

# TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

*of the*

FULLER AVENUE

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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*"Holiness becometh Thy house,  
O Jehovah, forevermore."*

PSALM 93 : 5.

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July, 1925 — July, 1950

Grand Rapids, Michigan

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REV. GEORGE GRITTER

### *Greetings from the Pastor*

LOOKING back upon these twenty-five years of our existence, the members of the Fuller Avenue Congregation have every reason to feel grateful to God for His gracious care and guidance. Many who were charter members are still with us and can testify that since the very beginning the Lord has been unfailing in His mercy.

Our congregation has enjoyed a steady growth, so that today it numbers over three hundred families, and forms one of the largest congregations in our denomination. We are especially grateful, for the spiritual care which our Great Shepherd did bestow, so that our congregational life has been characterized at all times by a wonderful harmony and by constructive effort in seeking God's Kingdom. By grace we have been one in the Lord.

During this quarter century, three of God's servants might minister to us. It is impossible to evaluate all the benefits which were received through their agency. Suffice it to say that they proved to be a real blessing, and that there is abundant evidence that each in turn made a distinctive contribution, so that the fruits of their labors are still apparent.

In the realization that we are unworthy of such great and numerous benefits, we express humble gratitude to God for all His kind dealings with us. And on this occasion of our anniversary we would re-dedicate ourselves to the great purpose of our existence — *The Praise of our God.*

## Our Congregational History

ON July 17, 1950, the Fuller Avenue Christian Reformed Church passed a milestone. It was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of our church. It is fitting that at such a commemoration we pause for a little while, and recalling the mercies of our Covenant God upon us during this quarter century, we glance briefly at the history of that period.

Our church had its inception in the language question. Our mother church, Oakdale Park, after working for some years on a way to make the transition from the Holland to the English, had finally come to having four services every Sunday. Having one pastor and practically two congregations, the spiritual work and the systematic preaching was at best inadequate. The congregation having a large number of families besides, many felt that the organization of a new church would be to the spiritual welfare of their families.

Through the initiative of Mr. B. H. Dice a committee of five was formed. He and the Messrs. Ralph Bos, P. C. Kooi, A. Balfort, Sr., and the now Rev. Jacob Smith, talked the matter over and came before the Oakdale consistory with the request for permission to canvass the congregation with a view to forming a new congregation. This request was granted and after the canvass the first meeting of those interested was held on June 1, 1925, in the Oakdale Park church basement. Rev. Herman Kuiper, Oakdale's Pastor at that time, who was an enthusiastic supporter of the movement, presided. Mr. Arnold Hulst acted as secretary. The result of this meeting was the election of a committee of five to carry on the preliminary work toward the organization. Article 8 of the minutes reads: "The balloting results in the choice of the following committee: P. Bouma, H. Boersma, G. Diephuis, R. Bos, and I. Diephuis." The committee met four times. P. Bouma was elected chairman; H. Boersma, secretary. As instructed by those at the meeting, the committee visited the Neland Avenue and the Sherman Street consistories, and received their cooperation. The former in placing an announcement on their bulletin, and the latter in permission to canvass their members living in the vicinity in which the new church was to be located. With the assistance of Mr. A. W. Hulst they began to look into the matter of obtaining options on possible locations. Negotiations were also started with the Oakdale School board for the use of the school gymnasium for the future church services.

At a second social meeting held in the Oakdale school on January 24, the committee reported on their activities. They were instructed to proceed with obtaining options on property, buy the necessary twin chairs, and obtain a piano, pulpit Bible and psalters. Mr. G. Brander was added to the committee. Besides the families from Oakdale, those of J. B. Ibershof and Wm. Cornelisse were present from Sherman St. At a committee meeting on June 25 it was decided to obtain options on the four lots on the N. E. corner of Fuller and Noble, across from our present location. The organization date was set for July 17, with the approval of the committee appointed at the May meeting of Classis Grand Rapids East, at which meeting the organization of a new church in the southeastern part of the city was approved.

