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Western Theological Seminary

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Abstract

Organized in the fall of 1847 and began holding services in an “upper room” over a store on what is now Plankinton Avenue. The first church building was erected in 1849, and this log structure was located on Tenth Street near Galena. The group was incorporated as the Dutch Reformed Church of Milwaukee in 1851. A new sanctuary was constructed on the northwest side of Milwaukee and dedicated in 1949.

Pastors that served the church included Reverend Mr. H. G. Klyn, Siene Bolks in 1855, John Vander Molen in 1861, Adrian Zwemer in 1870, R. Duiker in 1874, William Moerdyk in 1878, who served two ministries with John Broek’s ten-year pastorate in between, Henry Veldman in 1901, Henry Bruins in 1907, Henry Ter Keurst in 1918, Winfield Burrgraaff in 1928, Richard Oudersluys in 1932, Maurice Marcus in the 1940s. The collection of the First Reformed Church consists primarily of historical material from the early days to 1975, including booklets from the 75th, 90th, and 100th anniversaries. It also includes lists of marriage, 1894-1895, membership from 1851 to 1939, and baptism records from 1869-1883.

Accession No: W99-1249
Provenance: First Reformed Church of Milwaukee
Donor: First Reformed Church of Milwaukee
Processed by: Leon Witteveen, July 2002

History

The First Reformed Church of Milwaukee was organized in the fall of 1847 and began holding services in an “upper room” over a store on what is now Plankinton Avenue. The first church building was erected in 1849, and this log structure was located on Tenth Street near Galena.

In August 1850, the Reverend Mr. H. G. Klyn was called to be the first pastor. The group was incorporated as the Dutch Reformed Church of Milwaukee in 1851, and it was not until 1904 that the name “First Reformed Church” was adopted. Subsequent pastors included Siene Bolks in 1855, John Vander Molen in 1861, Adrian Zwemer in 1870, R. Duiker in 1874, and William Moerdyk in 1878, who served two ministries with John Broek’s ten-year pastorate in between.

The year 1893 saw the beginning of the Christian Endeavor Society and the Women’s Missionary Society. In 1904, a new church building was dedicated, and the change to the English language was in progress. During the pastorate of Henry Veldman, which began in 1901, a new building was constructed and dedicated in 1904. Henry Bruins became pastor in 1907 and, in 1915, women were given the right to vote at congregational meetings. Henry Ter Keurst became the next pastor in 1918, and a new pipe organ was installed and dedicated in 1925. Other pastors included Winfield Burrgraaff in 1928 and Richard Oudersluys in 1932, both of whom subsequently became professors at Western Seminary. It was during the pastorate of Maurice Marcus in the 1940s that it became apparent that a move would be necessary and a new sanctuary was constructed on the northwest side of Milwaukee and dedicated in 1949.
Scope and Content

The collection of the First Reformed Church consists primarily of historical material from the early days to 1975, including booklets from the 75th, 90th, and 100th anniversaries. It also includes lists of marriage, 1894-1895, membership from 1851 to 1939, and baptism records from 1869-1883.

Container List

Box 1

Articles, Church Herald
   New Sanctuary, 1950
   125th Anniversary, 1972
Baptism Records, 1869-1883
Booklets
   75th Anniversary, 1922
   90th Anniversary, 1937
   98th Anniversary, 1945
   100th Anniversary, 1947
   Architecture and Symbolism of the Sanctuary, 1950
Copy of Letter from G. DeJonge regarding early history, 1899
County Census Records, 1850, 1860, 1870
Marriage Records, 1894-1895
Membership Lists, 1851-1855, 1868-1870, 1872-1900
Membership Records, 1856-1939 (2 folders)

Box 2

Microfilms (2 reels)
   Minutes, 1849-1929
   Financial Records, 1851-1873
   Membership Records, 1856-1939
   75th Anniversary Program and Booklet, 1922
   Directory, 1904
   Notes of Pastor, n. d.
Newsletter, “Tellit,” 1933, 1936
Paper, “Membership Loss and/or Inactivity of Children of the First Reformed Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin,” Arlan Ten Clay, 1975