

## **Chronology**

### **Pre-1914**

Christian Reformed people moving to Detroit worshipped with First Dutch Reformed Church on Catherine St. (now Madison St.) just east of Grand Trunk Railroad (approximately St. Aubin between E. Lafayette and E. Larned).

### **1914**

January 11: First service with Rev. J. R. Brink in the chapel of a Baptist church at Clinton St. and Joseph Campau (approximately one block north of the east end of Macomb St., southwest of Elmwood Cemetery).

January 12: Decision to designate the new group as a mission station of the Christian Reformed Church.

February 23: The group decides to petition Classis (the regional body of the Christian Reformed Church) to organize a new congregation here.

April 13: The consistory discusses the advisability of starting a Christian School, followed by efforts to organize a Christian School Society.

June 11: First Christian Reformed Church of Detroit is organized.

June 15: Ladies Aid Society is organized.

### **1915**

November: The evening service is changed from Dutch to English. Soon after there were two Dutch and two English services; later there was an early morning Dutch service that was read, with a morning English service, an afternoon Dutch service, and an evening English service all covered by the pastor.

### **1916**

January 18: The congregation purchased a German Reformed church building at Jay and Chene (approximately Chene northwest of Antietam) for \$13,000.

May 31: Decision to have Sunday school in Dutch and English on alternate Sundays, but it is soon decided to have separate Dutch and English classes.

Fall: Young Men's Society organized (and organized again in 1921, 1924, 1932... Apparently the society had a hard time keeping itself going.).

### **1917**

Mission Society is established to visit prospective members.

### **1918**

February 3: Rev. Herman Bel of Rochester, New York, is installed as the first pastor.

December 8: Mission Sunday school is begun in the Gratiot-Six Mile Rd. area (discontinued August 28, 1929).

## **1919**

February 27: Mens' Society is organized.

## **1921**

Rev. Bel leaves for Muskegon.

October 28: Young Ladies Society is organized (for the second time).

December 31: Rev. Henry Verduin of Purewater, South Dakota, is installed. He was called upon to preach one Dutch and two English sermons per Sunday.

## **1923**

July 2: The congregation decides to sell the Chene St. church building to the African Methodist Church for \$28,000; the last service in the building is on September 2.

October 22: After three Sundays in a lodge hall at Mt Elliott Ave. and Charlevoix and six months in the school of St. Paul's Lutheran Church at Jay and Joseph Campau (approximately two blocks southeast of Joseph Campau and Vernor), the church purchases lots at Maryland and Goethe in Grosse Pointe Park for \$8400 (all previous locations were in the vicinity of the present Ford Field and Elmwood Cemetery).

November 12: The church decides to build a new building seating 400 people with provisions for a future gallery at a cost not to exceed \$45,000; groundbreaking is on November 30.

November 15: Choral Society is formed.

## **1924**

May 4: The first worship service at the new site is held in the basement of new church.

June 11: The cornerstone of the new building is laid.

## **1925**

January 21: The new building is completed. It is dedicated on February 4 in Dutch and February 5 in English. Total cost for the new building is \$53,000.

## **1926**

November 14: Rev. Verduin's farewell service; he leaves for Grand Rapids.

## **1927**

June 13: First Church decides to build a parsonage at a cost not to exceed \$10,000 (1442 Maryland).

## **1928**

August: Rev. Martin Monsma arrives from Doon, Iowa.

## **1929**

February 1: The Young Men's Society discusses whether "Confessed Lady members of our church" should "be allowed to vote in Church Election."

Grosse Pointe Christian Day School opens, with Dewey Westra as principal.

## **1930**

September 10: Missionary work begins at the Marine Hospital at the foot of Alter Road. This work went on for the next 17 years.

## **1932**

January 31: The church is gutted by a fire that leaves only the outside walls standing. The insurance company pays \$33,000, and the building is restored for about \$25,000, leaving a surplus. Until the building is finished, afternoon services are held in Grace Evangelical Church (Kercheval at Lakepointe), and morning and evening services and Sunday school are held in Jackson School, Marlborough and Waveney, Detroit.

An approximately 1921-vintage Page theater organ is purchased.

## **1934**

May: Rev. Monsma leaves for Pella, Iowa.

October 7: Rev. George W. Hylkema, from Orange City, Iowa, preaches his inaugural sermon.

## **1938**

February 21: The Mary and Martha Circle holds its first meeting (now Women's Bible Study).

September 31: Boys Club and Girls Club are started.

December 31: Rev. Hylkema preaches his farewell sermon, leaving to become chaplain at Pine Rest Hospital.

## **1939**

April 2: Rev. John O. Schuring preaches his inaugural sermon. There are now two English services, with an afternoon Dutch service conducted by an elder.

## **1942**

Choral Society sings over the radio at Detroit Flower Show.

## **1944**

Rev. Schuring leaves, and Rev. Menko Ouwinga arrives.

## **1947**

Mission Society conducts services one Saturday per month at City Rescue Mission.

