Church.

On September 10, 1995, the Cadets moved their workshop from the boiler room in the Pleasant Street Church basement to its present location in the room over the new parsonage garage. This room was dedicated to the glory of God in the memory of Mr. John Nyenhuis who had devoted many years of faithful service to the Calvinist Cadet Corps.

Calvinettes and Busy Bees



First Row: A. Rawlings, K. Westbury, M. Allen, S. Flora, C. Bangma, M. Bol
 Second Row: J. Mattscheck, J. Croft, J. Flora, J. Freitas, B. King, M. Brosnihan
 Third Row: D. Miedema, J. Mattscheck, B. Bangma, J. Bridge, J. Oosterman,
 K. Preble, M. Brosnihan
 Fourth Row: D. Wiersma, K. Northcutt, A. Cook - Head Counselor,
 L. Gibson, M. Nydam
 Not Pictured: S. Vis



First Row: J. Mattscheck, B. Ceramicoli, T. Morreale, M. Nydam
 Second Row: A. Stinson, M. Brosnihan, J. Malo, J. Smith, J. Newman,
 C. Exoo, M. Newman
 Third Row: C. Piquard, S. Koopman, S. Droby, R. Westbury, A. Krygsman,
 K. Youngsma, B. Cooper, S. Oosterman, K. Bangma
 Fourth Row: M. Bangma, B. Youngsma, B. Youngsma, N. Ouwinga, A. Droby
 Not Pictured: V. Bol

The Pleasant Street Church Calvinette Club was organized October 13, 1959. The goal of the Calvinettes is “. . . to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8). The emphasis of the program is the truth that it is God who made us and cares for us. He gives us all that we have, and wants us to thank Him and live for Him. The program includes Bible study, badge work, craft work, and Christian Service projects. Each Calvinette has adopted a grandparent at the Whitinsville Retirement Home. Other more lighthearted activities which the members enjoy are roller skating,

camping, and splash parties. At present, our club includes seventeen girls and seven counselors.

Busy Bees was added to the Calvinette Club in 1973. This year, the membership includes twenty-two second and third grade girls, three adult counselors, and two junior counselors. The meetings consist of Bible lessons, craft work, some badge work, and games. The aim of the members is: Believe in God. Be Kind to Others. Be True to Yourself.

Junior High Youth Group



First Row: E. Hendrikse, E. Schotanus, G. Godeke, J. Flora,
B. Youngsma, B. Runnels
Second Row: E. Wierenga, K. Bangma, A. Smith, V. Bol, B. Bangma,
V. Malloy, J. Meagher
Third Row: Pastor B. Dykstra, J. Engbers, T. Haringa, A. Groot, M. Haringa,
B. Barnatt, J. McClure, M. Dykstra
Not Pictured: I. Buma, Jack Holman, Joan Holman

The Junior High Youth Group at the Pleasant Street Church seeks to present Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord, and friend to students

in the seventh and eighth grades. It seeks to help youth develop a personal relationship with Jesus through worship, prayer, studying

God's word, and spiritual exercising.

Worship means to give praise to God through song and devotion. Prayer is the way one talks to God. Studying God's word begins with an introductory talk based on a scriptural teaching which is then explored by accountability crews. Accountability crews are small groups that meet together each meeting to look back to the previous lessons and challenges and then look forward to the new lessons and challenges. Finally, the aim is to set before the junior high students spiritual exercises that help them get their spiritual lives in shape. These exercises include things like praying for a fellow student, keeping quiet times, and writing a personal reason for loving God. The program attempts to create a relaxed, caring atmosphere which promotes each student as a child of God, and the group as a whole, as a part of the body of Christ.

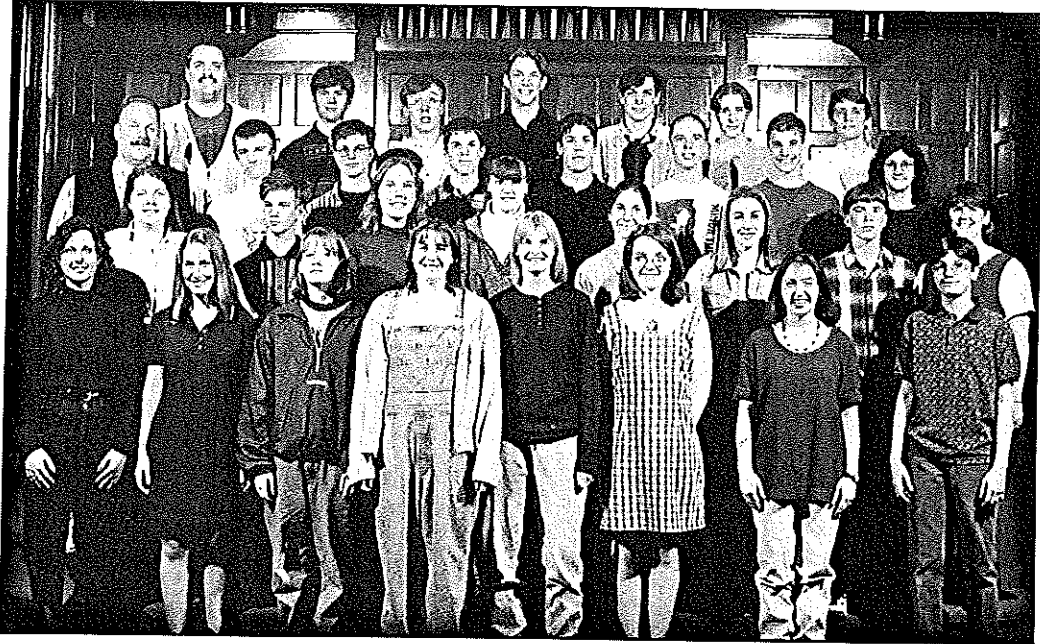
This year's theme is "Coming Together

in Christ." The attempt is made to develop the concept of the community of believers as a safe place to grow and a place to see Jesus. The focus verse for this year is I Corinthians 12:12, "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ."

Adult leaders this year are Iona Buma, Jack and Joan Holman, and Mary and Bruce Dykstra. Gayle and Noel Lopez are serving as an apprenticing couple this year.

The schedule for the upcoming year centers around the Sunday afternoon meetings (first and third Sundays), but also includes two retreats and a service project designed to encourage the youth to apply the knowledge discovered at the meetings. It is hoped that the beginning which has been made this year will continue, and young people will continue to grow in their love and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Senior High Youth Group



First Row: L. Nydam, S. Haringa, M. Haringa, L. Bors-Koefoed, B. Vis,
K. Youngsma, J. Malloy, N. Romeo
Second Row: M. Kenbeek, T. Bol, E. Bandstra, E. Meagher, E. R. Anderson,
H. Bjornsen, R. Ebbeling, M. Dykstra
Third Row: D. Nydam, S. Vis, B. Youngsma, M. Barnatt, J. Hendrikse, B. Smith,
B. Bors-Koefoed, D. Malloy
Fourth Row: D. Kenbeek, C. Bol, T. Frieswick, M. McClure, S. McClure,
M. Schotanus, Pastor B. Dykstra - Director

The adult leadership of the Pleasant Street Church's Senior High Youth Group this year consists of Bruce and Mary Dykstra, Douglas and Maribeth Kenbeek, Diane Malloy, and Douglas and Linda Nydam. During this year, the group leaders seek to nurture the youths' personal faith in Jesus Christ by challenging them to discover who Christ is in their personal lives and then to disciple them to a mature spiritual lifestyle. The leaders are also seeking to develop an awareness of servanthood by presenting continual service opportunities locally and beyond, and to develop a stewardly approach to the blessings of the Lord, both physically and spiritually.

The leaders of the program are firm in their belief that the church's youth groups need to be partners with families as they bring

children up in the world. Many things will pull at the heart of these young people and Pleasant Street's youth group wants to develop the spiritual skills within the lives of all the young people to equip them for living the rest of their lives in Christ. Spiritual skills like prayer, a solid quiet time with God, and worshipping God, are needed so that youth can move out into the working world with confidence in their ability to remain strong in the Lord.

From ten to fifteen members of the Senior High Youth Group, who call themselves The Young Ambassadors, meet every other week after the Sunday evening church service. They meet in each other's homes to spend time with each other around a Bible study.

**TRAINING FOR MINISTRY
AND
CHRISTIAN LIVING**

Library
Couples' Bible Fellowship
Ladies' Fellowship
Tuesday Evening Ladies' Bible Study
Saturday Night Alive
Small Groups
Couples' Club
Men's Tuesday Bible Study
Adult Education
Social Action Committee

Library



Librarians B. Youngsma and J. Hanscom

The Pleasant Street Church library began by decision of the Council in 1941. A committee made up of two elders, two deacons, a secretary, and four members of the congregation was formed to oversee the operation of the library which, in the beginning, was under the direction of the pastor, the Rev. Lambertus Van Laar. The library had a few reference books and a good basic selection of books of the time. The first librarian was Mrs. Wilma Vander Baan. Mrs. Vander Baan went to the Whitinsville Social Library and learned the Dewey decimal system and cataloged the books onto the library shelves. Mrs. Vander Baan recalls that one of the requirements applied to books chosen for the library was that they not contain "...any swear words." A Calvin College student recommended that Pearl Buck's classic novel of old China, *The Good Earth*, be included in the library. The review committee, however, decided that the Buck novel was not appropriate for the church library.

A later librarian was Mrs. Ethel W. Baker who greatly enlarged the library and encouraged the congregation to use it. She formed a special section for children and young adults and made available books which gave moral guidance and others which taught something of the history of the reformers.

