

HISTORY OF THE TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH

McCutchenville, Ohio

Early in the Spring of 1906, a committee, consisting of Hiram Johnson, Frank Badger, and George W. Lott, called upon Rev. J. B. Rust, in Tiffin, Ohio, in behalf of about one hundred persons in and around McCutchenville, who desired to be organized into a Reformed Church. Rev. J. H. Steele, D.D. was also asked for advice in connection with the movement. Necessary information and Christian counsel was given the brethren of the committee, and then the matter was allowed to rest for a number of weeks, in the hope that through the good offices of Huron Presbytery, which had jurisdiction in the premises, might stem the tide of disaffection in the Presbyterian Church of McCutchenville, and reconcile the opposing elements.

Repeated efforts in this direction having signally failed, papers were finally prepared in the form of a petition to the Tiffin Classis, Synod of Ohio, Reformed Church in the United States, for the organization of a Reformed congregation in McCutchenville, Ohio, and instruction was given how to proceed to effect a temporary organization. In due time, this petition, bearing over one hundred signatures, was presented to the Tiffin Classis, and the consideration of the same became the most important item of business in a call for a special meeting of the Classis, which was held in Grace Reformed Church on March 7, 1906. At this meeting Rev. Dr. Clement C. Martin, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Fostoria, was present as the moderator of the Presbyterian Church in McCutchenville. Dr. Martin spoke in behalf of the interests of the Presbyterian Church in McCutchenville, but acknowledged that in all probability the organization of a new organization, much as the loss to the Presbyterians was to be deplored, might prove to be the best way out of the difficulty. Having made this statement, Dr. Martin courteously acknowledged the kindness of Tiffin Classis in granting him the privilege to speak, and to have part, by special invitation, in the deliberations.

The Classis, unwilling to act unwisely, and anxious to follow the right course in dealing with the difficult and important problem before them, decided to hold an adjourned meeting in the First Reformed Church, on March 21, 1906, believing that this would grant more time for inquiry and preparation. In addition a request was made that as many of the petitioners as possible be present in person at the adjourned meeting of the Classis. At the adjourned meeting quite a number of the professors in the Heidelberg Theological Seminary, pastors, and elders, and other members of the Classis were present. Dr. D. Van Horne, Dr. A. S. Zerbe, Rev. F. W. Hoffman, Rev. F. E. Zechiel, Rev. C. W. Good, Rev. B. Howard Roth, Rev. J. B. Rust, Ph.D., Rev. A. C. Shuman, D.D., clerk of Classis, Rev. Dr. A. E. Baichley, and Rev. John I. Swander, D.D. Dr. Swander

delivered an address in support of the policy of conservatism, and rather discouraged the inclination of the Classis to grant the petition. On that day there were also present a great many members of the congregation soon to be organized, and after a thorough discussion of the questions at issue, a committee, with plenary power, consisting of Rev. Dr. David Van Horne, Elder Nelson L. Brewer, and Rev. Dr. John B. Rust, was appointed to effect the organization of a Reformed Church in McCutchenville, Ohio, in response to the petition as granted.

On March 28, 1906, Wednesday at 10 o'clock, the committee met the petitioners, who had come in large numbers to enter into the new fellowship, in Salem's Reformed Church, Seneca township, Seneca County, Ohio. After the reading of a chapter from the Holy Scriptures and a prayer, the object of the meeting was stated, and the names on the petition were called and canvassed. Frank F. Parkins, Mabel Freet, and William Sprau were received into the church by confirmation. Philip and Mrs. Hattie Basel, George W. and Mrs. Elizabeth Lott were received from Salem Reformed Church by certificate, and Roscoe and Lorena Lott from the Reformed Church at Sycamore. Mr. Adam Sprau was also received by certificate.