## **1948**

Goethe St. next to the church is acquired.

## **1949**

Rev. Ouwinga leaves.

## **1950**

Rev. Vincent C. Licatesi, a former Roman Catholic who became a Heidelberg Catechism scholar, arrives.

## **1953**

June 27: Lake Worth, Florida, Christian Reformed Church is sponsored as a Home Missions Church.

November: The first Sunday school classes in Immanuel Chapel, Roseville.

### **1954**

Rev. Licatesi leaves.

### **1956**

Rev. Samuel Vander Jagt arrives.

The Lake Worth, Florida, Christian Reformed Church is organized.

October 24: Choral Society is renewed, but following participation on Thanksgiving a protest is raised about it on various grounds.

### **1957**

Centennial of the Christian Reformed Church.

January 8: Council rejects the protest against the Choral Society.

### **1959**

December 2: Immanuel Christian Reformed Church in Roseville is organized.

### **1960**

Rev. Vander Jagt leaves.

### **1961**

October 1: Rev. John H. Groenewald preaches his inaugural sermon.

Council approves right of women to vote in Congregational Meeting.

### **1962**

February 11: Initial worship services at the Christian Reformed Church in Royal Oak (church sponsored by a group from First Church).

Fall, a new, 17-rank organ is installed, with pipes from Holland and cabinetry from Germany, at a cost of \$17,000.

### **1964**

Spring: A community church at 14<sup>th</sup> and Pingree is prepared in an apartment building with much support from First Church.

### **1966**

February: Royal Oak church is organized (now North Hills Christian Reformed Church, Troy).

### **1967**

Rev. Groenewald leaves.

July 3: Rev. Franklin D. Steen preaches his inaugural sermon.

September: Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council holds its first meeting, following Detroit race riots of July; several First Church members attend (became Grosse Pointe Interfaith Center

for Racial Justice).

First Church families sponsor Wayne Reformed Fellowship at Wayne State University.

**1970**

Seminarian William C. DeVries arrives to begin two years with Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship at Wayne State with First Church sponsorship.

**1972**

Seminarian Ron Cok begins a year at Wayne State with Inter-Varsity.

**1974**

John Natelborg arrives to begin as Associate Pastor for Campus Ministry at Wayne State under Inter-Varsity and Christian Reformed Home Missions.

**1975**

Rev. Steen leaves.

Community Assistance Program (C.A.P.) is begun.

Choir begins to sing regularly in worship services.

**1976**

February: Coffee Break Bible Study begins.

September 12: Rev. Douglas A. Warners is installed.

**1977**

March 27: The church begins its Faith Promise program of financial support for missions.

**1978**

Children's Church begins.

Elizabeth Dowdell replaces Stuart Eppinga as choir director.

**1981**

People in Faith United (PIFU) is organized by fourteen churches, including First Church, with Bon Secours Hospital and Crossroads.

**1982**

Rev. Warners leaves.

October 10: Rev. William J. Moxey becomes the new pastor.

**1983**

March: Maundy Thursday services are initiated.

Spring: Crossroads East social service office opens with First Church members involved.

October: Adult Education receives new emphasis.

**1985**

January: The first woman deacon, Nancy Malefyt, is ordained at First Church.

**1987**

Rev. Moxey leaves.

A new parsonage is purchased, and the old one becomes Parish House for various activities.

**1988**

September 20: Rev. William C. DeVries is installed.

**1991 or 1992**

Margaret Feringa becomes the first woman elder at First Church.

**2001**

Rev. Natelborg, associate pastor, retires.

**2003**

November 9: Rev. DeVries preaches his farewell sermon and leaves for First Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids.

**2005**

September: Rev. Van't Hof is installed.

**2006**

The Lakepointe parsonage is sold.

**2008**

February 3: Rev. Van't Hof is called home to be with the Lord.

**2009**

January 4: Rev. Van Arragon is installed.

**2010**

June: Building renovation is complete and celebrated with a dedication.

**2011**

April: Parsonage renovations are complete and the Van Arragons move into the parsonage at 1442 Maryland.

**2014**

June 11: 100th Anniversary of First Church. A celebration weekend includes a dinner, tours and participation by former pastors and congregants.

**2023**

June 11: Rev. Van Arragon preaches his farewell sermon and leaves for Plymouth Heights Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids.

## **Ministers**

Herman Bel 1918-1921

Henry Verduin 1921-1926

Martin Monsma 1928-1934

G. W. Hylkema 1934-1938

John O. Schuring 1939-1944

Menko Ouwinga 1944-1949

Vincent C. Licatesi 1950-1954

Samuel Vander Jagt 1956-1960

John H. Groenewold 1961-1967

Franklin D. Steen 1967-1975

Douglas A. Warners 1976-1982

William J. Moxey 1982-1987

William C. DeVries 1988-2003

Mark R. Van't Hof 2005-2008

Ben Van Arragon 2009-2023