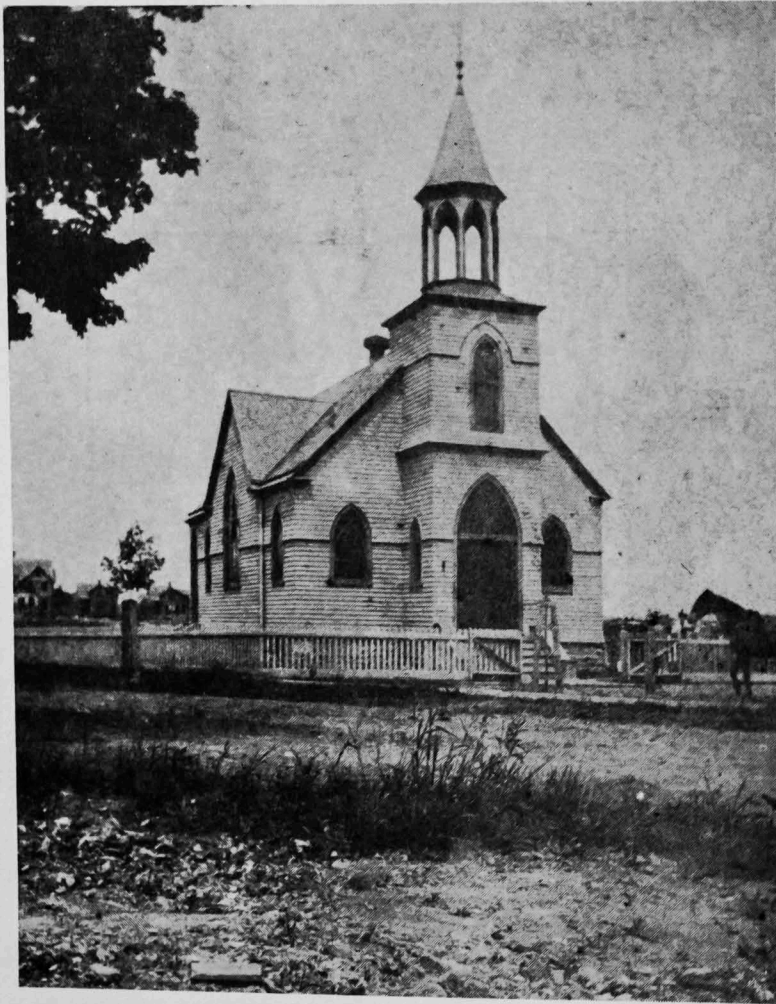


**BRIGHTON REFORMED
CHURCH**

First 100 Years



 BRIGHTON REFORMED CHURCH 
805 BLOSSOM ROAD ROCHESTER NY 14610



THE CHAPEL

Built in 1892, at a cost of \$3300. This picture, the only one known to be in existence and given us by Mrs. Marion (Ubbink) Duffy, has never been published before this time.

BRIGHTON REFORMED CHURCH

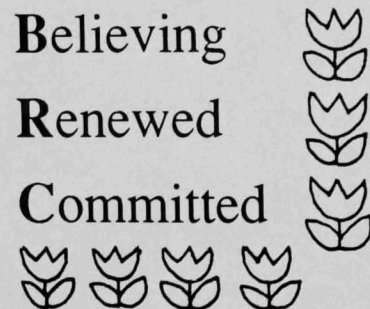
First 100 Years

**BELIEVING
RENEWED
COMMITTED**

We celebrate the Word!

1991

The first 75 years are a reprint of the Brighton Reformed Church 75-Year Anniversary Booklet, written by the Rev. Gordon H. Curtis. Information for 1967 to the present has been contributed by various Brighton Reformed Church members, including the Rev. Russell F. Pater.



A *quality* publication from
Heart of the Lakes Publishing
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Epilogue

The church is one of the most ordinary and obvious of institutions. Even if people rarely attend it or are doubtful about the validity of the faith it professes, the old church with its spire against the sky is likely to be as familiar and its activities as calculable as any of the other institutions we associate with our childhood years.

Yet immediately it must be said that there is a strangeness about the church for it stands in the midst of the everyday world, making unusual claims for itself and displaying a remarkable quality of survival. Never before has the church come under so heavy a barrage of criticism as it faces today. While the intensity of its critics may have increased, much of the content of their criticism is the same now as it was 100 years ago. For example, the charge of irrelevancy today could surely have been levelled in the early days of the Industrial Revolution. Indeed, men have "hardened their hearts" since the dawn of history to the revelation of God either through His prophets or through Jesus Christ.

What is truly strange about the church is that power within itself which appears to bring renewal in each age. No nation has been able to find, within the circumference of its own self, the power of self-renewal. The mighty empires of centuries ago decayed and fell. The church, with all its faults, has sought through self-examination, re-appraisal and re-dedication, to minister to its society, dynamically changing in each generation.

As the Brighton Church looks forward, having first looked at our past, there must be an awareness of the changing society and a sensitivity as to how to communicate to this changing society. There are typical moods of which we must be aware; some new, some old.

The first obvious mood is one that seeks consensus. From the teen-ager who cannot decide what to wear until first checking with his friends to the parents who asks "how much time should Tommie spend on his homework?", this mood seeks a guide to conduct by counting heads. The menace in this tendency to "average out" is that more and more the normal descends to lower and lower levels. What we used to call "rugged individual-



BRIGHTON'S FIFTY YEAR MEMBERS

Nearly Fifteen Hundred Years of Association

Front Row, left to right: Alice Dibble Zonneville, Jeannie Tierson Minck, Elizabeth Jennejohn Ross, Isaac Van Meenen, Maria Heyboer Van Meenen, Elizabeth Bodine Lash, Jacoba Van Riezen Keymel, Elizabeth Herman Buckley. Middle Row: Mamie Zonneville Smith, Nellie Tierson Menne, Jennie Van Der Brooke DeHollander, Anna Anderson Baart, Isacc VanBortel, Maria Merson DeKoker, Mary Bodine DeWitte, Nettie Bodine Brandt. Back row: Peter Wattiez, Cornelius Baart, Helen Hartsen Trost, Beatrice Bronson Baart, Sarah Cambier, Marie Vande Putt Blakley, Cora DeCook Vanderlinde, Helen Bigg DeHollander, Peter DeBrine.

ism" is now associated only with those who are "way out" and who are not usually identified with the church.