Through the years, sermons and church services have continued to be recorded on audiocassette and videotape. The tapes are first circulated among our shut-in members, and then they are added to the library collection and may be checked out by anyone.

The current librarian, Mrs. Betsy H. Youngsma, has made many improvements. Today the library contains over 1500 books, fiction and nonfiction, as well as over sixty videos. The library is well used by the congregation. In addition, it is a resource available to Coffee Break members. Various members of other churches, home-schooled families, and diverse church education programs also use our library. The library is a lively activity of our church and seeks to provide a wide array of books, tapes, and videos which serve to bring God's Word to life.

Couples' Bible Fellowship



Front Row: P. Wierenga, E. Bol, W. Groot, A. Bloem
Back Row: D. Wierenga, A. Bol, Wm. Groot, R. Bloem, J. Malo
Not Pictured: E. Malo, D. Hervieux, R. Hervieux

The Couples' Bible Fellowship is a Bible Study group which meets every other Saturday evening. The group began in 1979. The years have brought about a change of name from the original name of Young Marrieds. The group is geared primarily to Bible study, and meetings generally require some advanced study and preparation. Studies have focused on various topics of

interest or upon specific books of the Bible. For the last two years, the group has been working through the books of I and II Samuel. David's life and relationship with God, both prior to and during his rule as king over Israel have been a focus of study. The sessions generally last for about one hour, after which the couples generally visit with each other around some refreshments.

Ladies' Fellowship



W. Vander Zee, C. Schaver, H. Kuipers, J. Ebbeling, M. Wiersma

The Young Ladies' Fellowship held its first meeting on October 16, 1947. At first, members were to be under the age of thirty and could stay in the organization until they reached the age of thirty-five years. This requirement was later abandoned. The Fellowship had nineteen women as members. Meetings were held every other Thursday evening. Membership dues were fifty cents a month; an additional ten cents was collected and used for sickness gifts when appropriate. A five-cent fine was required from members who were absent. During the meetings a Bible study was held, refreshments were served, and the members worked on fancy work consisting of knitting and embroidery. Later the fancy work activity was changed to a short program of readings and singings. In October, 1950, it was decided that the \$3.50 limitation on the amount spent on refreshments each week would be raised to four dollars.

The Young Ladies' Fellowship started the

church's nursery program in the 1950's. The women held a yearly bake sale until December, 1969. In 1961, the membership dues were raised to \$1.00 a month. Presently a free-will offering is taken at each meeting instead of membership dues.

In 1957, twelve members left for a new society which had been formed. The new society was called Friendship Circle. In March, 1969, a letter was sent to the Friendship Circle inviting their eligible members to join the Ladies' Fellowship the following year. In October, 1973, the Friendship Circle and the Ladies' Fellowship decided to join forces in 1974.

Presently, by reason of attrition, five faithful members meet monthly to study a portion of God's Word. The lesson is led by the individual members. Each lesson is closed with a sharing time followed by prayer. Fellowship with refreshments is enjoyed at the end of each meeting.

Tuesday Evening Ladies' Bible Study



Front Row: M. De Vries, S. La Fleur, C. Ebbeling
Back Row: B. Oosterman, M. Wiersma, B. De Young, S. Vander Baan
Not Pictured: A. Hackathorn, M. Buma

The Tuesday Evening Ladies' Bible Study Group started in 1993. Several women had been involved with the evening Coffee Break before it was changed to a supper-Bible study group. At that time, several of these ladies became involved with the dinner preparation of the evening Coffee Break. The time required to prepare, serve, and clean up for the evening Coffee Break made it difficult for them to attend a Bible study. The women

finally decided to have a study of their own following the Coffee Break dinner period.

There are presently nine women in the group. Not all are involved in the evening Coffee Break. That is not a requirement. The group meets weekly on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. and uses Coffee Break study material for study and discussion.

Saturday Night Alive



First Row: C. Epplert, M. Bloem, M. Nydam, C. Chamberland
Second Row: R. Bloem, D. Wierenga, P. Wierenga, M. Kenbeek
Third Row: K. Wiersma, D. Epplert, D. Kenbeek
Not Pictured: D. Nydam, L. Nydam

On a warm summer night in 1992, a group of single and married members of the congregation joined together to brainstorm about the possibility of forming a new Bible study group which would include both married and single members of our church. After a great deal of discussion and the exchange of many ideas, the group came to a decision on a format and name for this new group. That is how Saturday Night Alive came into being.

It is now three years since the group was first organized. A dedicated group of fifteen

to twenty-five people meets on the first Saturday night of each month. Saturday Night Alive is a Bible study conducted in a casual atmosphere. The meetings involve a light supper, followed by Bible discussion and a time of prayer and singing. They also include a period of fellowship. Over the past three years, the group's growth in the knowledge of the Bible is clear to all. In addition, the sharing of cares and concerns has become very precious. Saturday Night Alive welcomes new members and looks forward to years of study and growth.

Small Groups



First Row: M. De Vries, F. Jorritsma
Second Row: R. De Vries, W. Jorritsma
Third Row: C. Schaver, W. La Fleur, S. La Fleur, S. Vanden Akker,
D. Vanden Akker, P. Townsend, W. Townsend, B. Plantinga, H. Plantinga

Small Group Ministry is a concept that has existed in the Pleasant Street Church for years. Many small groups under various names have been, and still are, functioning quite effectively in the church. The idea of organizing small groups with united goals, yet individual missions, was originally discussed by members of the Spiritual Life Committee as early as 1992. The small group concept was studied and reported upon by Lydia Bors-Koefoed. It was felt that to implement a Small Groups Ministry in our congregation at that time, or any time, would be a tremendous undertaking. It was decided to consider the matter at a later time.

In 1993, a task force was formed by the council to look further into the subject of small groups. The members of the task force were Lydia Bors-Koefoed, Jack Crawford, Wendy Groot, Don Koopman, and Sam Zylstra. At that time, a national conference on Small Groups was being held at Eastern College in St. David's, Pennsylvania. Lydia Bors-Koefoed, Jack Crawford, Judy Godeke, and Don Koopman attended this conference. They attended seminars and gathered information and materials for later

presentation. Several books about small groups were collected and task force members became educated on the subject. It was decided that a book written by the Rev. Jeffrey Arnold, *The Big Book on Small Groups*, was an excellent handbook. Several people from the congregation were targeted as potential group leaders and were invited to come to the further training sessions. The response was positive with approximately seventy people participating in the leadership training. A church-wide weekend retreat centering around the subject of small groups was held. The main speaker was the Rev. Jeffrey Arnold. After the retreat people were invited to sign up for small groups participation.

A small group usually consists of six to twelve people who share a common vision. These people gather two to three times per month for worship, prayer, Bible study, and fellowship. They share a covenant which has been established by all group members with one another. Groups began forming in 1994. Today there are twelve groups and the small group vision continues.

Couples' Club

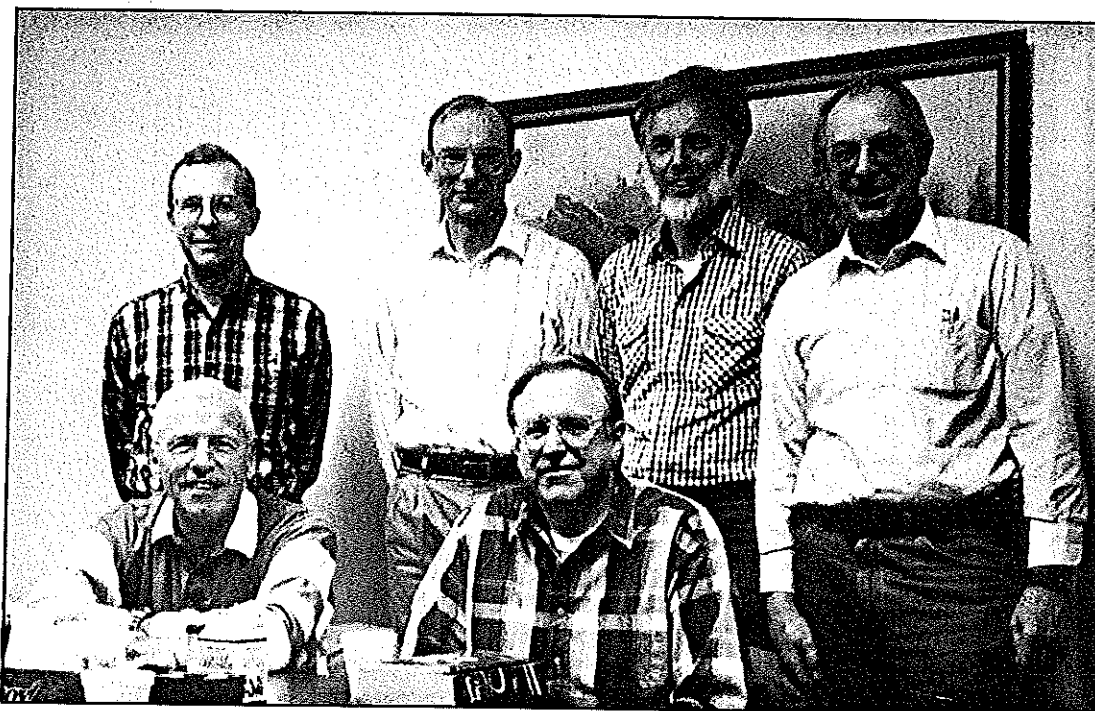


First Row: V. Kuik, K. Stinson, K. Piquard, S. Vriesema, P. Krygsman
Second Row: T. Kuik, S. Stinson, D. Piquard, S. De Vries, J. Vriesema, L. Krygsman
Third Row: G. Kuipers, S. Kuipers, R. De Vries
Not Pictured: D. Koopman, S. Koopman

The Couples' Club was organized by three couples. In a short time, it expanded to eight couples. The group has chosen to meet in individual homes on Saturday evening. Subjects of interest to young families

and those with young children are often chosen. In addition to Bible topics, material from Focus on the Family has provided subjects for discussion.

