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Western Theological Seminary

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Abstract

Organized in 1924 as the Van Raalte Avenue Reformed Church and later dissolved in 1996 as Bethel Reformed Church. Records include minutes and financial records of the consistory (Elders, Consistory, and Executive Committee Minutes). Other church organizations, church bulletins, directories, ledgers, membership records, correspondence, and photographs are open for public research.

Accession No: W97-1220
Provenance: Bethel Reformed Church
Donor: Bethel Reformed Church
Photographs 9 images (Box 4), 2 images (Box 5)
Processed by: Allyson K. Boggess, May 1998

History

Bethel Reformed Church was first organized on September 2, 1924, headed by Rev. M. A. Stegeman. Rev. Edward Tanis was called to be their first pastor. Bethel was formally named the Van Raalte Avenue Reformed Church, though the name was changed to the Bethel Reformed Church on October 1, 1928, by votes from the congregation and, ultimately, the consistory. Organizations such as the Ladies Aid Society, Men’s Brotherhood, and Young Women’s League were eventually formed. Unfortunately, due to a decline in membership and in defined leadership over the years, Bethel Reformed Church held their final service on December 29, 1996, and dissolved formally in 1997.

Scope and Content

The collection contains records of the Bethel Reformed Church from the early 1920s until 1997, including consistory minutes (Elders, Consistory, and Executive Committee Minutes). Other organizational minutes, financial records for the consistory and other organizations, church directories, anniversary information, specific ledgers, correspondence, and other information are open to public research without restriction. The folders for this collection are arranged alphabetically.

Container List

Box 1

Adult Bible Study
Constitution, n.d.
Minutes, 1947-1970
Anniversary Booklet (25th), 1924-1949
Annual Meetings/Budgets, 1981-1996 (2 folders)
Articles of Agreement/Incorporation, 1922, 1924-1928, 1931, 1949, 1951
Baby Roll Enrollment Cards, 1981-1986
Bulletins, 1943-1963, 1972 (22 folders)
Business Administration Committee Disbursements (monthly), 1982-1988
Business Administration Committee Minutes, n.d.
Business Minutes/Meetings, n.d. (2 folders)
Certificates of Baptism, 1909, 1922
Certificates and Letters of Dismission, 1924-1953
Choir Echoes, n.d.
Christian Education Committee Minutes, n.d.
Christian Service Guild, 1981-1984 (bound)
Cluster Family Program, n.d.
Communicant Members, 1982-1984
Congregational Care Committee Minutes, n.d.

Box 2

Consistory Minutes, 1923-1931 (bound)
Consistorial Reports
Annual, 1980-1991 (2 folders)
Pastor Ron Helmink’s Reports to the Consistory, February 1980 - September 1980
Constitution
Appendix to the Bylaws, n.d.
Bi-Laws, n.d.
Correspondence
n.d., 1930-1997 (15 folders)
Consistory, n.d.
Newcomers’ Letters, n.d.
Related to Vacancy, Oct. 1980-July 1982 and Call to Mr. Alan Hofland
Cradle Roll Listing, 1947-1987
Deacons Minutes, 1931-1943 (bound)
Director of Volunteer Ministries Reports, n.d.
Directory
1924-1996 (3 folders)
Proofs, 1986
Dismission Certificate
Granted Booklet, 1954-1959

Box 3

Elders, Consistory, and Executive Committee Minutes, 1959-1994 (23 folders)
Elders and Deacons
  Attendance Lists, 1983-1987
  Teams Lists, 1981-1990
Family Group Visitation Program, n.d.
“Fifty Years of Service” 1924-1974 Bulletin
Financial
  Contracting, Purchasing etc., n.d.
  Ledger, 1970-1980 (bound)
  Offerings, 1980-1987
  Promissory Notes, n.d.
  Report on Religious Education (annual), 1934-1935
Financial Reports (annual), 1925-1985 (5 folders)
Funerals, 1995-1996
Guild Pamphlet, 1974-1981
Guild for Christian Service
  Minutes, 1969-1973 (bound)
  Minutes, 1974-1980 (bound)
Koinonia: A Shared Adventure, 1984
Ladies Aid Society
  Attendance and Minutes, 1928-1993 (1928-1934 bound) (8 folders)
  Constitution, n.d.
Library, n.d.

Box 4

Membership
  1900s-1930s (bound)
  Transfers, 1990-1995
Men’s Brotherhood
  Constitution, Minutes, and Attendance, 1939-1941 (bound)
  Minutes, 1942-1945 (bound)
Missionary
  Agreements, 1978-1986
  Certificates, Profiles, 1978-1992
  Correspondence, 1990-1996
Photographs
  Bruggink, Roger and Adilee, 1986
  Doorenbos, Harvey and Margaret, August 1981
  Ford, Peter and Patty, n.d.
  Herbelin, Ted and June, n.d.
  Miersma, Harry and Pat, 1984; Family, n.d. (2 items)
  Sikkema, Verne and Lorraine, n.d.
  Stewart, Elizabeth and Thomas, Oklahoma University, n.d.
  Westra, Richard and Maja, 1983
Outreach Committee Minutes, 1983-1992
Photographs, Baseball and Softball Teams, 1990 (2 images)
Property, 1962
Redecorating Bethel Reformed Church Correspondence and Plans, 1984
Register Cards, A-E, H, J, K-P, R-T, V-W (18 folders)
S.A.F.E Committee
   Minutes, 1992
   Study Report, 1992
Sanctuary Windows, 1976-1983
Seminary Scholarship Fund Policy, 1975
Social Functions File, 1977-1987
Staff Relations Committee Minutes, 1992
Survey of Steketee Brothers Addition to the Bethel Reformed Church, 1970
Sunday School, Teachers and Officers Minutes
   1925-1956 (bound)
   1959-1983 (bound)
Telephone Directory, 1993
Worship Committee
   Disbursements (monthly), 1984-1985, 1988
   Minutes, 1983-1993
Young Women’s Branch of the Executive Committee Minutes, 1902-1918 (bound)
Young Women’s Branch Minutes, 1903-1924 (bound)
Young Women’s Committee of the Synod of Chicago Minutes, 1919-1926 (bound)
Young Women’s League for Service Constitution, Minutes, and Attendance, 1931-1942 (bound)

Box 5 (Oversize)

Articles of Association and Amendment (negatives included), 1925, 1929
Certificate of Amendment, Changing the Name from Van Raalte to Bethel, 1929, 1955
Church Membership, Baptismal, and Marriage Records, ca. 1910s-1950s
Consistory Minutes
   1931-1952
   1952-1959
Embosser, n.d.
Financial Report, 1923-1930
General Fund Ledger, 1978-1983

Box 6 (Oversize)

Ledger
   Old Church Records (A-H), n.d.
   Old Church Records (I-Z), n.d.
   Old Church Records, ca. 1930s (2 folders)
Lot 151 Steketee Brothers Addition Papers, 1962
Mortgage Documents and Lot Abstracts, 1914-1966