Another mood is one of the retreat from idealism that appears in segments of our society. There is a turn from crusading to a search for security. A young man is more interested in retirement features of a prospective job than he is in the development of his potential in the job. The church had recoiled from the social gospel of the late 19th century, finding it a hard competitive world to speak to. There was far more security within Zion's walls. A tension exists today between those who cherish a view of the church as a compact, exclusive people and those who cherish the vision of functional responsiveness to the needs of the world.

Our forefathers were men of rock-ribbed faith and strong dedication. They persevered over the years in building this church, overcoming times of depression and prosperity, war and peace. They built with painstaking care and they maintained a diligence over the purity of the faith. We must do no less. As we go forward toward our centennial, we shall succeed gloriously if we are found faithful as they were faithful.

We are a part of a continuous stream. We affirm, as our confession of faith, the articles of the Apostles' Creed, the ground of the church in every age. We believe that God is Lord alone, free to act wherever and whenever He chooses. He is not bound by our traditions, cherish them though we may. This is the Reformation principle of the sovereignty of God.

The Reformed faith which we confess is Christ-centered. We start with Christ; our goal is Christ. We can permit nothing to come between us and His great power. We believe God is in Christ reconciling us to Himself.

The Reformed faith which we confess is rooted in the activity of the Word and Spirit in human relationships. As Dr. Livingstone, the father of our Reformed Church in America said, "Never separate the Word and the Spirit of the Lord." To do so leads to wild excess of enthusiasm on the one hand or the hide-bound legalism on the other hand. The Bible is the living Word of God, made alive for us by the Holy Spirit. It is fresh every morning. In this freshness the Brighton Church must continue to move confidently into the future.

Upon the foundations built by our fathers and grandfathers we shall continue, by the grace of Almighty God, to strengthen the fellowship of committed Christians that it may invade and defeat the evil in the world and construct and preserve the good in the world.

The voice of an American poet cries out in anger and frustration against an America of "unspeakable loneliness", against a "death of the heart" which has replaced the "miracle of love". Of this love he wrote:

It is a mighty heritage, it is the human
heritage, and it is all there is to trust.
And I learned this through descending, as
it were, into the eyes of my father and
mother. I wondered, when I was little, how
they bore it — for I knew that they had much
to bear. It had not yet occurred to me that
I also would have much to bear; but they knew
it, and the unimaginable rigors of their
journey helped them to prepare me for mine.
This is why one must say Yes to life and em-
brace it wherever it is found — and it is found
in terrible places; nevertheless, there it is;
and if the father can say, "Yes, Lord", the child
can learn that most difficult of words, AMEN.

For nothing is fixed, forever and forever and
forever, it is not fixed; the earth is always
shifting,

the light is always changing,
the sea does not cease to grind down the rock.

Generations do not cease to be born, and we are
responsible to them because we are the only witnesses
they have.

The sea rises,
the light fails,
lovers cling to each other,
and children cling to us.

The moment we break faith with one another,
the sea engulfs us and the light goes out.*

That the light may never go out, the light of the "miracle of love", let us carry on in the "faith of our fathers."

* Reprinted from "Nothing Personal" by Richard Avedon and James Baldwin.
By permission of the publishers.

CHAPTER 8

NEW BEGINNINGS

The early days of Rev. Curtis' ministry saw a new innovation in the church's outreach and education. The Browncroft Cooperative Day Nursery was formed using BRC's educational facilities. Each Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the church building was enlivened by 18-20 four-year-olds and their teachers. The nursery occupied three rooms, and the toys were stored each day so that these rooms could continue to be used by church groups. Though this school had no organic unity with our church, we mutually enjoyed a wonderful relationship. Mrs. Elinore DeVuyst was our representative on their board of directors.

At the September, 1963, Consistory Meeting, Jacob DeVuyst reported on a Classis meeting held at the Interlaken Reformed Church. His report included comments on the symbols and beauty of their church windows and suggested that something similar could be done with the plain windows at Brighton. Consistory minutes for February 11, 1964, report that Frank Elliott, chairman of the worship committee, submitted an estimate for changing 7 windows to include symbols, at a cost of approximately \$3600.

Mr. Elliott and the committee met with Mr. O'Hara of the Pike Stained Glass Studio to review choices of designs and symbols. Excitement reigned at the May meeting when he presented the final choices for the 7 windows which would include theological and Biblical concepts. Consistory approved: The Burning Bush, The Sacrificial Altar, and The Tablets from the Old Testament; The Star of Bethlehem, The Lamb of God, The Book, and The Dove, from the New Testament. Money donated in memory of Abram DeKoker was to be used toward the cost of these new windows.

In March, 1966, Rev. Curtis asked Consistory for approval to purchase a set of 25 handbells, with the cost to come out of memorial funds as approved by the finance committee. The handbells would be played by the young people of the church. After much discussion, Consistory voted in May to purchase 25 new handbells. The newly formed bell choir performed for the congregation during 1967.

1967 marked the 75th Anniversary celebration, a wonderful time for BRC and its members. A church history, written by Rev. Curtis, was published and was greatly appreciated. One memorable and joyful event was a church picnic, the first in many years.