Men's Tuesday Bible Study



Front Row: W. La Fleur, H. Plantinga
Back Row: W. Townsend, H. Baker, A. Youngsma, R. De Vries
Not Pictured: R. Bangma

After attending a Promise Keepers convention, seven men began a Men's Tuesday Bible Study as part of the small group ministry of the church. The group meets at

7:00 p.m. at the office of Prudential Prime Properties. It follows a plan of lessons from the book, *Promise Builders*. Prayer and sharing are integral parts of the program.

Adult Education

The Adult Education Program Committee provides informative and challenging classes where adults can grow in their faith. Topics which may be discussed include marriage, parent-teen relationships,

creation vs. evolution, Jesus' death and resurrection, and other timely topics. The group meets for an hour (8:45 to 9:45 a.m.) before the Sunday morning worship service.

Social Action Committee

The Social Action Committee is made up of interested members of the congregation who are appointed to meet and discuss controversial social issues which have a

special interest for Christians. It comments on these subjects in its reports which are printed and made available to the congregation.

**OUTREACH
AND
MISSIONS**

*Women's Missionary Society
Coffee Break
Men's Life
Friendship
The Palawan Project*

Women's Missionary Society



Front Row: M. Oosterman, W. Nydam; E. Wassenaar, E. Ebbeling,
G. Vanden Akker, M. Wiersma
Back Row: G. Nyenhuis, M. Solivan, H. De Vries, G. Bangma, E. Oosterman,
D. Baker, K. Cooper
Not Pictured: G. Silvis

The Women's Missionary Society held its first meeting on October 23, 1936. At that meeting a constitution was adopted which states that the purpose of the organization is "... the mutual benefit of the members by means of Bible study ... and the extension of the Kingdom by giving contributions and money raised to various causes but principally for missions." There were originally twenty-one members, and in ten years, the society grew to sixty-four.

Over the past sixty years, the society has raised money by catering for church suppers and weddings, held clothing drives for the Luke Society, and sponsored baby showers for Bethany Christian Services. The society also sends Christmas boxes to missionary

families overseas, and has supported a child for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee. These are but a few of the Society's various activities.

Numbers have dwindled as many are "getting on in years." One charter member, Mrs. Ethel Ebbeling, is still living. Meetings are held bi-weekly from October through April. Meetings are built around a Bible study and a coffee fellowship. The society is a source of spiritual growth for its members who are in constant prayer for and in communication with our missionaries. Within the range of its capability, the Women's Missionary Society contributes to the financial support of those whom God has chosen to spread his Word, both at home and abroad.

Coffee Break



M. Baker - Coffee Break Director, C. Engholm, D. Audette, K. Kats,
L. Vanden Akker



A. Rosenberg leads Little Lambs

As the Pleasant Street Church celebrates its one hundredth anniversary, Coffee Break celebrates a birthday, too. Coffee Break at Pleasant Street was ten years old in February, 1996.

Eleven years ago, the Rev. John J. Wieggers asked some women to attend an informational meeting about a new church outreach program at Avery Street. These women heard about the exciting things that were happening in a new program of inductive Bible study which was being called Coffee Break. They came back overwhelmed but willing to ask themselves what God wanted them to do with this information.



E. Bol and H. Beinema lead Story Hour

There would be so much involved for this new evangelistic Bible study for women to be well-run - nursery, story hour, refreshments, leaders' meetings. Could this congregation really support such a program? Would there be people here with the desire to reach the unchurched? Would there be women willing to give the time necessary to make such a program work? Would the people of the Blackstone Valley respond to such a program? Did God really want to begin such a program at Pleasant Street?

All that Summer and Fall, five women met weekly to pray for God's direction in this matter. In the Fall, it was decided that a single

Christmas event would be held to determine the level of interest for such a Bible study. Advertisements were placed in newspapers, posters were put up around town, and church members were encouraged to invite their unchurched or unbelieving friends to this very special informational meeting about Coffee Break. Refreshments and child care were provided. When the big day arrived, there was a reasonable turnout. Christmas carols were sung, the history of the songs and their relation to Christmas were explained, and, most importantly, the concept of Coffee Break was presented. The Coffee Break philosophy of opening the Bible to see what God has to say was laid out. No commitments were requested at the time, but there were a few community women who indicated that they would be interested in such a Bible study. The decision was made to proceed with the organization of the new program. The following February, Coffee Break officially began with the study of the book of Mark. There were two groups consisting of six and eight women each.

It seems that every year, God gives new problems or new issues, to stretch, to teach, and to help the Coffee Break staff to grow. The staff felt that working women need Bible study, too. It seemed that there ought to be an evening Coffee Break. For this reason, a Coffee Break program which met in the evening was begun.

It was discovered that the three-year-olds were really too young for the Story Hour but there were two-year-olds in the nursery with whom the stories of the Bible could be shared if they were offered a program geared to their age and development. It was discovered that just such a program called Little Lambs was available.

When the evening Coffee Break seemed to be losing its effectiveness, the staff struggled with the problem of how to get working mothers to come out and study the Bible. The question was, "What kept them from coming to Coffee Break?" Could it be the problem of finding a babysitter and having to fix dinner first? The decision was made to provide childcare and a light supper

and call it Dinner Break. To create such a program there would have to be willing individuals to provide the services such a program would require. There was a marvelous response to a church-wide request, and a dedicated staff which faithfully prepares a meal and staffs programs for the children was developed.

The Coffee Break program continues to be a challenge. In the evening the children who come to the program range in age from infancy to thirteen years of age; their number can vary from six to twenty-two. They come from all backgrounds. To meet the challenge for the children, Dinner Break child care has grown from being not only supervised homework help and play time, but also to being an opportunity for them to discover the Bible.

For Coffee Break and Dinner Break to remain in tune with God's leading, prayer must continue to be a vital part of this ministry. As Coffee Break and Dinner Break grow, so does the commitment to prayer. In connection with the Coffee Break and Dinner Break programs, prayer partners, Tuesday morning prayer time, and prayer persons are essential.

In 1996, seven Coffee Break groups and two Dinner Break groups are meeting every Tuesday. The dedicated people of the Pleasant Street Church make up the staff of all Coffee Break programs. God is using these programs to open His Word to the people of the Blackstone Valley so that the Word can speak to them. His Word does not return empty; they do respond.

God has blessed the Pleasant Street church with a marvelous ministry in Coffee Break. It is a ministry which provides as much for those serving as for those being served. The staff praises God for his goodness in using them to serve Him. They praise God for challenging them. They praise God for his gracious goodness in providing for all of their needs. They eagerly wait to see what God will do in and through Coffee Break and Dinner Break in the next century.

Men's Life

Men's Life is a Bible study ministry for unchurched men established by the Christian Reformed Church. Meetings are ideally held in a neutral location such as a restaurant, office, or board room. No Bibles are carried and men commit themselves to attend for a course of six or eight meetings. Initial topics discussed are what the Bible says about money, marriage, work, family and so forth. Materials are supplied by Men's Life.

Pleasant Street's Men's Life began when four men decided to attend a seminar at the Avery Street Christian Reformed Church on witnessing to unchurched men. Upon returning home, they held several breakfast prayer meetings after which they were led to give the evangelistic concept a try. They were able to recruit four unchurched men, an agnostic, a pantheist, and two former church members who hadn't attended church in thirty years.

The first meeting place was a storefront on Church Street. After the first eight-week session commitment, everyone wanted to go for another session with a different topic. This original group met for several years at different places, including a horse farm, but eventually ended up in the board room of Alternatives Unlimited. Two of the original four men made profession of faith. One had never read the Bible and has since read it through several times.

After ten years, only one person from the original group remains. New members from the Pleasant Street Church have joined as have men from outside the church. Two members and their families have joined the church. The number of men participating in the Men's Life program has never been large, but the present group looks to the future with faith.

Friendship

In September of 1987, the Pleasant Street and the Fairlawn Churches combined their efforts to reach out to the mentally impaired citizens of our community with the message of Jesus Christ. Ages of those served have ranged from thirteen to sixty-three years.

The group meets every Thursday evening from early September to late May. Each student is paired with an individual teacher to allow the formation of a trusting friendship. Their time together begins with singing at 7:00 p.m., after which the leader then shares a story with the group for thirty to forty minutes. Audio and visual aids supplied as part of the Friendship materials are utilized to make the stories interesting. Prayer time follows with participants permitted open sharing of joys, sorrows, and concerns. The student-teacher teams then go off to individual rooms for a time of story

review and further sharing. The schedule is similar each week to add a sense of stability to the experience.

One of the older members of Friendship loved to hear the song "God is so good." He had been confined to a wheelchair for most of his life and had struggled with one infirmity after another. Sometimes he would refuse to sing but he could never hold back his smile when he heard those words. He did finally succumb to an illness and the group accepted, with childlike faith, that he was finally dancing and singing his favorite song in heaven. Somehow the term "impaired" never seemed to fit after that experience. Jesus was right, of course. Everyone must be a child in the faith no matter what his or her age. This program is a rare opportunity for the Fairlawn and Pleasant Street churches to show the love of Jesus to those less fortunate than most.

