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### Meeting Minutes of the Consistory of the First Reformed Church

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12 April 1861

Holland, Michigan

At a meeting of the consistory of the First Reformed Church at which Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte presided, Wiepke Diekema and his family wished to be reinstated in the church because they have left the Scottish [Presbyterian] church in South Holland [located on what is now South Washington Ave.]. The pastor of that congregation, Rev. Schepers, would not give the Diekemas a transfer of membership letter. A committee of the pastor and Elders Keppel and Wakker would make an inquiry "concerning their Christian conduct" of Rev. Schepers. The deacons inquired of the consistory whether two families are deserving of help from the congregation.

In Dutch; translation by Rev. William and Althea Buursma, 2000.

Original in the records of the Pillar Christian Reformed Church at the Joint Archives of Holland, vol. II., pp 155-156.

ARTICLE 10 – All of the brethren indicate that at the next communion service to be held on Sunday, the 20<sup>th</sup>, they will be able to participate in a loving relationship with one another.

The meeting was closed by Brother Broek, who led in prayer.

G. Wakker, clerk

Consistory Meeting of April 12, 1861

All members were present.

ARTICLE 1 – The meeting was opened with prayer by the president, A. C. van Raalte.

ARTICLE 2 – The minutes were read and approved.

ARTICLE 3 – A dispute between Binnekant and de Weerd, involving a tax assessment, led to the appointment of a committee of Wakker, Keppel, and te Roller, who are assigned, if at all possible, to resolve the controversy.

ARTICLE 4 – Wiepke Diekema and his wife, Hendrikje Diekema, nee Stegeman, and children, entered the meeting, desiring to be received as members. They were formerly members of the congregation but, due to circumstances, had gone along with the so-called Scottish church at South Holland. They now, however, motivated by their own convictions, wish to be acknowledged as members of this church. For some time, they have been attending. It was decided to agree to the request of these members, since they are known to the brethren. However, because Rev. Schepers has refused to give them a statement of membership, an inquiry will be made concerning their Christian conduct of Rev. Schepers. The committee consists of Keppel, the pastor, and Wakker.

ARTICLE 5 – A membership statement was received for Eelke Wierenga, nee van Aardvark, from Muskegon, dated March 22, 1861.

ARTICLE 6 – Brothers Broek and Labots were appointed as delegates to classis, meeting in Overijssel, on April 17. The alternate for the first-named will be Kamper, and for the last-named Wakker. All of the brethren were requested to attend the sessions of the entire classis.

ARTICLE 7 –The deacons request advice concerning the financial assistance given to the members Brouwer and Drost, because these members, in addition to owning a lot and a home, also have other possessions. The first owns a house lot behind his dwelling and the other is the owner of an additional 20 acres. The majority judge that in this matter there are some difficulties, because it seems rather harsh to take into consideration their property in granting to them financial support. This is particularly true since both have children who are very young. It was felt that at the very least the home or the place where the home is situated should not be taken into consideration; also that the 20 acres of Drost are of little value, and that the house lot of Brouwer would first have to be signed over. However, if the deacons were to go in this direction, they might very well need to struggle with other difficulties, and the matter would take on, most likely, an unpleasant aspect in the eyes of the public.

There were some who judged that benevolence should be offered, but that it should be done sparingly. The majority were of the opinion that this ought not to be a matter of conscience for the deacons, if they give assistance in the need, particularly if they urged them to use their own resources before helping to empty the poor fund. This would bring about the problem that other needy members, who had nothing or lived in greater need, would not receive the necessary help to assist them. Some of the deacons were of the opinion that monies given for benevolence ought not to be disbursed for the above-mentioned reasons to these members, since it could well lead to abuse.

ARTICLE 8 – Keppel and van de Luyster were appointed as a committee, authorized at the congregational meeting, for procuring a fence around the church grounds, and to urge the appointed committee to complete their task.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Brother Kamper.

G. Wakker, clerk