

OUR HERITAGE: THE HISTORY OF COMMUNITY REFORMED CHURCH



Charlevoix, Michigan

“I will build my church...” Matthew 16:18

The following information was compiled from several sources:

- ◆ *Interviews with several of our members*
- ◆ *A talk given by Jessie Cunningham in 1990*
- ◆ *A book of history in word and pictures prepared by Dale and Marilyn Boss*



South Barnard Presbyterian Church was organized in 1904 or 1905. Rev. Redpath from Petoskey and Rev. Johnston from Cadillac conducted the services. Services were held at the home of John Zylstra. The South Barnard Church building was built between 1905 and 1907, and Rev. William Wormser came as a regular stated supply minister. He was installed by Rev. Redpath and Rev. Johnston. The Committee of the Petoskey Presbytery met in the present South Barnard Church on October 29, 1907. The following people expressed their desire to become **charter members** of this church:

Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Zylstra
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Potter
Mr. and Mrs. John Boss
Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Potter
Mrs. John Potter
Mr. and Mrs. John Bottema
Mr. and Mrs. John Zylstra
Mrs. Ed Boss
Mrs. Frank Brock

- ◆ John Boss was elected as elder for a two year term, and Cornelius Zylstra was elected for a one year term.
- ◆ John Bottema was elected as deacon for a two year term, and John Zylstra was elected for a one year term.

The following were elected as trustees:

Frank Brock for four years
Lawrence Boss for three years
Hiram Potter for two years
Frank Boss for one year

The South Barnard Church was a **mission church**, which meant that it was supported by other churches. Rev. Wormser was first hired year by year as stated supply. From May 1, 1908 to April 30, 1909 he served this way. He was then hired at a salary of \$200.00 a year, together with the

The congregation determined that the horse stables on the church lot would belong to the 16 persons who signed the \$275.00 note, borrowed for the finishing of the church building and the building housing the horse stables, each one of these men having a stall in his own name. The stables were numbered one to eight, and divided as follows:

- | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| No. 1 | Lawrence Boss and Frank Brock |
| No. 2 | Jacob Klooster and Albert Klooster |
| No. 3 | Hiram Potter and John Potter |
| No. 4 | John Boss and William Wormser |
| No. 5 | Andrew and Miles Klooster |
| No. 6 | John Bottema and Ed Boss |
| No. 7 | Henry Potter and Peter Block |
| No. 8 | Cornelius Zylstra and John Zylstra |

It was also resolved that there would be no Sabbath School from the third Sunday in November until the first Sunday in May, due to poor road conditions, which made it very difficult to have any attendance.

Rev. Wormser left in 1914, and Rev. G. DeJonge was pastor in 1915 for a short time. The church became affiliated with the Reformed Church in America in October of 1915. Summer students for the summers of 1916, 1917 and 1918 were as follows: John Bruggers, Frank De Rost and James Stegema; with Dr. DeJonge coming in the winter time. Dr. DeJonge was here until 1929 off and on, at least to preach and teach catechism. Student Ed DeWitt came the summer of 1929. Peter DeYoung was a student in 1930. In 1932, Rev. Sysse came as a classical missionary. He stayed until the latter part of 1933. In 1933, Rev. Isaac Scherpenisse came as stated supply, and boarded with John E. and Iola Boss. He left in 1936.

During this time it was common for retired ministers to come up from Holland or Grand Rapids to preach the Sunday sermons and to teach catechism. Church members would take turns picking up the minister, who would arrive by train at the Phelps depot. The minister would stay with families of the congregation. There were times the church was without a minister, and an elder would read a sermon that had been mailed to him by Western Seminary in Holland. Sermons were preached in the Dutch language for many years. Eventually an English service was added in the afternoon, and most families went to both services. Minutes of consistory meetings were written in Dutch until 1936.

Catechism classes were taught in English to the children and young people on Saturday afternoons. Most that attended walked to and from

catechism. Young people of the church met with those of another church in Barnard for what was called “Christian Endeavor” on Sunday evenings. Prayer meetings were held on Wednesday evenings.

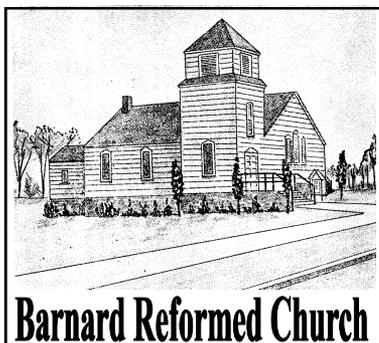
Some **early customs** connected with the church have been recalled by some of our long-time members:

- ◆ Music came from a pump organ played by Maggie Boss Smith (Francis Boss didn’t start playing until the early 30’s)
- ◆ Offering was placed in a bag attached to the end of a long stick which the deacons passed through the congregation.
- ◆ Peppermints were given to children as a reward for good behavior.
- ◆ Elders and deacons sat together in the front of the church.
- ◆ Men and boys sat on one side of the church, and ladies and girls sat on the other. Frances Boss and Iola Boss abandoned this tradition, and sat with their husbands as newlyweds. Within two weeks the rest of the congregation followed suit.
- ◆ Ladies wore long dark dresses and hats with hat pins.
- ◆ Ladies and girls had their offering tied in a corner of their handkerchief.
- ◆ Church cleaning was done by the ladies of the church. Water was carried from the closest neighbor’s house.