The Palawan Project



D. Koopman, Mrs. Rigalado, N. Rigalado, D. Koopman, B. Zylstra,
Dr. S. Zylstra, Dr. R. Bors-Koefoed, L. Bors-Koefoed, Dr. P. Boelens

The Pleasant Street Church Professional Management Team is directing a Luke Society missionary project on Palawan, a remote island of the Philippines. The team is made up of Dr. Roy and Mrs. Lydia Bors-Koefoed, Mr. Donald and Mrs. Doris Koopman, and Dr. Samuel and Mrs. Brenda Zylstra. The team combines the skills of business and medical professionals, and has the mission of creating a medical clinic on Palawan which provides a high quality of medical care in a setting of financial self-sufficiency.

Working in a third world environment has presented the Pleasant Street team with unique challenges. Quezon, a city of 50,000 people, and the site of the project, has had no dentist. To operate modern dentistry equipment, a steady source of power and water is necessary. In Quezon, brown-outs occur almost daily, often leaving the clinic without power for days at a time. Water supplied by the town of Quezon is available for approximately two hours per day, making it possible for the dentist to operate the drill for only brief periods. To overcome these obstacles, the Luke Society Palawan Project

is drilling a well and purchasing a generator. Negotiations with the mayor of Quezon have made possible a move from a bamboo structure to a semi-abandoned brick structure which is being remodeled. A reception room, a conference room, examining rooms, an operating room, and a dental office are planned.

Dr. Nathaniel Apostol, the son of the first Christian Reformed Church-ordained Filipino minister, has joined the staff as director and dentist. Dr. Emilia Ajero is a woman physician who has recently been added to the clinic staff, as has Perry, a male nurse. All of these staff members have a zeal for evangelism. The staff of the Palawan Clinic has set a goal of leading two souls per month to a knowledge of Jesus Christ by personal encounter with the help of the Holy Spirit. It is also determined to plant two new churches per year in the area.

A very important goal of the Professional Management Team is to make the clinic self-sustaining. Presently, the clinic derives income from patient fees, pharmacy,

photocopy machine, rice thrasher and tiller, and private subsidies. International economics determines that as developing societies evolve, the value of the U.S. dollar decreases, making the contribution of the Luke Society less helpful. For this reason, the Professional Management Team views as crucial the goal of developing the clinic's ability to generate income in Philippine pesos. This will make the clinic grow and prosper on its own for years to come.

This project has presented the Professional Management Team with

financial, personal, and spiritual challenges. Team members acknowledge the stress the new project places on each busy and involved member. The members feel challenged by the requirement that they form a meaningful partnership with the Filipino doctors and pastors to "... touch lives in Jesus' name." The Professional Management Team rejoices that as the needs are developed, the Lord supplies the gifts and the resources as appropriate.

"Great is (his) faithfulness."

7

MUSIC

Men's Chorus
RESOUND!
Our Organ

Men's Chorus



First Row: W. Bangma, L. Bangma, W. La Fleur - Director, J. Godeke - Accompanist,
W. Banning, A. Baker

Second Row: G. Baker, M. Hackathorn, A. Youngsma, R. De Vries,
M. Youngsma, Don Koopman

Third Row: J. Nydam, D. Bangma, T. Cooper, W. Vander Brug, Dirk Koopman

The Men's Chorus of the Pleasant Street Church was formed in 1984. A well balanced chorus of four men in each part was directed and accompanied by Mrs. Grace Bosma. The songs, sung in four-part harmony and written for men's voices, were performed about six times a year. In addition to singing at the worship services of the Pleasant Street Church, the group gave concerts at the Beaumont Nursing Home, the Fairlawn

Christian Reformed Church, and the Avery Street Christian Reformed Church in South Windsor, Connecticut. After the death of Mrs. Bosma, Mr. William La Fleur assumed the role of Director. Mrs. Anna Hackathorn and Mrs. Judy Godeke divide the duties of accompanist. The group maintains a membership of about sixteen men. The group is dedicated to praising the Lord Jesus Christ with their voices and their songs.

RESOUND!



Front Row: J. Oosterman, R. De Vries, N. Lopez
Back Row: M. Hendrikse, L. Hendrikse, S. Barkin, K. Barkin, J. Holman

The Pleasant Street Church Praise Band, now known as RESOUND!, began in the summer of 1993. It was founded by Mr. Douglas Vander Schaaf, a former teacher at the Whitinsville Christian School. Mr. Vander Schaaf had previous experience as a drummer in a Christian rock band during his college days. The organization began with three vocalists, a drummer, a keyboard/vocalist, a bass and lead guitar.

In the beginning, the group led the congregation in a contemporary Christian music praise time during worship services a few times a month. There were questions about how the congregation would respond to contemporary Christian music which included drums and guitars. While the "experiment" was not painless, contemporary music has found a home at the Pleasant Street Church.

The organization was originally known as The Praise Band. When the performers decided that they should have a new name,

they requested suggestions from the Pleasant Street congregation. It was from suggestions offered that the name RESOUND! was chosen.

There have been changes over the period of the intervening years. Doug and Bernita Vander Schaaf and family have moved to California. Steve and Karen Barkin have assumed the leadership of the group. RESOUND! has presented programs in places outside of Pleasant Street. They have appeared at the Blackstone Valley Crusade, the Youth Unlimited Convention in North Kingston, RI, and have given a concert at Faith Fellowship Church in Uxbridge.

The purpose of RESOUND! is to "Praise the Name of Jesus," the title of one of their songs. The group believes that the Lord has given them a ministry of contemporary music, music which is a powerful means of worship for them and their audience. God is Lord of all musical forms - classical, choral, and contemporary.

Our Organ



Seated: M. Haringa, Director of Music
Standing: N. De Vries, Organist



Organist/Pianist: J. Malo

The pipe organ is one of the oldest of musical instruments. It has been mentioned in manuscripts dating from well before 200 B.C. The first recorded use of the organ in church seems to have taken place in Spain in the fifth century.

The pipe organ in our church was designed and constructed by the Austin Organ Company of Hartford, Connecticut. Austin is the oldest and the largest builder of pipe organs in the Northeast.

This instrument (Opus 1027) was originally built for the Bellevue Theater, Upper Montclair, New Jersey, on June 1, 1921, at a cost of \$10,000.00. On February 20, 1943, the instrument was removed, rebuilt and updated by the Austin Organ Company and installed in our church for \$5,000.00. On December 11, 1947, a new 3/m stop key console was added and the console was moved from the organ proper to its present location at a cost of \$4,000.00.

The pneumatic system of the organ contains several hundred flexible pouches which, because of age and use, may deteriorate, causing malfunctions to take place within the mechanics of the instrument. On April 11, 1977, a contract was signed with Frank G. Kiernan, a pipe organ builder in Framingham, Massachusetts, for the replacement of the leather in the organ and for refurbishing of the pipes. The restoration work took six months and was completed on September 17, 1977. In 1977, the pipe organ had a replacement value of over \$100,000.00.

From the earliest days when the bellows were manually pumped to the present when the power is by electric motor, the organ and the singing which it has accompanied have been an important part of our worship services. The organ has made its contribution to the congregation's reputation for singing. God has been praised as the organ joined the voices of the congregation in hymn, psalm, and joyful song.

**MEMORIES
OF
SIX
PASTORS
AND
A WIDOW**

Mrs. Lois Veltman

The Rev. Richard De Ridder

The Rev. William F. Vander Hoven

The Rev. James Admiraal

The Rev. J. Peter Vosteen

The Rev. John H. Piersma

The Rev. John J. Wiegiers

Mrs. Lois Veltman

On Sunday afternoon, twenty-two servicemen came for tea. They would stop at the parsonage on Saturday and we'd place them with people according to their backgrounds - farmers with farm people, etc. The family of George Nydam had entertained 150 servicemen and several others likewise. It was good for our congregation - new blood - since many of the servicemen married our young women. One summer we had twelve weddings.

The Ladies' Missionary Union was formed from the five ladies' societies, so our people became acquainted with our C. R. missionaries who would travel up from New Jersey on their tours.

The Whitinsville Christian Reformed Church was the only Christian Reformed church in all of New England. The pastor would have to travel to New Jersey for classical meetings. Although lonesome for fellowship with our own ministers, we were well received by the ministers in the town and had wonderful fellowship with all the other clergymen: Rev. Fleming (Presbyterian), Rev. J. Duncan (Methodist), Rev. H. Robson (Congregational), and Rev. Armitage (Episcopal). We had community services at the beginning of each new year. There was also a closeness between our church and the Rev. Dr. Harold Ockenga's Park St. Church in Boston, Massachusetts, as well as with all of the New England Fellowship.

Our church was filled all summer long with visitors from all over the U.S.A. who came to see New England and Boston. We made a list of all the things to see in one day in Boston. (Even Plimouth Plantation could be squeezed in the itinerary if you'd be willing to come home later.)

For the family, a big event was the moving from Pleasant Street to Cross Street. We loved the big white "Liberty House." Peter Koopman remodeled it to suit the

Veltmans from the basement room - lowered so Rev. Veltman could play ping-pong down there - to the attic rooms where the Lionel train reigned. Also the extra bedroom on the third floor became a retreat for many a serviceman.