In 1968, a new ministry was developed for shut-ins. The worship services were recorded and a library of tapes maintained for members and friends unable to attend worship services.

Community relations were enhanced by Rev. Curtis' participation in many special events. Among these were his participation in the Genesee Ecumenical Ministries, slide lectures at Nazareth College, a presentation at the Gleason Works Retirement Banquet, and numerous meetings with members of the Catholic church and with the Eastside Community Center. Denominational responsibilities consisted of long-term service as Stated Clerk of the Rochester Classis and as moderator of vacant churches several times through the years.

In 1973, Rev. Curtis was granted a leave of absence and a financial allotment to defray expenses to further his interest and study dealing with the process and problems of aging, and the church's ministry to the aging. As a result of his work and of his report entitled "The Church's Ministry to the Aging," a 6-week seminar was held on the process of aging and its attendant problems. The aim was to provide understanding for middle-aged persons whose aging parents were their responsibility. Another 5-week seminar on health and dying from both the physical and spiritual point of view was offered. Rev. Curtis was well recognized in the community as someone knowledgeable on this subject, and was called upon by church and civic groups to speak to them and provide information.

CHAPTER 9

THE GREAT FLOOD OF 1972

The rains began on Wednesday, June 21, 1972, in Steuben and Allegany Counties where the Canisteo and Cohocton Rivers normally flow smoothly and quietly. It was an ordinary rain, one that everyone expected to cease soon. Instead the downpour continued until 5 inches of rain forced creeks and swollen rivers over their banks until a state of emergency was declared. Residents in Hornell and Canisteo were being evacuated, but the Hornell mayor advised that there was no real danger to life if people stayed home. Communications began to falter as telephone poles and lines fell. Route 15, a Steuben County highway—a lifeline—was closed and Bath students were sent home from School.

People went to bed Wednesday night in Corning, Elmira, Athens, Towanda, and Lawrenceville with rain drumming on their roofs. As the rains continued Thursday, the Cohocton River had risen 27 feet and the Canisteo River was already 7.7 feet over the flood stage at Addison.

By Friday, Corning's northside was obliterated by rushing water that poured over a 23-foot dike and surged down city streets with speeds up to 35 miles an hour. Devastation was everywhere, debris littered streets, and many homes had been swept from their foundations by the roaring current.

And there was MUD. Every place—MUD!

By Saturday, workers began inspecting houses and many were declared unsafe. Volunteers began arriving from all areas and food began to arrive in massive quantities.

It was about this time that BRC's pastor, Rev. Gordon Curtis, visited the area and the following Sunday reported to the congregation the need for help in the Corning area. He requested that we, as a church, join with many others who were sending people to help in the clean-up.

The response at BRC was immediate, with a group of people ready to drive at once to Corning to see what needed to be done. Two homes

became our responsibility, one belonging to a widow, Mrs. Catherine Ward, at 105 Pritchard Street; the other to her neighbor, Mr. Harold Kinner, at 107 Pritchard Street.

Both houses had been flooded almost to the ceiling of the first floor. Electrical ceiling fixtures were filled with water, hollow doors were full of water, furnaces in the basement were waterlogged, and all electrical motors in washing machines, dryers, refrigerators, mixers, etc., were no longer workable. Hardwood floors had buckled, and there was mud in every drawer, on every shelf, on silverware, dishes, inside the refrigerators, on everything. Doors no longer closed—inside and outside doors were warped beyond repair. It was a scene of devastation that greeted the volunteers from BRC.

For 14 weeks, three and four carloads of volunteers packed lunches and thermos jugs and left Rochester about 6 a.m. every Saturday morning for a 2-hour drive to Corning where they worked for many hours, usually leaving about 4:30 or 5 p.m. for the trip home. Many women also went separately during the week to assist by washing mud-covered dishes, cleaning out kitchen drawers, scraping inside refrigerators, and performing numerous other needed tasks.

Many people made the trip every single week, and others went whenever they could. There were many who could not go at all, but they were the people who contributed money which the workers used for purchasing paint, nails, lumber, and other items needed in the restoration work.

The conclusion of this restoration program was realized when Mrs. Ward could begin using her kitchen again, could go to her basement to do her laundry, and could sit peacefully in her living room; when Mr. Kinner could again sleep in his own bedroom, and live in his home which had originally been condemned because of caved-in basement walls. The many dedicated workers from BRC could say, "we helped bring this about." In Mr. Kinner's words, "We owe so much to you folks who did so much for us."

To celebrate the end of this unselfish donation of time, labor, and financial assistance by the BRC family, Mrs. Ward and Mr. Kinner from Corning were invited to be our weekend guests. They came up on a Saturday, and enjoyed a pot-luck dinner with all the workers, their spouses, and Pastor Curtis. Everyone had a great time together. Our guests stayed overnight, attended the worship service with us the following day, and were recognized at the service from the pulpit.

BRC can justly be proud that we answered a call for help. BRC became part of a great effort to help our brothers and sisters who had a need, and we enjoyed doing it. Following Mr. Kinner's death, the church received a generous gift as stipulated in his will.

CHAPTER 10

OUTREACH

On May 13, 1975, the Rev. Russell F. Pater accepted "a clear summons from God through a persistent Pulpit Committee from Brighton Reformed Church" and was installed as the ninth minister in the church's history on September 14, 1975. At the time he received the call from BRC, he was preaching a series of sermons on "God's Calls in Scripture" at his church, the First Reformed Church of Wynantskill, NY.