The following persons were received by renewal of profession:

James Frank Badger and his wife Mrs. *Sylvia*.
Harry H. Basel.
B.F. and Mrs. Floyd.
Leah and Fern Beis.
Mrs. Herma Weininger Bigger.
Mrs. Laura Bland.
Chester C. and Mrs. Blue.
Mrs. Jemima Bowman.
Mrs. Harriet and Gail Brown.
Mrs. Elizabeth Conaghan.
Mrs. Minnie Davidson.
William Dixon.
Mrs. Myrtel, Emma, and Jessie Dixon.
Mrs. Susan Fishel.
Lewis Fritz.
Mrs. Anna Fritz, and Clara Fritz.
C. A. and Mrs. Bertha Gary.
Frank and Mrs. Minnie Gier.
Mrs. Lottie *Grubel*.
Oscar and Mrs. Carrie Hahn.
Lawrence H. and Mrs. Minnie *Houpt*.
E. F. and Mrs. Mattie Jamison.
Hiram and Mrs. Amanda Johnson.
Mrs. Mary A. Long.
Cyril Wilson Miller and Mrs. Anna M. Miller.

Mrs. Elizabeth Ogg.
William H. and Laura E. Parkins.
James H. and Mrs. G. W. Pennington.
J. H. and Mrs. Estella A. Parkins.
Celesta and *Edward* Parkins.
William S. and Mrs. Mary Richards.
Mrs. Laura E. Pontius.
Mrs. Lulu Roberts.
Mrs. Della A. Shaffer.
Henry and Mrs. Fanny Spoon, and Harry Spoon.
Mrs. Nettie Sprau.
Edward and Mrs. Edith Swerlein, Edward Jr., Homer, Alvin, Jay,
Ethel, and Marietta Swerlein.
E. C. and Donna and *Saloma* Von Blon.
Charles *Weikert*, Mrs. Amy *Weikert*, his wife, Sarah *Weikert*, his
mother.
Mrs. Laura and Welsh Weininger.
John Yentzer and his wife Mrs. Winnie.
Hazel, Pearl, and Clifford Yentzer.
Mrs. Julia Turflinger.
August and Emma A. *Kissebeth*.

The following were received as adherents:

Leta Beis, J. W. and John Conaghan, Elmer and Mrs. Grover,
Lawrence and Mrs. Mary E. Swerlein, O. M. Roberts, Edward
Wagner.

This done, the character and claims of the Reformed Church were defined, and vows were then exacted from the petitioners in acknowledgment of the Christian faith, and in support of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States. When all, in obedience to the request, had risen to their feet, the members of the committee, Drs. Van Horne and J. B. Rust first, and the Elder Brewer, extended the right hand of fellowship to each and every person received by confirmation or reprofession of faith into the newly organized congregation. It was a most solemn and affecting scene, and one which those who witnessed it will never forget.

After dinner, in the Salem Church, the new organization adopted the name Trinity Reformed Church of McCutchenville, Ohio, and by the president of the committee, Dr. Van Horne, were declared a legally constituted Reformed congregation, attached to the Bascom Charge, Tiffin Classis, Ohio Synod.

The following consistory was elected and installed: Elders: Charles *Weikert* and George W. Lott. Deacons: J. Frank Badger, Oscar O. Hahn, and Edward Swerlein. The consistory also serves as the Board of

Trustees. The building committee chosen consisted of the following persons: Charles Weininger, Hiram Johnson, William H. Parkins, Edward Swerlein, and Frank Geir. Afterwards Mr. Weininger resigned from the committee, and Mr. Charles *Weikert* was elected in his stead.

During the service of organization, Elder N. L. Brewer offered a touching prayer, and near the close of the meeting gave some wholesome advise, from a lawyer's point of view, in further protection of the interests of the new church.

Steps were immediately taken to decide upon a suitable site for the new church edifice, after the congregation had voted unanimously in favour of the project, and to go on with the building, once satisfactory plans had been secured.