We liked being so near the downtown also, and some stores, especially Baker's Department Store, run now by the third generation of the Baker family. And we still had our same wonderful neighbors, the Hermans, Duncans, Alice Duggan, the Lynch family and the Goulds.

We were spoiled when it came to flowers as there were three florists in the church. But we learned much about their business.

A great surprise was the money the congregation presented us as a gift for a new car! How our family enjoyed that. It travelled many of those gorgeous New England roads.

We enjoyed the people so much. Nelson would just have to say, "We Frisians. . .," and it made all the difference.

Our children were eight, six, five years, and twenty months old when we came to Whitinsville. Besides the children, we carried with us strawberry plants from Drenthe, Michigan. The first year they blossomed, we picked the blossoms to let the plants get the nourishment. The second year, Paul came into the house and said, "I did it for you!" "What did you do?" "I picked all the blossoms."

Collecting money for the second church was started. Mr. Whitin was so enamored, he gave the first \$1,000.00 for the second church.

We were especially thankful for the people who helped care for our children so we could do church work and also take some time off together. Every Friday evening we

were entertained at the Baker farm to watch "I Remember Mama" on Kooistra's TV. We also consumed pounds of popcorn! Young people came over on Sunday nights so we could go visiting people of the congregation.

I remember when Arnold Baker's barn burned.

We also enjoyed the fellowship of the Christian School teachers. The school policy of one week off after five weeks of school would give us time to take the children and the teachers on side trips throughout New England to see the gorgeous foliage and historical spots.

Little Paul wandered about the town and the police would bring him home sporting an ice cream cone. But once he endeavored to get to Williams Hill by himself. He was gone for three hours. A hunter had picked him up

and brought him to the police station. The police were having a meeting at the time, but, finally we were reunited. He said he was going to "... Faye's house."

Many weddings were solemnized while we were there. One summer Nelson officiated at twelve weddings. Our children would pick up the confetti and play "wedding" the entire next day. The children played often on the high school field. One long blast and two short blasts on the whistle would bring them scampering home.

I was also fitted with my first hearing aid soon after we arrived. Our baby sitter, Gerry Swart, told her mother that the children spoke louder to me than to Rev. Veltman. The hearing aid man came and I heard the refrigerator and the furnace run for the first time in years. Needless to say, I'm still wearing aids and hear beautifully.

The Rev. Richard R. De Ridder

Our ministry took place as the arrangements for an additional congregation were being contemplated. The spirit of working together and generous contributions for a second church displayed a remarkable spirit of unity and purpose. The Pleasant Street congregation numbered 275 families at that time. A second church was a wise undertaking.

Services were well attended morning and evening. We recall how occasionally members of a black congregation in Woonsocket would attend in the evening with their pastor. Afterwards, they would come to the parsonage for refreshments and fellowship. How many of us enjoyed going to their annual fund-raising chicken dinner.

There was excitement of well-attended societies, especially the young people's society. They knew how to participate in a diligent study program as well as how to have fun.

A diligent, well-organized consistory, and diaconate contributed much to help expedite the ministry of the church. By rule, meetings adjourned at 10:00 p.m., an excellent practice.

I cannot forget the strong support of Christian education at all levels. Calvin College was close to the heart of the people. The later establishment of a Christian high school showed the commitment to Christian education.

The strong commitment to outreach was displayed in the calling and installation of the Rev. Nelson Vander Zee as our diligent, talented missionary pastor. This led to the formation of the Framingham congregation.

The entertainment and accommodations for servicemen were a blessing to many while away from home. Through the years, we have met several of them and always hear the gratitude they had for their second home in

Whitinsville.

We had a number of students (mainly non-CRC) from Harvard, Radcliffe, and other schools, who came in groups of from four to twelve to our morning service. Afterwards they had dinner with us at the parsonage with discussion following. My wife was so very busy, and our budget was stretched. As a result, several joined our CRC congregation, even some Jewish youth. Last year in III Denver CRC, we met one of the boys. He showed us the letter he had written to his mother after one such Sunday.

Dr. Leonard Vander Linde, a graduate student in the Department of Psychology at Boston University, served members of the congregation with his expertise in counseling as needed on Friday evenings. There was no charge. The council paid his travel. I shall

always treasure his contribution to those whom he counseled.

I took one day a week for special study at Hartford, CT, Seminary. In three years, I received my Master's degree. The work done at Hartford was applied to my Th. D. studies later at the Free University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. These met the requirements for being appointed to the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary.

Relations with our neighboring pastors were so joyful. I learned much from them and we shared viewpoints.

We wish the congregation much blessing in the future. The Whitinsville congregations have a wonderful heritage to celebrate and on which to build.

The Rev. William F. Vander Hoven

I thank the Centennial committee for the opportunity to send our best wishes and kindest greetings in Christ to the Pleasant Street Church.

Of all the churches I was honored to serve, Pleasant Street Church remains, throughout the years, uppermost in my memory. God gave us many grand experiences with you.

One of the first things that comes to mind is the annual youth Bible Study retreat at Woody and Trudy Style's Sunapee Lodge. Who could ever forget the Chipmunk Run? And the fireside Bible studies? How could the glory of God be so much fun?

Another great memory is Fairwoods. One summer morning, Jim Nydam interrupted his milk run to come to the parsonage with an idea. We had been looking for a youth center, and Jim had learned that morning that Mr. Bilodeau was going to sell the pond and surrounding land. What a site

for a youth center! But we had to act at once with a deposit. By that quick but prayerful action, God gave us what became Fairwoods. Almost unanimously the entire CRC community shared the fun of erecting buildings. Then came the inspiring mission fests, congregational picnics, swimming parties, ice games and campouts. And again, in keeping with the Pleasant Street spirit, everything about the activities, constitution, and bylaws of Fairwoods was glory to God.

In 1957, Pleasant Street had the joy of organizing the Framingham congregation. This came after some years of support and encouragement from Whitinsville. There were now two CRC Churches in the Blackstone Valley area.

This was quickly followed by the beginnings of worship services in Vermont. Thelma and I had heard of a group of Dutch immigrants in that area, and took a vacation time to find them. Services began with a few families gathering each Sunday in a farm

home around tapes of Pleasant Street services. Later we leased a little church for one dollar a year. In time they requested branch-membership in Pleasant Street which the consistory granted. Then began a long-distance ministry to the people there, full of pleasant memories. Many Pleasant Street people participated in summer Bible schools and elders took turns going with me to celebrate communion with the little group. Subsequently, God gave us an organized church in Vergennes, Vermont. Again, both for Framingham and Vergennes, God received glory as hundreds of people saw his blessings upon the Reformed faith. We didn't realize it at the time, but here the possibility of Classis Atlantic Northeast was born.

Shortly after, in 1958, came another glad event, one also richly blessed by God. We couldn't hold the congregation in the sanctuary, and rather than go to multiple services or expand the building, we decided to organize a daughter church. At a meeting of the ministerium one of the local pastors said to me, "We didn't know there was trouble in your church. Who was mad at whom?" With a heart full of praise to God, I could correct the mistaken notion. I could tell them that the membership of the church consisted entirely of people who of their own accord chose to be a part of the vision of a new CRC in Whitinsville. I told them of the \$40,000.00 love gift from Pleasant Street (in those days a very considerable sum), of the fact that the consistory loaned me to the new church for their first month of church life, and of the gift of the land for the church and parsonage. Dick Larkin, a reporter for the *Blackstone Valley Tribune*, wrote a lengthy article extolling the spirit in which the new church came into being as something unheard of in the Valley. The new church chose the name of Fairlawn, and the entire community had another testimony to the faithfulness of God towards the grand old Reformed faith. Again, Jesus received glory out of Pleasant Street Church.

Much more could be said. Our family grew and learned in Whitinsville. And though distance and the passing of time have somewhat intervened, we still have nothing but deep love for Pleasant Street Church and her members. We congratulate the congregation on the Centennial. For all these years you have been a powerful witness to the Reformed faith in New England, including such movements as the New England Theological Society and our ties with Gordon-Conwell. You have kept the faith though surrounded by all sorts of variants of it. You are a showcase tribute to the power of the Word and the presence of the Holy Spirit, all in the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am grateful to God and to you for having called me to be your pastor, which made so many highlight experiences possible. Looking back I ask that where I have failed I may be forgiven. Whatever good may come of those too few years, all the praise goes to God alone; nothing to us.

May the Holy Spirit of God live within all of you. My prayer is that our wonderful God may continue to use you for his glory and the salvation of souls until Jesus comes. May you continue constantly in the spirit of the early church, as the unified body of Christ, living in "... the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and prayers." "And having a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in the fullness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. . . . Let us hold fast the confession of our hope, that it waver not, for he is faithful that promised. And let us consider one another to stir up to love and good works, not forsaking our assembling together. . . . but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day drawing near." And may God enrich you with his choicest blessing in Christ, your head and king.

In his love.

The Rev. James Admiraal

My wife Rita and I, along with four little children, arrived in Whitinsville from Rock Valley, Iowa, in early March of 1976. We had to wait for several days before the moving van arrived with our belongings, but we were so eager to sleep in our new large home that we chose to spend the night there in sleeping bags. In the meantime, we explored the nooks and crannies of a parsonage which had quite a history to it.

Serving the Pleasant Street congregation was both challenging and rewarding for a young pastor just entering his second charge.

One challenge was simply finding my way around. It was totally different from being in the separated towns of Iowa with its country side roads at every mile juncture. Here in New England roads ran every which way and you went from Northbridge to Uxbridge to Rockdale without realizing you had crossed into another municipality. Even so, we much enjoyed the variety and beauty of the area.