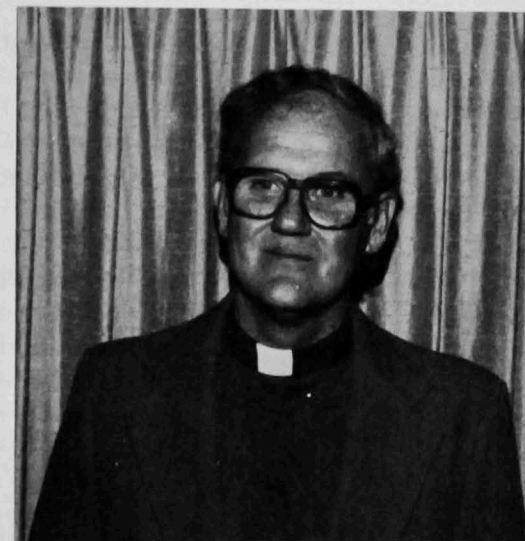
To maintain a continuity of pastoral services during the summer of 1975, Mr. Steven Wing, a Western Theological Seminary student, was employed as an intern pastor. As the parsonage had been sold during Rev. Curtis' ministry, Consistory purchased a newly built house located at 7 Tree Brook Drive, Penfield, for the pastor's family. Contributions were made and bonds were sold, permitting the congregation to negotiate a 25-year, \$25,000 mortgage. The final cost of the house was \$57,000. An option to purchase the house at a future date was written into the minister's formal Call.

DYNAMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS OF MINISTRY

Rev. Pater described his rewarding and challenging ministry as "a transitional pastorate in a fringe-city congregation." The immediate geographical radius around the church in 1975 indicated a declining population. Indeed, Rochester census figures revealed a 10% drop in urban population in the decade of the '70s and approximately another 10% in the '80s. Fewer and fewer oldline "Dutch" families continued to live in the church's immediate area, and there was an obvious "graying" of the church membership. These factors had a strong impact on Sunday School enrollment.

A major goal of ministry was visitation of a flock living in a widely dispersed area, plus the monthly shepherding of twenty-five to thirty senior members, either housebound or residing in nursing homes.

As of 1990, approximately 120 church members had entered the church "triumphant" during Rev. Pater's tenure. During the past 15 years, a significant demographic change in church membership took place. While members of the Dutch heritage continued to be dominant,



Rev. Russell F. Pater

regular worshippers were from many ethnic backgrounds, including Black, Hispanic, and Taiwanese.

As higher education became more the norm than the exception, many young people who were reared in our church resided in other parts of our vast country. The mobility in society affected church membership. Since WW II, family size decreased, with today's family more likely to have two children, rather than four or five. In addition, the high incidence of divorce nationwide has not left BRC unscathed.

Nevertheless, within the past few years, BRC has attracted a growing number of active, committed young adults. As a result, attendance in our nursery is increasing as the Church moves into the '90s.

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Lord continued to open new and challenging opportunities for mission. A significant segment of post-high-school graduates were organized into a College and Careers group in 1975. For approximately eight years, this fellowship provided nurture and occasions for service for many young adults. To combat the pain and loneliness of a number of recently divorced members, the minister and the Reverend Anne Guild-Donovan, Chaplain at the Rochester Psychiatric Center, were

led to develop group therapy and fellowship activities for this hurting segment of both church and community. In other innovative ways the church attempted to meet the varying needs of its membership. One such organization was a popular church Camper's Fellowship begun in 1976, but disbanded because of a national gasoline crisis.

Weekly youth meetings and softball and basketball teams have provided fellowship for our teenagers and young adults.

Volunteer transportation for the area elderly through the Winton Senior Services, and the weekly fellowship provided by the Blossom Senior Citizens continue, after twenty years, to fulfill seniors' needs.

WINTON SENIOR SERVICES

Winton Senior Services is an ecumenical effort supported by three area churches, namely Brighton Reformed, St. John the Evangelist, and St. James. The goal of the organization is to help senior citizens stay in their homes as long as possible.

In the beginning, this was the dream of the Rev. Gordon Curtis, who worked closely with Father John Mulligan and Sister Marlene Vigna. Winton Senior Services was started in April, 1974, and the first Advisory Board consisted of June Adams, Roy Hand, and Barbara Goodrich, among others from different churches. Now, other people wanting to start similar services consult this group for advice.

Volunteers range in age from retired persons down to youth who, are utilized for spring and fall clean-up. The majority of calls are for transportation.

Rev. Pater is chairman of the 1990-91 Advisory Board. Other long-time volunteers from Brighton Reformed Church are Gladys VanDussen (helps with the Hot Line), Nellie Brouwer, Elinore DeVuyst, Hanna Briner, and Barbara Goodrich. The past efforts of Roy Hand, Alex Anderson, and Jeroon Krocke are gratefully noted. There is always a need for more volunteers to help this ministry to the ever-growing segment of our population.

THE BLOSSOM SENIORS

In the fall of 1970, a group of seniors, members of Brighton Reformed Church, approached the Rev. Gordon Curtis to see if a group could be formed to meet the needs of older people.

It was decided to move forward on this idea, and an organization was formed. Mr. Isaac Hubregsen was appointed as president, bylaws

were formed, and the group was off and running. "Although age has slowed us down, we are still going strong after the passing of an entire generation," notes Frank Ernisse, retired group president.

It was decided to have a "brown bag" lunch and a weekly fee of \$.25 to help defray expenses, such as coffee furnished by the club. An annual membership fee of \$1.00 was charged to each new member, upon attendance at three meetings.

Mrs. Barbara Goodrich and Mrs. June Adams were to serve as a liaison between the church and the club which would be called the Blossom Seniors. Mrs. Elinore DeVuyst now serves as liaison.

Mr. Clarence King was the unofficial, but "official," coffee maker. He purchased the coffee at a special price (local stores did that in those days) and he made and served the coffee each week. Mae Hubregsen was Recording Secretary, a job which Dorothy Collins took over when Mae was taken ill. They kept records of attendance and membership, as well as other duties. The membership grew rapidly and we averaged eighty to ninety people at each meeting. Mr. Mervin Baker was our official greeter.