On May 10, 1937, an official call was extended to the Rev. Harold Ringenoldus. He accepted his call and became the first called minister of South Barnard Reformed Church. During his pastorate, the congregation decided that a new church building was needed, built on a better road that would be plowed in the winter. It was difficult to get to the church on the hill in the winter. People walked or came by horses and sleds. Property was purchased on Barnard Rd., about five miles south of Charlevoix and three miles from the old site. In August of 1938, it was decided to move the old church, but in October the congregation voted to erect a new building. In the meantime, they sent a committee after the bell they had previously purchased, and erected it on a platform at the old site until the tower of the new church was ready to hold it. John Boss, father of Frank, Ed, Gerald and Jay, was in the lumber business and he contributed a great deal of rough cut lumber to build the church. John Potter built the basement. The building was ready for occupancy in 1940, and was called the Barnard Reformed Church. The two side windows of stained glass were donated by Rev. Scherpenisse, and the middle window was given in memory of Mrs. Ed (Grace) Boss. These windows have since been transferred to the front of the church

built in Charlevoix in 1962. The old South Barnard Church was sold in 1940, and the lumber was used to build the tenant house on the old Paddock farm. For \$13.00 per month the church rented as a parsonage the new home that Fred Trimble had constructed at 313 W. Garfield in Charlevoix.

Rev. Ringenoldus left in 1942. In the summer of 1943, Ellsworth Dykstra came as a summer student. A unanimous call was extended to him in October of 1943, asking that he become the pastor when he finished his studies the following spring. He accepted his call and came in 1944. The church rented the home at 102 W. Lincoln for him. During his pastorate, two lots were purchased on the corner of Grant and Lincoln Streets for the sum of \$650.00. In the spring of 1947, Eldon Potter and Bill Potter constructed the new parsonage, the first one that the church owned. This was sold in 1965, to Oscar Ward, for the sum of \$12,000.00.



Rev. Dykstra left here for Oskaloosa, Iowa in the fall of 1947. Rev. Joseph Bekkering came in 1949, and was the first occupant of the new parsonage. Under his guidance, the church became self-supporting. It no longer received salary supplements from classis. In August of 1953, the time of the service was changed from afternoon to morning. In June, the congregation raised \$200.00 for the support of a missionary. Rev. Bekkering preached for a time at the Congregational Church in Charlevoix and also in Ironton. The congregation grew with new families. They needed more room, and plans were put forth for a solution, but in 1953, Rev. Bekkering received a call from Canada.

Rev. Wilson Rinker came in 1954. He was a forceful speaker and soon initiated a weekly program on the Petoskey radio station. He was busy visiting the sick in hospitals and those in jail. He wanted each person to be a missionary and tried to teach them how to approach others. The congregation continued to grow and a committee was formed to solve the space problem. Then, in 1958, Rev. Rinker received a call to California and accepted it.

In 1957, the officers of the Sunday School voted to buy a used 1946 Dodge 48 passenger school bus from the Charlevoix Schools. The church's Couples' Club had a work bee, and completely renovated the interior, with Mrs. Gerald (Bea) Boss sewing new seat covers for the entire bus. The exterior was completely sanded and repainted a nice medium blue with white lettering, which was done by Mrs. Dale (Marilyn) Boss. Dale Boss drove the bus every Sunday morning from 1957 to 1965, to pick up children throughout the area for Sunday School. Attendance ran between 140 and 152 continuously. The bus was used as one classroom, as there was not enough room left in the church. Times changed, and the bus was sold for \$250.00 in 1965.

Ken Van Wyk came as a summer student in 1958. Later that same year, Rev. Charles Stoppels came from Iowa. During his pastorate, the church was so full that the pews had to be slid to the sides, and chairs placed everywhere.

The decision was made to build a new church in Charlevoix. It was felt that the north side would be a good location, since there was no church on that side of town. Dale Boss, son of John and Iola Boss, negotiated the purchase of 39 lots from 17 different owners, many of them not having their property for sale. It was also necessary to contact all the property owners in the Lindsey Park addition of the City of Charlevoix, which was over 100 people, to obtain a release from restrictions put in the property deed, which stated that one dwelling house could be built on two lots. Frank Boss, son of John and Jennie, was Building Superintendent, as the church did their own contracting. Dale Boss was church treasurer and chairman of the building committee. The architects for the church building were Kammeradt and Stroup from Holland, Michigan. Their fee was 6% of the construction costs. The complete church was built and finished for the price of \$73,600.00. John L. Boss and his son Herbert were steady employees, and did a lot of the major carpentry work, as well as some of the stone work, including building the fireplace.

