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Meeting Minutes of the Consistory of the First Reformed Church

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19 July 1864

Holland, Michigan

Elder Teunis Keppel was elected chairman of the consistory meeting of the First Reformed Church in the absence of Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte. A committee of women who clean the church requested that the consistory pay for the expenses of cleaning so that the women did not have to beg to raise the money needed. The interior of the church also needed to be painted. The consistory would make a decision about this. The building committee reported that it would cost \$500 to paint and whitewash the church. The consistory also decided to pay the expenses of cleaning the church, a proposal made by the women earlier in the meeting. D[irk] Broek wrote a pointed letter to the consistory stating that the church could not expect the students to preach for nothing since they cannot be expected to "live on air." He submitted a bill for \$20.00 for his preaching on four Sundays in 1863 and 1864. The consistory refused to pay him and also let him know that it did not like the tone of his letter.

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. 214-216.

Consistory Meeting of July 19, 1864

Absent: Brothers Broek, Naber, Kieft, and Geerlings.

ARTICLE 1 – The meeting was opened with prayer by Brother de Bruin. Brother Keppel was appointed as chairman.

ARTICLE 2 – Boutje Woltman and Johanna Wilmina Woltman, nee Verbeek, entered the meeting, desiring to be admitted to the table of the table of the Lord, by way of profession of faith. However, since it was evident that Mrs. Woltman knew very little, both were accepted after questioning by the chairman.

ARTICLE 3 – A committee of women, who had been requested to clean the church appeared at the meeting, asking to be released from begging for the necessary monies for the cleaning project. They asked that the expenses be paid for from the church treasury, and they also requested that the interior of the church be painted.

The consistory, not yet having made a decision concerning painting, answered this committee that tomorrow they will be informed of the decision of the consistory.

ARTICLE 4 – The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

ARTICLE 5 – The building committee presents a plan for the painting and whitewashing of the church, with an estimate of approximately \$500.00. Brother te Roller reports that the monies will be available at the time of the painting. It was decided that the necessary expenses for the furnace will not be extensive, and the decision was made to paint and whitewash the church. The implementation was assigned to Wakker, Plugger and Geerlings.

ARTICLE 6 – It was decided that the expenses for the cleaning of the church will be paid from the church funds. Brother te Roller was assigned to inform the committee who had asked about this.

ARTICLE 7 – Membership received for Joost Mosselman and Pieterella Wilhelmina Mosselman, nee Kosse, from Grand Rapids, dated June 20, 1864.

ARTICLE 8 – The clerk reports that he has received a letter addressed to him which apparently should have been addressed to the consistory. This letter is as follows:

Holland, Michigan, July 18, 1864

Honorable friend,

“Urgent circumstances compel me to inform you of this very unpleasant task for me.

“As you know, I have on various occasions, preached for the First Holland Reformed congregation here, without having received any honorarium. The assignment is a duty placed upon me, and it seems that people are of the opinion that my work is pro deo. This is news to me. In my academic preparation, I have never received a penny from the congregation, and if this is the way that the consistory of Holland treats all students, then, at the very best, it is most inappropriate, to say nothing about that it is unchristian.

“In these days, when everyone is making money like water, it is inhumane not to reimburse students who are just as good as other people and must pay large expenses for the labors they perform. People seem to think that students can live on air. If I had received for my efforts just a token, I would have been more than satisfied. But now, due to the behavior of the consistory, I am compelled to take this extreme measure, which is an unpleasant remedy for me. I feel it is my duty to present the following bill:

For preaching on July 12, 1863 -	\$ 5.00
For preaching on September 13, 1863 -	5.00
For preaching on June 12, 1864 -	5.00
For preaching on July 3, 1864 -	5.00
Total -	\$20.00

I hope that the consistory will see to it that I will receive the money as quickly as possible, since I need it, because I am leaving this week for a trip to Wisconsin, and I still have some debts to be paid.”

With respect, your friend D. Broek

Elder G. Wakker, clerk of the consistory of the First Holland Reformed congregation at Holland, Michigan.

The consistory decided to take note of this letter as being addressed to them. They decide that since no money has ever been paid by the congregation in cases such as this for pulpit supply,

and, since some of these preaching assignments are at the request of and in the presence of Rev. van Raalte, these appearances are more in the form of a permission for young students instead of providing for a need in the congregation.

An educated or intelligent human being in such a position should not even think of being paid or requesting money. Moreover, the spirit in which the letter is written is incorrect. It was decided to write him as follows:

The consistory of the First Holland congregation

To: D. Broek

“We have received from our clerk a letter which you wrote, and we make the following comments in connection with remarks addressed to us. We reply that the debt you refer to in your writing is one that we cannot acknowledge. We call attention to the fact that the spirit of your letter of admonition conflicts with your position (as a seminary student).”

The clerk was instructed to bring this matter to his attention.

ARTICLE 9 – According to custom, all the brothers testify that they are able to celebrate the Lord’s Supper in a fraternal fashion.

The meeting was closed by Brother Vork.

G. Wakker, clerk

Consistory Meeting of September 5, 1864

Absent: de Bruin, Naber, and Kieft.

ARTICLE 1 – The meeting was opened with prayer by Brother Keppel.

ARTICLE 2 – The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

ARTICLE 3 – The committee for a review of the books reports that everything was found to be in good order, and the book for church funds contains the sum of \$216.35. Furthermore, the book of the deacons includes the sum of \$78.77. This report was signed by J. Labots and T. Keppel, committee.

ARTICLE 4 – There was a discussion about the mission fund, and it was decided that, just as last year, pledges will be brought to the homes for signatures, indicating what members will be able to give this year. The clerk was requested to read this decision next Sunday in church. The reason why these monies are needed is for the support of Rev. Karsten.