In the early days, as today, the Seniors were a mixed religious group as well as ethnically diversified. Everyone was welcome . . . just bring a lunch, a smile, and a quarter!

Mr. Cliff Zecher was elected President and served well for two years, and it was during his term of office that we grew rapidly. Then Mr. Zecher, due to ill health, could not serve further, so Mr. Arthur Brouwer was elected as president. Mr. Brouwer, a good leader, was sturdy and strong and stood for law and order. He led us on trips to parks and picnics, and when he was called home, he left large shoes to be filled. Mr. Frank Ernisse, who was Vice President, succeeded him and led our group for eleven-and-a-half years.

In the years to follow, the Seniors prospered and shared their material gains with BRC. The seniors purchased and had storm windows installed, purchased ten new tables, coffee urns and carafes, and provided the money for new drapes at the lodge windows.

When the church started F.L.I.P. (Fellowship Lodge Improvement Program), the Blossom Seniors decided to do their bit and help. It was decided to raise one thousand dollars toward this project, and Ruth Johnville said that if the Blossom Seniors raised one thousand dollars, she would match it. The Seniors raised a total of \$1,300 and Mrs. Johnville gave us her check for \$1,300. At a Sunday service, the Seniors

presented Mr. Jacob DeVuyst, chairman of F.L.I.P., a check for \$2,600.

Mr. Edward Plant, assisted by Mr. William Traugatt and Mr. Frank Ernisse, using some paneling left to the church, paneled the back room used as a cloak room. The Seniors have also painted the windows.

Some of these donations were due to an "angel" in their midst who wanted no recognition. After two years of silence, the promise was broken to the Blossom Seniors' "angel," and Mrs. Beh was asked to rise and be thanked for her contributions to the group. Over a period of three years, Mrs. Beh donated several thousand dollars.

Following Mr. Ernisse as President were Mrs. Ethel Shea (who served for two years) and the current president, Mr. Raymond Hebing.

Some of the Seniors' activities over the years have been trips to various parks, the Eastman House, and their annual banquet. They've worked for the Red Cross, visited various nursing homes, knit lap robes and mittens by the dozen.

A list of charter members from 1970 includes:

Ashley, Catherine	Kennedy, Ethel	Schell, Clarabell
Baker, Ethel	King, Clarence	Smith, Jennie
Baker, Mervin	King, Vera	Stadtmiller, Martha
Brownell, Vera	La Gasse, Mary	Stickney, Ethel
Brouwer, Arthur	Lash, Jane	Tait, Frances
Collins, Dorothy	Melens, Elizabeth	Traugatt, William
De Roo, Martha	Melens, Julius	Trost, Carl
Eastwood, Edith	Nast, David	Trost, Helen
Heberle, Margaret	Nast, Helen	Van de Wall, Ethel
Henchen, Lillian	Opdewoerd, Josephine	Zecher, Cliff
Henderson, Susie	Owens, Marjorie	Zecher, Martha
Hess, Jean	Ramsay, Alice	Zonneville, Minnie
Hubregsen, Isaac	Ramsay, James	Zonneville, Alice
Hubregsen, Mae	Rich, Clarence	Adams, June (Liaison)
Johnville, Ruth	Rich, Norma	Goodrich, Barbara

(Liaison)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Increasingly, the facilities of Brighton Reformed Church have been stretched to capacity, serving the community virtually every night of the week. SCAC (Senior Citizens' Action Council), Blossom Seniors,

Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Alcoholic Leadership Training Sessions, CODA (Co-Dependency Anonymous), the Arthritis Foundation's Club, Girl Scouts, The Golden Links Folk Music Group, the Taiwanese Bible Group and the Taiwanese Cultural Association, plus neighborhood associations are among the many greater community organizations utilizing our plant.

Since its establishment nearly forty years ago, The Lewis M. Fowler Conference Center has been close to BRC's heart. Our people have always been active in the support of this Synod center. Many of the young people who camped there as youth now are active as workers in the Camp Fowler Booster Association. "Saints" with the surnames of DeRoo, Hand, Henchen and Henderson, have been replaced with surnames such as Abbey, Ligtenberg and Miller. Within the Rochester Classis and Albany Synod, we continue to see our laypersons as active participants.

In the City of Rochester, BRC's people can be seen in mission. Many of our loyal folk have responded . . . from serving soup to the hungry, to working at our own surplus food center. Involvement in Jail Ministries, the Rochester Psychiatric Center, and Church Women United are also important priorities for some of our people.

As a church we have usually responded generously and met the established goals of synodical and denominational drives. In 1984, for example, we raised over \$10,000 for a three-year RCA Growth Fund.

ECUMENICAL STRIDES

Our sister and neighboring Christian Reformed Church suffered a disastrous fire in 1982. Consistory immediately granted permission for them to use our facilities for office space and meeting accommodations. This proved to be a most amiable arrangement and did much to bring our two heretofore separated church communities together in a bond of Christian love.

While there has been a long-standing tradition of those churches in the city who are a part of the Reformed Church in America to unite for special services such as on Thanksgiving Eve, it has not been until more recently that we have celebrated Reformation Sunday with all those churches within the Reformation Family of Churches. And for more than a decade now, BRC has annually celebrated the crucifixion of our Savior at a Good Friday service with the members of St. John the Evangelist Church, a neighboring Roman Catholic Church.