The sanctuary of the church building was designed to be 36 feet wide by 60 feet long. The footings were all poured to fit that size. At the last minute, it was decided to add another 12 feet on the front end, using framework to hold the west wall, rather than the pair of laminated arches that were to be on the end. This gave an extra seating capacity of 52 persons.

The granite stone in the fireplace came from a basement which had been vacated for over 40 years, located on the old Robert Gregory farm on the Barnard road. The dark limestone pieces were hauled on a stormy December day, on a two-wheeled trailer behind a tractor, through two feet of snow, out of the old lime quarry at Bell's Bay. John Martin was the man who drove the tractor to get this stone.

The bell that was in the Barnard Church was transported to town. Robert Clark, manual arts teacher, and some of his students made the mechanical device to make the bell work electronically. At a time when the money in



CHARLEVOIX, MICHIGAN, THURSDAY, JULY 6, 1961

To Break Ground for New Church

Plans for the constructions of a new Community Reformed church of Charlevoix at Petoskey ave. and Meech st. on the city's north side have been announced by the Rev. Charles A. Stoppels, pastor of the congregation now known as th Barnard Reformed church.

Ground-braking ceremonies marking the beginning of the project will be held at the site of the new church, three acre plot of land on US 31 North at Meech st., at 3:30 p.m. Sunday.

Joining in the ceremony will be the church board composed of Clyde Cunningham, Richard Potter, Harold DeYoung, Charles Wielenga, Nathan Boss and Marinus Veurink of Petoskey, supplemented by Franklin Boss, Dale Boss, Robert Potter, John L. Boss and Lawrence Boss to form the building committee.

The Reverends George L. Majors and L. L. Lewis, representing the Charlevoix Ministerial Association, will also participate in the ceremony to which



the public is invited.

Work on the building will begin Monday under the direction of Franklin Boss who will serve as construction superintendent. The church board plans to do its own contracting under the guidance of Mr. Boss. Contracts for heating, plumbing, electricity and ventilation will be awarded at a later date.

The building will have approximately 6300 square feet of floor space and will be built on a gsade, thus eliminating the need for steps.

Anticipated cost of the church will be approximately \$60,000.

This figure does not include the cost of furnishing the church or the purchase of 22 lots as a church site.

When completed the church will be known as the Community Reformed Church of Charlevoix. Its history goes back to 1904 when it was organized as a Presbyterian church in South Barnard. About 1918 it was united with the Reformed church of America. The present church at Barnard was completed in 1941. Since then the church has grown to a point where it has outgrown existing facilities, thus the need for the new church.

the building fund got down to \$56.00, a stainless steel cross was ordered from Mr. Roy Raymer, owner of the Will-Flow Corporation. Mr. Raymer sent his crew over and erected the cross at no charge for either the materials or labor. The bell tower chimes and system were donated by families in the church in memory of Leon and Ralleigh Wielinga, young teen-age boys of the church, who were killed in a car accident.

The first service was held on Easter Sunday in 1962. Janice (VandenBerg) Maddox was the first to make her profession of faith in this new building on the same Easter Sunday. The 1940 Barnard church was sold at this time for \$4,000.00 and made into a home by Mr. and Mrs. Earl Peltier. The new parsonage was built during Rev. Stoppels' pastorate, and finished in 1965. The lot had a basement on it when it was purchased.

Rev. Stoppels left in 1966, and Walter Pickup served during the summer of 1966. Rev. Albert Mansen came in 1967, and during his pastorate, the drive-in services were initiated with the belief that they would draw people; summer students Dale Matthews, Jim Zinger, Phil Grawburg, Peter Nordstrom and Karl Folkert assisted with these services and with the youth programs.

The new educational wing was built and finished in 1973. An addition to the fellowship hall was built in 1984-'85, and served as space for a growing youth program. Continued growth led to a fundraising campaign to conduct a major renovation of the current sanctuary, as well as an addition that would house classrooms, a new kitchen and nursery, and office space. This project was completed in 1992.

Rev. Mansen left in 1976 and was succeeded by Rev. Larry Grooters in 1977. Jan Boss was hired as Director of Youth and Education in 1984. Mark Hofstra served as an associate pastor from 1997 until 2001. Jonathan Mays became Worship Director in 2001, and Andy Dragt served as Student Ministries Director from 2002 - 2003.

Pastor Grooters served as senior pastor for 26 years (1977-2003). After his retirement, Pastor Paul Copeland served as Interim Pastor. Pastor John "Chip" Sauer was appointed senior pastor in February of 2005.

God has continued to bless Community Reformed Church throughout its history, and for that we praise and thank Him!