Another challenge was serving a large, established church with many pastoral needs. Going from hospital to hospital to visit the sick, or going to the many elderly in nursing homes, their own homes or apartments, involved much time. However, this too was in many ways enjoyable and enriching.

A unique challenge at Pleasant Street was its relative isolation from other Reformed churches. At the same time, I have never

served a congregation which had such a diversity of backgrounds in it. And many of those who came to attend Pleasant Street came there because they loved the Biblical Reformed faith. We had two young servicemen, who come to mind, who would sit in the very front of church, Bibles open, and just relishing the proclamation of Reformed truths. Others came from quite some distance with that same appreciation.

Pleasant Street was very open to people of different backgrounds. And some of its members, I recall, were very diligent evangelistically. I recall with fondness Pleasant Street's love for music. The singing was enthusiastic. And the organ concerts which were held from time to time were memorable.

Pleasant Street was also blessed with solid consistories - men who served and directed the church wisely and faithfully. Come to the annual consistory party time, they could also play and laugh like few consistories I've served.

Our family left Pleasant Street church in the summer of 1980 for the Second CRC of Kalamazoo, Michigan. We left with two additional children - both born in Memorial Hospital in Worcester. So we have two Massachusetts-by-birth in our family. We are grateful to the Lord and his people - also in Whitinsville - for their spiritual impact on our lives.

The Rev. J. Peter Vosteen

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Remembrances are very funny things. I find that they are very selective and very

personal. Often they are not accurate to fact. Over the years they grow and are distorted. So, to write them down is a very hazardous

business. I hope that if your memory is different from mine, you will not accuse me of violating the ninth commandment.

There are things that I remember that are a bit painful, but there are also very humorous things that I am sure you would like me to tell. On one occasion, the consistory proposed to the congregation that we hire another minister to help with the work. The congregation dispensed with that idea in a hurry. Later on a man of the congregation came up to me and sympathetically told me not to be discouraged. "The congregation always turns down new ideas three times before they pass them," he said. There was also the time when I was to have open heart surgery. A lady of the church met me in the bank and informed me that she was praying very hard for me because she knew how many people died from that operation.

I would like to tell you about the attempts that we made in the area of evangelistic outreach. We decided that we should try to be more faithful in carrying out the great commission. Between the two churches we hired a full-time deacon. Through the efforts of the deacons, we had an office for him downtown with clothes and food to give to those in need. Also the deacons replaced the roof on the home of an

older lady in town who was living on Social Security. Her roof leaked; she had no money to replace it. She was not connected to our churches. But, because of her need, the deacons, on a Saturday, went over and replaced the roof. She never came to church, but the village took notice and had a very positive attitude toward us.

There was the time when we had a Saturday program for the children of the community. We were overwhelmed when 400 children appeared. Or maybe you remember Paul and Betsey Ingeneri when they first came. Paul put his arm around Betsey during the worship service. What a stir that caused.

There are so many fond memories. I can't begin to recount them. But the greatest memories are of the Lord working in the hearts of his people - and the people themselves. I could go on but I must stop.

May this time, as you celebrate 100 years of the Lord's faithfulness, cause you to look back with gratitude and to look ahead with anticipation to the great day of the Lord's return.

Solo Deo Gloria

The Rev. John H. Piersma

To write a report of one's ministry for a certain time in a certain place and remain honest is not easy. It's been fifteen years since we were installed as Pleasant Street's thirteenth minister. Please be sure that Gen and I consider it a great privilege to have served in Whitinsville. We are grateful to have been found worthy of such service as well as grateful to many of you for making this period meaningful and gratifying. We are happy to have played a small part in your history and to join all who congratulate you on your 100th anniversary.

I think it fair to say that our term of service marked off an era in your history. We want to believe, however, that "the faith of the fathers" is not in decline among you. Certain things may change, of course, but the Truth of sovereign grace sacrificially expounded and defended in our Reformed tradition is timeless. After all and before all, even in the moment of celebration, is His glory.

Pleasant experiences while with you were the refurbishing of the sanctuary

("peanuts" compared to your current building project), the organization of the Men's Chorus, the Sunday evening discussion meetings (especially as we went through the history of the Christian church), catechizing some of the brightest kids I've ever seen, the growth and acceptance of our Christian High School (how I loved those basketball games), the spirited congregational singing. This is not a complete list, nor are these items placed in order of importance! Most important and often most pleasant were the routine things,

preaching, teaching, visiting, administering the holy sacraments, etc.

The strategic importance of the Christian Reformed congregations in Whitinsville for New England is undeniable. We hope and pray that you will resolve to hold high the banner of solid Reformed evangelicalism for at least another hundred years. The Lord requires that of you.

God Bless!

The Rev. John J. Wiegers

"CONGRATULATIONS - GOD BELIEVES IN YOU" is the title of a book by Dr. Lloyd Ogilvie, Chaplain for the U.S. Senate. I'd like to borrow these words, with thanks to the author, and express them to you on the occasion of your 100th anniversary. Barb and I join you in celebration of praise to the Lord for his goodness and faithfulness for these one hundred years.

Isn't it great to know that God has believed in you and has been committed to Pleasant Street Church from day one on, and that his unflinching presence and enabling power will never change? Over the years he has blessed your congregation with so many talents and with such a variety of ministry skills. As you prayerfully used your "grace gifts" for the upbuilding of his church, open to the leading of his Spirit, serving and encouraging others, and touching the lives of many people with his love, you have delighted the heart of God.

I am very thankful for having been a part of Pleasant Street Church's history. Among the many spiritual developments which took place during the 1984-1992 time frame, a few stand out in my mind for which I especially thank the Lord: more intimate experience of the awesome presence of God in worship; a deeper desire to allow the Holy Spirit greater freedom to move and lead among us; a growing love for all brothers and sisters in Christ scattered throughout our communities; a greater passion to minister to and be

involved with non-Christians; the beginnings of what now is a thriving and effective Coffee Break/Story Hour ministry; developing a growing prayer ministry for renewal and outreach, covering the entire Blackstone Valley; beginning the Congregational MasterPlanning process, giving the congregation ownership of its ministries.

The years 1984-1992 were, for the most part, wonderful years. At this anniversary time let's say to each other, "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever . . . (for) who can be compared to God in faithfulness to all generations" (Psalter Hymnal No. 169).

The future of the Pleasant Street Church is as bright as the promises of God. May your life together be blessed with unity and peace; may your hearts be filled with joyful praise; and may your ministry be energized by God's Spirit who "believes in you" and who will "take great delight in you, quiet you with his love, and will rejoice over you with singing" (Zephaniah 3:17, NIV). I love the way the Living Bible renders the last line of this verse - "Is that a joyous choir I hear? No, it is the Lord Himself exulting over you in happy song."

Imagine, God himself rejoicing over Pleasant Street Church! Hallelujah!

Joyfully yours,
John & Barb Wiegers

RECOLLECTIONS . . .

“ . . . remembrance of former times.”

Ecclesiastes 1:11

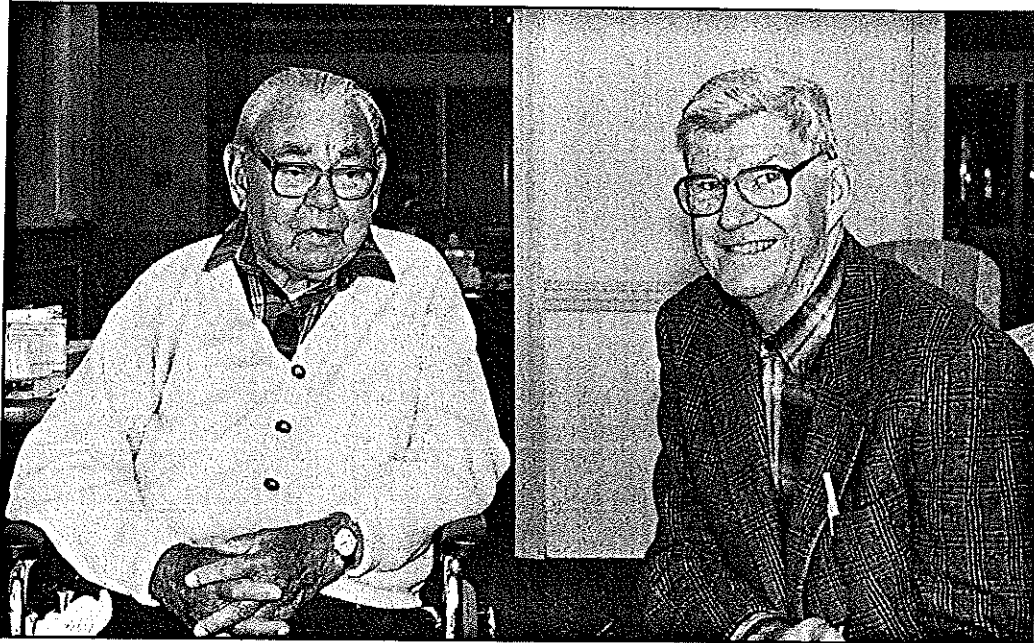
*Four ducks on a pond,
A grass-bank beyond,
A blue sky of spring,
White clouds on the wing:
What a little thing
To remember for years -
To remember with tears!*

William Allingham (1828-1889)

*Mr. Jacob Feddema
Mrs. Doris E. Koopman
Ms. Annie M. Plantinga
Mr. Bernard Van Spyker*

*A Remembrance of Things Past . . .
a conversation with Mr. Jacob Feddema*

by J. H. Baker & E. H. De Vries



J. Feddema with Editor J. H. Baker

The sun was bright and the warm air was melting the recently fallen snow as Edward De Vries and I drove to the Milford Meadows to visit the oldest living member of the Pleasant Street Church, Mr. Jacob Feddema. The day was noteworthy because on the very day of our visit 98 years before, March 13, 1898, Mr. Jacob Feddema was baptized in the newly organized Whitinsville Christian Reformed Church by the Rev. Feike J. Drost.