CHAPTER 11

CHURCH HOME & FAMILY

PHYSICAL RENOVATION AND IMPROVEMENTS

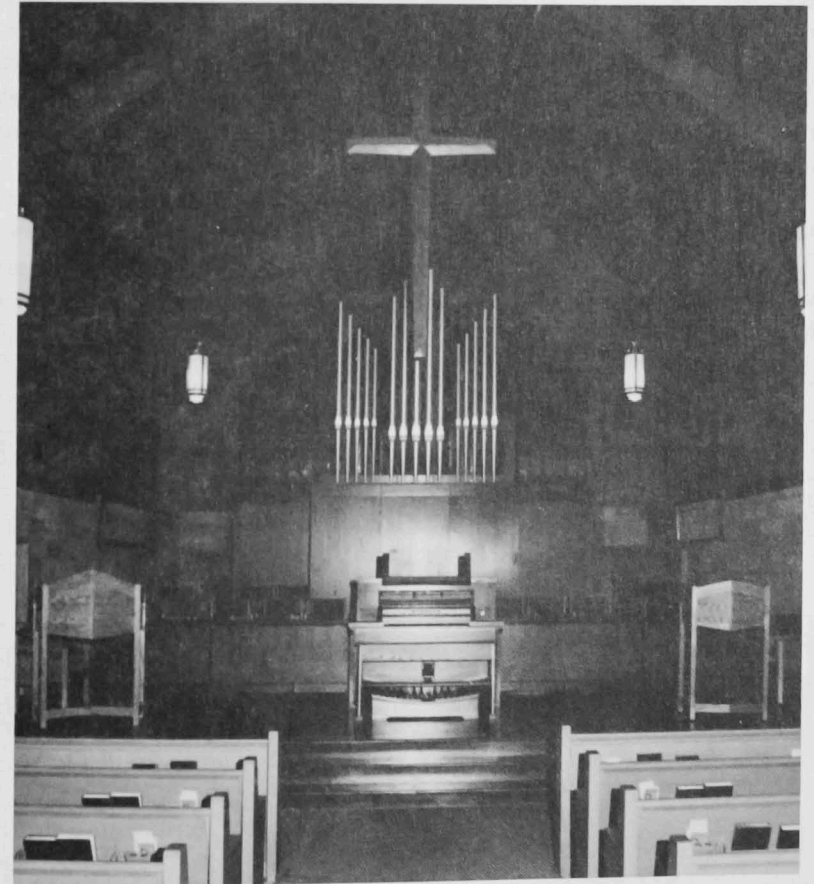
A church, similar to a house, is often in need of repair. Fortunately, our people are proud of their "church home" and have always been willing to lovingly care for it. By means of many volunteers in 1977-78, every room in the educational plant, hallways, corridors and stairwells, were painted. It was estimated that 75 hours of painting were donated. In addition, the women made new draperies for all the windows in the educational building.

In 1979, a large committee, representing a cross-section of the membership, was formed to study the necessary improvements required to modernize the thirty-one year old quonset hut, known as Fellowship Lodge. The F.L.I.P. (Fellowship Lodge Improvement Program) Committee, under the leadership of Jacob DeVuyst, supervised both a volunteer labor force and many sub-contractors in putting a new roof and facade on the building, installing a new heating unit, electrically updating the building, modernizing the ladies room, insulating the building, wallpapering the interior, providing new draperies, and erecting a separate storage shed. Thirty thousand dollars was pledged in a campaign chaired by Robert Ayyette. Without the tireless efforts of the dedicated volunteers, costs could easily have doubled.

Also, in 1979, the stained glass windows in the sanctuary were re-leaded, and in 1981, a new roof was put on the church building.

About the same time, the minister asked Consistory for the privilege of exercising the original option of his Call to purchase the parsonage located at 7 Tree Brook Drive. This caused considerable debate and analysis. In September, 1982, the congregation voted to grant this privilege. The parsonage was sold to the minister for \$70,000 on the basis of a land contract.

By far, the greatest and most successful financial program in recent years was a two-year fund drive during 1989-90 that realized over \$112,000 for the remodeling of the chancel area of the sanctuary



THE NEW ORGAN

and the installation of a Schlicker Unit Pipe (512 Pipes) Organ. This enterprise was directed by an Organ Action Committee, chaired by Robert Ayette.

The study for the new organ installation was actually begun in 1987, and plans were formulated for the transition, including carpet and pew removal, and the dismantling of the old organ. Church volunteers actually did much of the work. An architectural firm, Doran Associates, planned the renovation process. New pulpit furniture was designed and built by James Johnson of Grey Haven Studio. New choir chairs were purchased to enhance the new decor.

The renovation was completed in April, 1990, and the organ was installed in June, 1990. On October 14, 1990, during the worship service, a Remodeling Dedication Service was held, led by the Rev. Russell Pater, and an Organ Dedication Concert was given that afternoon by church organist, Tandy Reussner.

DEDICATED PERSONNEL

BRC is a family church. Considering its long-tenured employees, it is obvious they felt they were a part of our family. Mr. David Hughson served as Church Organist and Music Director from July, 1975, to June, 1986; Mr. Daniel Hegarty served as Church Custodian for twelve years, until it was necessary to retire for health reasons. Mrs. Esther Abbey, who began a shared part-time secretarial position on October 16, 1979, became the full-time secretary in the fall of 1980, and capably and lovingly continued in this capacity until her untimely and sudden death in November, 1990.

Proudly, several sons and a daughter of BRC have entered into full-time Christian service during the past decade and a half. These are the Rev. Pamela Pater-Ennis, in the RCA; the Rev. Lee Miller in the Evangelical-Free Church; and Mr. Edison Ziegler in the Lima Baptist Church. BRC has had the privilege of nurturing several seminary intern pastors; Okke Postma, in the summer of 1977; Paul Janssen in 1983-84; Philip Bakelaar in 1984-85; and Edison Ziegler in 1985-86.

CHAPTER 12

HEIGHTENED SENSE OF MISSION

In July, 1978, the pastor and several lay members of the church were instrumental, under the auspices of Rochester Classis, in beginning a Hispanic Ministry. While the work was slow and often frustrating, it gave our, then all white, congregation an appreciation for work with other cultures. This ministry suffered many setbacks, and after prayerful consideration, the congregation of Ecclesia Reformada Hispana was disbanded five years later. Since that time, BRC's congregation has been greatly enriched, for the Rev. Dr. Juan Carmona, the founding pastor of the Hispanic Church, and his family chose to unite with us.