The congregation also decided to worship in the Tymochtee school house, three miles beyond McCutchenville, until the new church would be ready for occupancy. On May 6, 1906, Rev. A. C. Shuman preached the first sermon to the new congregation, from the text: Colossians 1:18, and on May 20, Rev. J. B. Rust preached the second sermon in the history of Trinity Reformed congregation, from the text: Luke 12:32, and the theme: The Mission of the Church.

On Sunday, August 26, 1906, the corner-stone was laid; but when the service was about to begin a heavy storm of wind and rain interrupted the exercises at the church, whose walls were partly completed, and caused great inconvenience and discomfort to the large assemblage of members and friends of the congregation. Finally the people responded to an invitation from the pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church to hold the service there. The ceremony of the laying of the corner-stone was conducted by Rev. J. B. Rust, acting pastor, assisted by Rev. Mr. Nolmes, pastor of the Methodist Church. Rev. A. C. Shuman and Dr. D. Van Horne preached the sermons in the Methodist Church.

The first communion service in the history of Trinity Reformed Church was held at Tymochtee, in the school house, on Sunday morning, February 24, 1907. Fifty-five persons communed. The roads were very rough, especially in Seneca county, and the weather was stormy so that services were not largely attended. The pastor spent two hours and one half in driving from Tiffin to Tymochtee. Florence Pauline, daughter of Frank J. Weininger and his wife Grace, born Gier, was *baptized*. The offering, amounting to \$2.51, was given to the pastor, whose services thus far had been rendered as a gift to the congregation, in order that he might contribute his part toward establishing the congregation upon a firm basis, in the new church in McCutchenville.

The new church was consecrated to the worship of Almighty God on Pentecost, May 19, 1907. Three services were held, and the edifice was

filled with enthusiastic friends of the new enterprise every time. Dinner and supper were served by the women of the church in the basement. Rev. C. W. Good, Rev. Dr. D. Van Horne, Rev. Chas. E. Miller, D. D., Rev. H. J. Christman, D.D., and Rev. Brackney, pastor of the M. E. Church, had part in the services. The music was excellent, Mr. W. H. Bogenwright of Tiffin conducting. Miss Grace C. Van Horne played the piano, and Mr. S. C. Schoepfli, a student at Heidelberg University, the violin. The day began with a debt of \$3500.00. Rev. Dr. C. E. Miller had been asked to raise as much money as possible toward the liquidation of that indebtedness. He proved equal to the task, as on other similar occasions in other churches. When the day closed \$2800.00 had been secured in subscriptions and in cash, leaving an unpaid balance of only \$700.00.

On the day of the corner-stone laying, August 26, 1906, the following articles were placed in the copper box in a receptacle in the stone: a copy of the Bible. A copy of the Heidelberg Catechism. Minutes of the Ohio Synod at Tiffin in October 1905. A copy of the Minutes of the Tiffin Classis at Payne, Ohio, May 1, 1905. A copy of the Reformed Church Messenger, September 28, 1905, and a copy of the Christian World, August 25, 1906, presented by Rev. A. C. Shuman. A copy of the Tiffin Daily Tribune, August 30, 1906. A copy of the Daily Chief, Upper Sandusky, Ohio, August 20, 1906. A copy of the Wyandot Union-Republican, August 24, 1906. A written History of the Trinity Congregation prepared by the acting pastor, Rev. J. B. Rust.

The pulpit bible and hymnal were presented to the congregation on the day of dedication by Mrs. Mary A. Long, commonly known as "Grandma Long".

The lot upon which the church stands was given to the congregation by Mr. Frank Gier and his wife, Minnie Bell, nee Straw.

The pulpit, communion table, and pulpit chairs were presented to the congregation by acting pastor of the church, Rev. J. B. Rust.

The clock was presented by Mr. A. F. Shaffer, a store-keeper in the village of McCutchenville.

Mrs. Mary Huffman, residing in the same village, donated one hundred and fifty loads of sand, taken from her sand-bank, toward the building of the foundation.

The men of the church donated, cut, and hauled all the native lumber used in the structure, and also hauled the bricks, purchased in Fremont, Ohio, from the cars of the McCutchenville station, to the building site.