We came upon Mr. Feddema in his wheelchair as he waited for us in the sunlit reception room of the nursing home. With a warm greeting, he asked us to follow him as he propelled himself to the dining room area where, he informed us, we could talk undisturbed. Mr. Feddema wears a hearing aid. Comfortably clad in light white shoes and socks, dark blue pants, and a plaid cotton shirt over which he wore a light grey sweater, Mr. Feddema responded to our questions in a voice reflective of his age but resonant with energy and enthusiasm. In his right hand he held a white face cloth with which he carefully wiped his nose and mouth from time to time. The skin of his face was soft and pink;

the skin of the back of his hands was bronzed by years of hard work and exposure to sun, wind, and rain.

We jogged his memory with questions of days gone by in an attempt to retrieve recollections from which we could reconstruct an outline of a life which was almost a century in length - . . . *a la recherche du temps perdu* (A remembrance of things past) as Marcel Proust would have observed.

Jacob Feddema's father, Wietze Feddema, and his mother, Efke Bosma, came to the United States in 1887 upon the invitation of Jan Bosma, Mrs. Feddema's brother. For a time, Wietze Feddema worked at Castle Hill caring for the cattle which Mrs. Whitin had imported from the Netherlands. The first home Jacob Feddema remembers was the family home on Purgatory Road. On Sundays, the family would ride to church in a horse-drawn Democrat Wagon driven by Mr. Willem Visser. He recalls that Mr. Visser collected ten cents for taking the family to church. He remembers services conducted in the Dutch language by the Rev. Foppe

Fortuin. The Dutch hymns were sung from the heart with vibrant energy accompanied by an organ, the bellows of which were pumped by a young man who was a member of the church.

Catechism classes were conducted in Dutch. Sometimes discipline was a problem and Rev. Fortuin was forced on occasion to assume a fiercely authoritarian role. No doubt the spitballs which Jacob admits were sometimes directed in the direction of the august *Dominie* did not help the situation and contributed, no doubt, to the pastor's righteous indignation.

Mr. Feddema remembers the collection being taken with a bag on the end of a long stick which was extended down the aisle to the parishioners. "Most of the collection," he said, "was coins." After church Mr. Meindert Vanden Akker, one of the deacons, would walk to his home at the Vanden Akker Farm on Purgatory Road with his pocket full of small change from the collection.

With a reverential tone he said, "My mother was such a Christian lady. She made me read the Bible every morning before I went to school." As he grew older, however, Jacob developed an urge to see the world and live new experiences in new places. He decided to move to Chicago. When asked why he chose Chicago, he said, "Isn't that what they used to say - Go West, young man, go West? That's what I did."

Always a baseball fan, he had gotten to know Chicago Cubs Hall-of-Famer Gabby Hartnett years earlier when Hartnett visited friends in Whitinsville. Later at a ballgame at Wrigley Field he saw Hartnett, then famous as a catcher for the Chicago Cubs, and shouted, "Hi Gabby!" Hartnett looked up and shouted back, "Hey Whitinsville, why don't you meet me at the press gate!" Later Feddema was interviewed by Tim Murphy, author of "*From Milltown to Cooperstown*," a biography of Gabby Hartnett.

Jake remembers being at the 1932 World

Series game between the Cubs and the Yankees in which Babe Ruth pointed to centerfield as he came up to bat and promptly proceeded to put one of Charlie Root's pitches into the centerfield stands for a home run. Jake remained faithful to baseball and upon his return to Whitinsville in the 1930's, he played first base and was captain of the church baseball team.

In World War I, Mr. Feddema served in the U.S. Navy. His service was, he says, "uneventful." After the war, he reenlisted and did destroyer duty spending much time in the Mediterranean and the Adriatic Seas. He remembers picking up refugees fleeing from the Communist Revolution in Russia. "They were," he said, "dirty and bedraggled." After being picked up, they were given a bath, their clothing was fumigated for lice, and they were taken to the port of Ragusa, now Dubrovnik in Yugoslavia.

Mr. Feddema also remembers being a member of the crew which commissioned the destroyer *USS Reuben James* shortly after World War I. The *Reuben James* was one of the fifty overaged destroyers which the United States transferred to the British Navy in exchange for a ninety-nine-year lease of naval bases along the Atlantic seaboard from Canada to the Caribbean in the early days of World War II. It was sunk by a German U-boat in October of 1941 with the loss of over one hundred officers and men.

Jacob Feddema married Dora Hilverda in April of 1923. The Rev. Leonard Trap performed the ceremony. He is the father of Marion L. Oosterman and Evelyn D. Oosterman, both faithful members of the Pleasant Street Church. Mr. Feddema recalls as one of the saddest moments of his life the occasion when an infant son, Harold, died at the age of four-and-one-half months.

A loyal church member for all of his years, Mr. Feddema served on the Council of the Whitinsville Christian Reformed and, later, the Pleasant Street Church for several years. His wife, Dora, passed away in 1973.

Because of advancing age and progressive disability, Mr. Jacob Feddema entered the Milford Meadows in December, 1992. He enjoys his surroundings and is thankful for the comfort and the security of his new home.

As Jacob Feddema lifts weary eyes to the distant hills, he sees ever and ever more clearly the origin of his help and the source of his salvation. The remembrance of times and things past is both pleasant and painful.

A Treasured Memory. . .

by Mrs. Doris E. Koopman

Twenty-three years ago, my membership was transferred to the Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church. My first memory of the church took place thirteen years before that transfer. I was a student at Calvin College and a member of the college's A Cappella Choir which was directed by Professor Seymour Swets. Every spring, at break time, the choir would go on a tour. We were excited because on our tour we were going to the East Coast and would be visiting New York, New Jersey, and New England.

We arrived at Whitinsville and prepared for the evening concert at the Pleasant Street Church. As I recall, the concert went very well. There was a great community turnout and an enthusiastic response from the audience. At the end of every concert, it was customary for the choir to sing The Calvin Alma Mater, "Calvin, Calvin, Sing we all to thee. . ." An opportunity was then given for Calvin Alumni to come forward and sing along with the choir. It was also an occasion to acknowledge the "Calvin experience." It was a tradition established by Professor Swets, that this was to be a time when a choir member who belonged to the church in which we were performing should direct the choir. During our performance, there was no

Painful for the memories of what is past but pleasant as he contemplates ". . . the glory which shall be revealed in us." After a life of energy and engagement, Jacob Feddema sings with enthusiasm, "Take my life and let it be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee. . ." He recites, without a pause or hesitation, Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

choir member from Whitinsville, but someone in the choir remembered that Doris Hiskes was dating a boy from Whitinsville named Don Koopman. When it came time for the Alma Mater, my friends hustled me out of the alto section, telling Professor Swets that since my boyfriend was from Whitinsville, I was the one who should direct the Choir for the singing of the Alma Mater that evening. I was introduced as a friend of a "native son."

I took the baton and directed the choir for the singing in the very sanctuary in which I now worship regularly every Sunday. The choir really did not need a director for that song. They could sing it on automatic pilot; they could sing it in their sleep. It was a time for recognition of choir members, a time for sharing and connection with families, loved ones, and Calvin's friends.

In 1973, I became a member of the Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church. Over the years, Don and I have travelled much and visited many churches, but we always have a sense of thankfulness and belonging whenever we return to worship at Pleasant Street.

A Brief Memoir . . .

by Ms. Annie M. Plantinga

My grandparents, Oepke and Murkje (Zandstra) Plantinga came to Whitinsville from Holland in 1892. They had six children, Peter, Elsie, Hans, Annie, Albert, and Andrew.

Oepke worked at the Castle Hill Farm. The family lived in a house near the farm on Castle Hill Road. The Plantinga family with several other families from Holland started church services in Whitinsville. They first met together at the Plantinga home on Castle Hill.

My father, Hans, was twelve years old when the family came to Whitinsville. He married Jennie Krull. They had three children,

Ida, Oliver, and me, Annie. Hans was active in the church. He taught Sunday School and was an elder. He also played the organ for church services. I remember going to the church on Willow Street as a child. The present Pleasant Street Church was built in 1929. I made profession of faith when I was eighteen years old. The Rev. Ralph Bolt was pastor at the time. I went to Girls' Society, sang in the choir, and taught Sunday School.

(Ms. Annie Plantinga's grandfather, Oepke, was one of the charter members of the church and served on the first consistory. - The Editor)

For Your Kind Hospitality

" . . . thank you from the bottom of our hearts. "

by Bernard Van Spyker

We came to Whitinsville in response to an "ad" in *The Banner*: "*The Christian Reformed Church, Whitinsville, Mass. Servicemen - Spend the weekend with us. Homes provided.*" The servicemen came from Navy, Seabee, and Army bases and camps around New England. My cousin, Dale Gravengoed, came from Fort Devens; Eddie DeVries came from the Seabee Camp in Davisville, R.I.; I came from Quonset Point, R.I.

Dale told me about all the beautiful young ladies in Whitinsville with names like Lola, Elveena, Grace, Nellie, Mary, Gerry, Sylvia, and Marian, to name a few. He said that the male competition was in the service elsewhere.