Rev. Pater noted that the farthest thought from his mind when he accepted the Call to become the minister of Brighton Reformed Church was involvement in a Taiwanese Mission opportunity. The Lord moves in mysterious ways!

It is difficult to assess the results of this ministry, or its impact upon this congregation and Classis over nearly a decade. The story of Adoniram Judson might help. He was a New England pioneer missionary, representing the Baptist and Congregational denominations. Adoniram spent twenty-one months in prison and labored twenty-one years translating the Bible into the Burmese tongue. He lost his only child through disease. The Home Mission Board wrote him asking, "How are the prospects for growth?" Rev. Judson, with the vision of the cross held high, wrote back, "The outlook is bright as long as we have the vision of the Risen Christ and the gift of life." As we ponder the history of the Taiwanese Ministry in Brighton Reformed Church, the church is challenged to remember the outlook is bright as long as we have the vision of Christ and the gift of life.

In spite of many frustrations, new challenges and unexpected turns, a faithful Steering Committee has subscribed to that theology. Three volumes of correspondence and minutes reveal the intricacies of this adventuresome work.

On an experimental basis, in Spring 1981, Brighton Reformed Church loaned its facilities to the leaders of a large contingent of Taiwanese residing in greater Rochester, who were divided into a cultural-social organization known as The Taiwanese Association, and a Taiwanese Bible Fellowship Group. The Taiwanese Association began to meet on Sunday afternoons, from 2:00-5:00 p.m., and reserved a section of our church library for Taiwanese reading materials. Forty people made up the Taiwanese Bible Fellowship, meeting on alternate Fridays with a common meal, worship and a children's Bible Class taught by BRC's young adults.

A denominational executive of the Pacific Asian American Council, Dr. Moody Yap, convened a group of leaders from Taiwanese communities in Buffalo and Rochester, the Rochester Classis and the Synod of Albany, on October 5, 1981. BRC was represented at that session. The result was the one-year appointment of a Rochester Classis Task Force that, together with the Classis and Synod Church Planning and Development Committees, would explore organizing a joint Taiwanese Christian fellowship between groups in Buffalo and Rochester.

The first meeting of this task force of eleven people had the Rev. Russell Pater and Roland Woodhams representing BRC and Dr. Ken Hsu, the Rochester Taiwanese Bible Fellowship. Rev. Pater was appointed chairman, a position he has held to the present. A year later, David Fridline from BRC was appointed to the committee, because of his love for the Taiwanese people, gained during his U.S. military service in Taiwan. The fledgling Taiwanese community always insisted on paying rent for using the facilities. Classis and Brighton Reformed jointly provided new tri-lingual (Mandarin, Taiwanese and English) hymnbooks for the fellowship.

In the Spring of 1982, Dr. Chia Taw Huang, a dentist who had recently moved to Binghamton, but who was still supportive of the Rochester group, proposed we bring Rev. Stephen Pan to do graduate work at the Colgate Rochester Divinity School and to serve as a part-time minister with the Rochester-Buffalo area Taiwanese. Much correspondence flew to-and-fro over the Pacific. Officials of Classis and Synod met the following autumn to explore this proposition. A realistic contractual arrangement was formulated whereby Rev. Pan, an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, would be a three-quarter-time graduate student and devote one-quarter of his

schedule to developing a ministry for the Taiwanese in Binghamton, Rochester, and Buffalo.

Funding from the Particular Synod of Albany, Rochester Classis, Brighton Reformed Church and the Taiwanese communities was developed. Classis joined Rev. Pan and his family (wife and three children) petitioning Naturalization and Immigration for an H-1 classification (admitting him on the basis of specialized skills). Classis also helped obtain housing and furnishings in Fairport. The loan of a car provided essential transportation.

Now that a pastor was on the scene, Rochester Classis transformed the Task Force into an ongoing Steering Committee and made arrangements to install Rev. Pan as a Missionary Pastor to the Taiwanese and a staff person of Brighton Reformed Church in June, 1983. Rev. Pater was elected chairman, Dr. Ken Hsu was treasurer, and Roland Woodhams and David Fridline also were appointed to represent Brighton Reformed Church on the new Steering Committee.

Further investigation was made with Taiwanese leaders in Syracuse by our Taiwanese Steering Committee, who met with officers of a Taiwanese Club, and agreed to establish a monthly Bible Study group in the Syracuse Reformed Church under the leadership of Rev. Pan. In addition, Rev. Pan was traveling bi-monthly to Binghamton to lead worship and Bible Study in the home of his brother-in-law, Dr. Chia Taw Huang.

A retreat of sixty Taiwanese Christians from all over New York State took place at the Fowler Camp and Conference Center in Speculator, NY, in the fall of 1983, to explore the possibility of organizing a Taiwanese Reformed Church in Upper New York State, and place this church in the denominational plan of establishing new churches. Leaders were present from Binghamton, Ithaca, Buffalo, Syracuse, and Albany. Ultimately, the model that emerged was an ambitious three-point charge for Rev. Pan to minister to the Taiwanese of Binghamton and Syracuse as well as Rochester. The Steering Committee was meeting every other month to support Rev. Pan in his ministry. Rev. Craig Hoffman served as secretary of the committee.

Gradually, it was gratifying to see in the spring of 1984, four members of the Rochester Taiwanese community unite with Brighton Reformed Church. The local Taiwanese encouraged separate Taiwanese Bible Study for the adults, but a united worship with the

English congregation and the merging of the children in the English Sunday School. In December, Rev. Pan announced that he would resign as a graduate student in order to devote his full time to the ministry, even though he would only receive part-time financial funding. As the Binghamton and Syracuse communities were beyond the bounds of the judicatory of Rochester Classis, Montgomery Classis was requested to appoint representation on the Steering Committee. Their decision was to leave the entire ministry in the hands of Rochester Classis, but they promised continued financial support. At this time, another valuable member was added to the steering committee, Dr. San-Laung Chow.