The *corner-stone* was the gift of Mr. E. A. Hasenmeyer, representative of the Eckhart Monumental Company of Toledo in Tiffin. The building committee paid \$5.00 for the inscription.

The copper box was made by Mr. A. W. Gundlach, tinner of Tiffin.

Marquerite Spoon and Mary Badger by the sale of bouquets of flowers, purchased the collection plates, and presented them to the Church.

Mrs. Pontius also did self-sacrificing work for the church. She gathered gifts and subscriptions for the art windows in the church.

The aim of the first pastor, throughout his pastorate of about three years, was to cultivate a truly churchly spirit in the congregation, and to induce the young people to study the Heidelberg Catechism. To this end some general instruction was imparted to the congregation as a whole on Sunday after the regular service of worship, but the effort at that time to organize a catechetical class among the young people, to prepare them for confirmation, proved unsuccessful. The evangelistic method had been in use for so many years in the community that the catechetical method seemed new and strange. In response, therefore, to a popular demand throughout the congregation, a series of special services was opened on Sunday evening, February 9, 1908. But the weather became most inclement and hence the meetings were finally abandoned. An interesting feature of the meeting was the question-box. On Sunday morning, February 23, 1908, as a result of the effort, five adults and four children were received by baptism and thirteen persons by letter, re-profession of faith, and confirmation. A large concourse of people was present. One hundred and ten persons communed, including some Presbyterians and Methodists. The weather was favorable and the frozen roads were in fine condition, smooth as a board, so that Dr. Van Horne, who preached the sermon, and the pastor, as well as the people, were delighted in every way with the happy result of the ten days' mission.

On March 13, 1910, in the presence of a large concourse of people, assembled to celebrate the final liquidation of the debt incurred by the congregation to complete the building of the church, and to thank God for His great blessing. Near the close of the service three notes, amounting to about \$4000.00 which had been cancelled were burned openly in front of the pulpit. Rev. C. E. Ewing, the pastor, struck a match and lighted two of the notes, and Rev. J. B. Rust, the former pastor, taking fore from the lighted match, set fire to the third note. The notes were held by members of the consistory, J. Frank Badger, Philip Basel, and Hiram Johnson, the treasurer of the congregation.

The pastor, Rev. C. E. Ewing, had charge of the service. The history of the congregation was read by the former, the first pastor, who had been invited to be present on the occasion. Mr. George H. Weininger made a

few appropriate remarks in further description in detail of special work and incidents in connection with the building of the church – the labor, a material contributed by the men, and the husking bees of the women. After this a short address was delivered by the former pastor who based his remarks upon Romans 13:8, "Owe no man anything."

Miss Electa Long played a piano solo. After some happy remarks by the pastor, the service came to an end, and the event passed into history. The day was beautiful, the roads were quite good, and the congregation was most joyous in spirit.

The final reports read at this service by the various treasurers indicate that the actual valuation of the church, as it now stands, completed and free from debt, is not less than \$10,000.00.

Source: Tiffin-Seneca Public Library
Microfilm
Seneca County Church Records
Heidelberg College Archives

Italicized = corrections made to original document.

December 27, 1905
Newspaper Article
Source Unknown

All is not harmonious among the members of the L. A. S. of the Presbyterian church at McCutchenville. It is reported that thru the efforts of the ladies the sum of \$582.19 accumulated in the society treasury. Some days since the officials in the church came to the conclusion that circumstances justified a disbandment of the Aid society and that the funds on hand should be turned into the church treasury. On these points a considerable difference of opinion prevailed giving rise to two opposing factions in the ranks of the society. The treasurer it is alleged, endorsed a certificate of deposit for the amount in her care and turned it over to the church officials. Her resignation was tendered. Now comes the president of the society with a suit enjoining the Peoples' bank of this place where the money is on deposit, from honoring the certificate until the society elects a new treasurer and formally makes some disposition of the funds in question.