There were "lawn parties" at Baker's farm, home cooking at the LaFleur's, chocolate milk at the Nydam farm, baking at the Kooistra's, fun at the Wassenaar's, a hymn sing at the Burgess's . . . and on and on.

For a "poor" Grand Rapids city boy who

had few friends, it looked like the "promised land." We servicemen had never had it so good! We came up on Friday night and, if someone had enough gas in spite of rationing, we headed for Marlboro to go roller skating at the rink where the roof leaked when it rained. We had to be careful not to be caught by the police for unnecessary driving! Then on Saturday morning we would walk around to see who was baking and get a sample from the hard working wives. At night, many times we would go to one of the farms for a "Lawn Party" - to play games and have a fun time. Sunday was church day, a great meal at noon, evening service, and then to someone's house for a "hymn-sing." Then, most times, Eddie and I would miss the 10:20 p.m. bus to Providence, so we would hitch a ride back to base in one of the oil tank trucks going our way.

On Thursday night, the Young People would go bowling so I'd come the 50 miles from Quonset just to have a fun time together as young people. As Christian servicemen, very homesick, we so appreciated the kind

hospitality of the Whitinsville Christian Reformed Church homes. We were treated as part of their families. As Matthew 25:40 says, “. . . inasmuch as you did it unto the least of one of these, you did it unto me.” Yes, that kindness was surely a taste of what true Christianity and brotherhood is all about.

After the war was over, as many as forty of us servicemen came back to marry the wonderful girls that we had to leave behind, and the amazing thing is that probably three-quarters of us came here to live rather than go back to our own home town.

Whitinsville Christian Reformed Church, now known as the Pleasant Street Church, means so much to us who were “strangers” faraway from home. You took us in, cared for us, gave us your daughters. For that, we former servicemen cannot adequately repay you.

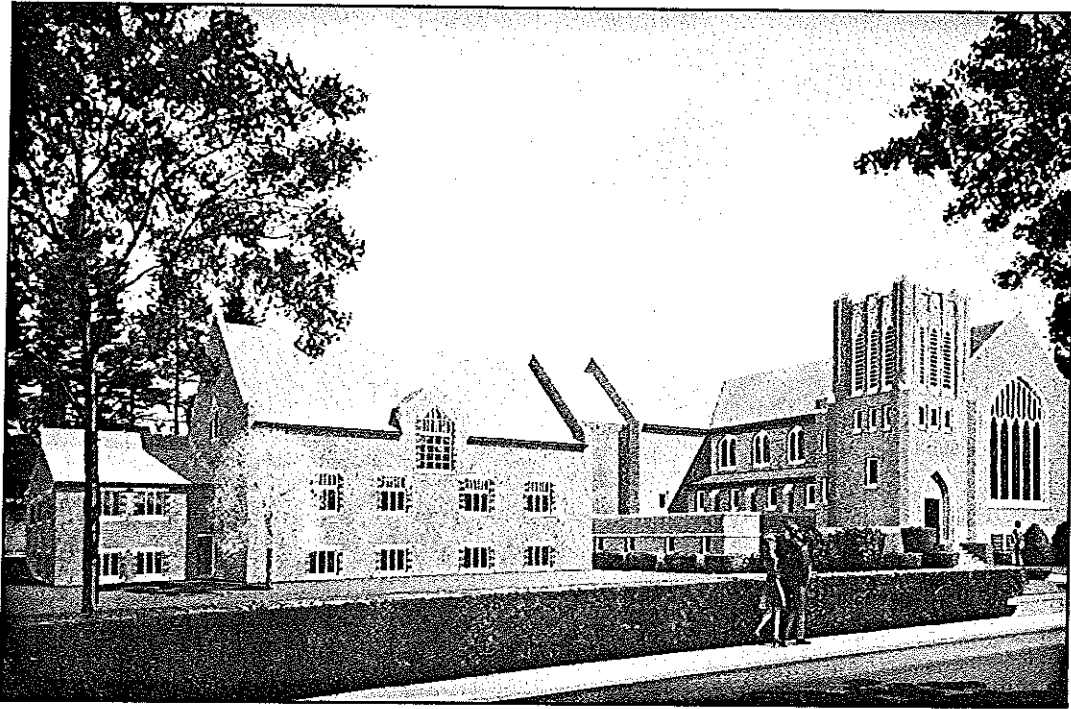
All we can say is, “Thank you” from the bottom of our hearts. We also thank God for his goodness shown in this “valley” to us homesick guys.

A VISION OF THE FUTURE . . .

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."

Proverbs 29:18

by the Rev. William G. Vis



Artist's drawing of present building

The pages you have just read are filled with upheavals and changes. They reveal vast cultural shifts, a work environment molded by the presence and then the closing of the Whitin Machine Works, war and peace, recession and prosperity. The worship of Pleasant Street has moved from Dutch to English and from psalms and hymns to praise choruses. A parade of pastors with varying gifts and personalities has served the church. There is this one constant in the first hundred years of Pleasant Street's existence - God's faithfulness.

What does the future hold for Pleasant Street? Where are we going? Concrete predictions are impossible, but the broad pattern may be partially discernible. Small groups have become an important component of the church's ministry and may become more so. If attendance and membership continue to grow, a second morning service will need to be considered and the need for additional staffing evaluated. The opening of the church addition will present a multitude of new opportunities for

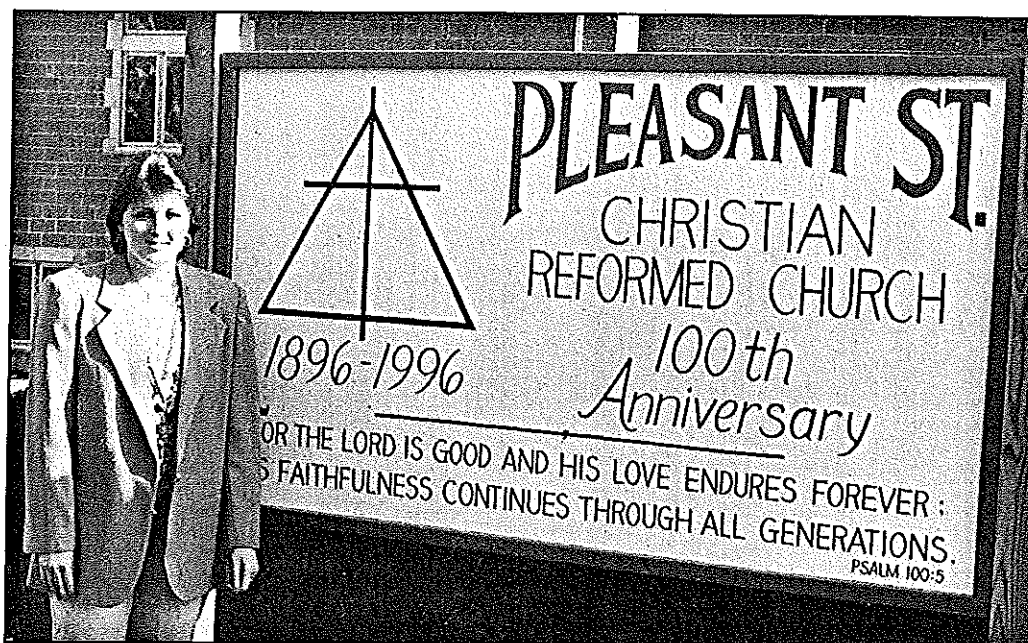
ministry to our membership and community. These new opportunities will require the continued active involvement of a significant portion of the congregation in ministry roles. All of these possibilities were already visualized in the Congregational MasterPlan adopted three years ago.

We see the future, however, as in a glass darkly. All of these possibilities, or none of them, may actually come to be. But even as there has been one constant through all the changes in the past century, we can look to the future with this assurance - God will remain faithful. Of course, a faithful God expects a faithful response from his people. The following vision statement, adopted in 1993, continues to form our response to God:

Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church seeks to be a praying congregation united in our love of Christ, faithful to the Word of God, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. We emphasize the discovery and use of each member's gifts, enabling us to be a caring body of vital Christians ready and willing to serve both the church and the community for Jesus Christ.

**CREDITS,
STAFF
AND TRIBUTES**

CREDITS



K. Lariviere, Centennial Logo/Sign Designer

Centennial Banner and Logo Design	Kelly L. Lariviere
Historical Research	Annemieke Galema, Ph.D., Peter De Vries, Jack Vanden Born, Ed.D.
Proofreaders	Cynthia Baker, Marilyn J. Baker, the Rev. William G. Vis
Caption Writing, Photo Layout	Douglas G. Kenbeck
Printing and Technical Assistance	Glen W. Bloem and the Staff of Old Colony Stationery
Translation	Sander Silvis



Centennial Committee



B. Plantinga, D. Wassenaar, H. Plantinga - Chairman,
E. De Vries, N. De Vries, G. Bangma

Centennial Book Staff



E. De Vries, J. H. Baker - Editor, N. De Vries

CENTENNIAL BOOK STAFF

EDITOR John H. Baker
ASST.-EDITORS Edward H. & Nellie N. De Vries
PHOTOGRAPHY Edward H. De Vries & Dennis L. Kenbeek

A Personal Tribute

To my mother and father, Cornelia S. and Hilka J. Baker, who
through life's adversities always kept the faith. - The Editor

A Special Thanks

To Edward and Nellie De Vries without whose assistance this
Centennial book would not have been possible. - The Editor