By the Spring of 1984, it was reported that Binghamton had had 19 meetings with 15 adults and 14 children; Syracuse, meeting once a month, had 20 adults and 14 children; and Rochester had 30 adults and 25 children. At a combined Easter service in Syracuse, 100 Taiwanese were present. A second annual retreat was held at the Watson Homestead, with 57 present.

A major transition took place, unexpectedly between November, 1984, and the spring of 1985. Rev. Pan reported self-pressure to produce converts and requested the Steering Committee to declare him a self-supporting pastor. He wanted also to move to Binghamton, where he and his wife bought a business and now could support themselves. Further, the Binghamton Taiwanese community held great potential for growth. Rev. Pan reaffirmed to Classis he still had a strong call to serve as Taiwanese pastor, but on a voluntary basis. He would continue to travel to Rochester on alternate Friday nights, and to Syracuse once a month. Classis, with much debate, approved of Rev. Pan's decision. Classis agreed to compensate him for transportation and hospitalization.

The Taiwanese community in Binghamton continued to grow, and larger facilities had to be rented in the Vestal Presbyterian church. Rochester Classis directed that the Steering Committee be permitted to serve as a Board of Elders and administer communion twice a year and administer Baptism, as well as receive new members. Unfortunately, due to a regrettable family schism over leadership and policy, the Taiwanese ministry was greatly hindered for six months. With prayer and strong indigenous Taiwanese leadership, the crisis was overcome, and the Binghamton fellowship continues to thrive to this day.

Another chapter in this ministry was written in 1987. The Reformed Church learned of a World Council of Churches Scholarship graduate

student from Taiwan enrolled at Colgate Rochester Divinity School. Upon contact, Rev. Oliver Chow, a campus chaplain in Taipei, Taiwan, said he would like to do ministry in Rochester, knowing that Rev. Pan was anxious to be relieved of that responsibility. In addition, the Steering Committee explored with Genesee Area Campus Ministries and the Chaplain at the University of Rochester, the possibility of beginning a campus ministry with Asian students. After all plans were approved, it was learned that Rev. Chow was not eligible, because of scholarship technicalities, to continue his second year of graduate work and, subsequently, his study visa would be invalid. A frantic search for alternate opportunities proved frustrating and unsuccessful.

In 1988, the Steering Committee inaugurated correspondence with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, inquiring whether there might be a Taiwanese graduate candidate interested in becoming enrolled at Colgate Rochester Divinity School, and who would also consent to do part-time work with area Taiwanese under the supervision of Rochester Classis. At least three candidates responded, but only the Rev. Mannix Su came to Colgate Rochester, having passed the English proficiency test and having expressed interest in our ministry. Rev. Mannix Su, his wife, Christina, and daughter, Glyn, arrived in Rochester at the end of August, 1990. Rev. Su, a Chaplain at the MacKay Memorial Hospital in Taipei, Taiwan, has a fully paid one-year scholarship, granted by his home hospital employer. To continue his second and final year of graduate work for his Doctor of Ministry degree will require much financial support from the Steering Committee. Rev. Su asked Rev. Pater to be his field supervisor, and an eight-member lay committee of Taiwanese and church members will critique his field work (twelve hours per week). Rev. Pan has relinquished his responsibilities in Syracuse to concentrate his efforts in Binghamton and graciously, Rev. Su has taken up that mantle.

One exciting development remains to be highlighted. Rochester Classis' Church Planning Committee, Albany Synod delegates, and the Steering Committee met with Taiwanese leaders from Binghamton in October, 1990, to explore the possibility of developing an organized Taiwanese Family Church in Binghamton under the auspices of the RCA. This plan is in the process of development.

Brighton Reformed Church has doubtless been the recipient of many spiritual blessings of this ministry over the past ten years. Outstanding Taiwanese families have enriched our entire church

fellowship, some of whom have proved devoted leaders of our Consistory. A heightened awareness of this mission of Christ's Church now permeates our vision. What are the prospects? In Judson's words, "With the cross held high, the outlook is bright as long as we have the vision of Christ and the gift of life."

EPILOGUE

This historical Centennial publication has taken us from the late 19th century, when devout Dutch landscapers from the local area traveled by foot and carriage over muddy roads to a chapel whose cornerstone was laid on July 4, 1891. In sharp contrast is a modern period of varied cultures, with parishioners traveling some distance along three-lane arterials to a fringe-city church, endeavoring to serve the Lord in new and dynamic ministries.

The second century of BRC's service has new challenges, which our people confront with optimism and spiritual commitment. To blend together area and suburban parishioners . . . to find new evangelistic techniques to reach and nurture an area community of single parents and elderly persons . . . to knit together a congregation that includes Taiwanese, Puerto Rican as well as old-line Dutch surnames . . . these are the exciting opportunities for BRC during our next hundred years.

From a wooden frame chapel on the corners of Arbordale and Blossom Roads to a remodeled chancel in a beautiful sanctuary complete with the recent installation of a unit Schlicker pipe organ, BRC has experienced the guidance of God's Holy Spirit over the past century. With optimism and zeal, BRC trusts in the Lord's guiding hand for the future.

The final stanza of Ernest Shurtleff's poem, "Lead On, O King Eternal," provides us a prayer for the new century:

"Lead on, O King Eternal: We follow, not with fears;
For gladness breaks like morning where'er Thy face appears.
Thy cross is lifted o'er us; We journey in its light:
The crown awaits the conquest; Lead on, O King of might."