On the evening of July 17, 1925, an enthusiastic group of families gathered in the Oakdale school gym in eager anticipation of the fulfilment of their desire to be organized into a new congregation. Rev. H. Schultze, then Pastor of the Sherman

Street Church and chairman of the Classical Committee, called the meeting to order and presided. Rev. H. Henry Meeter, then Pastor of the Neland Avenue Church, was secretary. Rev. E. J. Tanis, also on the committee, could not be present. Our opening number was Psalter No. 347 (Psalm 121). Rev. Schultze offered prayer and read John 15:1-12, referring to the Vine and the branches, with the fitting climax, "This is my commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you." Also I Timothy 3:1-13, referring to the offices instituted in the church. The membership certificates then were received, which revealed that those requesting membership in the new church totaled 39 families from the Oakdale Park Church and two families from the Sherman Street Church, the heads of these families all being confessing members. Besides, from Oakdale 14 single confessing members, and one adult member by baptism. Total of 203 souls. Six elders were elected: H. Bosma, G. Brander, S. Herrema, J. B. Hulst, J. Kamstra, and J. Mersman, and four deacons: P. Bouma, P. Brouwer, N. Keegstra, and W. Spoelhof. These brethren were duly installed into their respective offices by the Rev. H. H. Meeter. Thus Fuller Avenue Church took its place in the ranks of the Christian Reformed Churches of Grand Rapids as the 18th church.

With joyful hearts we met the next Sunday, July 19, 1925, for our first church service with Dr. C. Bouma leading us and preaching on Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever."

The first consistory meeting was held on July 20. The first officers, J. B. Hulst, president; J. Kamstra, vice-president; H. Bosma, clerk, and N. Brouwer, treasurer. At this meeting a trio was made up, consisting of the Reverends H. J. Kuiper, R. B. Kuiper, and E. Van Halsema.

At the congregational meeting of August 3 the Rev. R. B. Kuiper was called to be our first pastor, at a salary of \$2,500.00, and a budget was adopted, amounting to \$4,900.00. The new church was incorporated as the Fuller Avenue Christian Reformed Church, according to the laws of the State of Michigan, with Mr. Dorr Kuizema as Attorney and Notary Public.

At the consistory meeting of August 17 already the decision was taken to buy our present property.

On Sunday, September 13, we celebrated our first communion, using a set loaned us by the Sherman Street Church. This had the common cup. We used this set for about two years, after which the individual cup was introduced.

When the Sunday School was started during that month, Mr. B. H. Dice became Superintendent. The first teachers were all men.

At this point I am going to digress for a moment to give you the following facts: The first family to leave our fellowship was that of Harry Boersma, moving to East Paris. The first member to be married was Miss Margaret Herrema, who became the wife of Candidate A. A. Koning on September 3, 1925. The first baby born was Trena Olive,



REV. E. F. J. VAN HALSEMA

to Mr. and Mrs. Dick Bouma, on the tenth of August. She was baptized on September 20. This baby was also the first one taken from our midst by death, November 29, 1925, 3½ months old. The first adult to leave for the Heavenly Mansions was Mrs. Jacob Bosscher, in September, 1927.

To our great disappointment the Rev. R. B. Kuiper declined our call, and on September 15 the Rev. H. J. Kuiper was called, but he also declined. On October 21 out of a trio consisting of the Reverends D. H. Kromminga, L. J. Lamberts, and E. F. J. Van Halsema of East Paris, the last named was chosen. On November 9 we received the glad tidings of acceptance. We bought the first parsonage at 1315 Fisk Street on November 24, and the first week in December we received the new pastor and his family in our midst. Installation services took place on December 10, and he began his work in our midst on Sunday, December 13, preaching on II Peter 1:19. Having received a minister from the Lord, next we were longing for a permanent place of worship. At the outset we had a fine start toward our building by the most generous gifts of \$10,000.00 from the Oakdale Park Church, and \$3,500.00 from the Neland Avenue Church. Besides this, our membership subscribed about \$10,000.00 in cash, and in labor and materials for the new church.



On January 7, 1926 the Building Committee was appointed by the consistory consisting of the brethren B. H. Dice, president; P. D. Bouma, secretary; R. Bos, G. Brander, N. Brouwer, P. Keegstra, P. Kooi, and W. Spoelhof.

The general contract was let to Behrens Bros. on March 25, for the sum of \$44,053.00, excluding most of the subcontracts, which were to be let separately. Work was begun on the foundation on April 6, and on the evening of July 7 we gathered together to perform the laying of the corner stone. Rev. J. M. Vande Kieft of Oakdale Park and Rev. H. H. Meeter of Neland Avenue also took part in the ceremony. The building of the structure proceeded prosperously and was completed in due time and the dedication to the service of our God took place on March 2 and 4, 1927.

With great joy and thankfulness to our Covenant God we took possession of our new church building for public service on Sunday, March 7. At this time our



congregation numbered 67 families. Harmony and love prevailed in our midst. Society life was flourishing and a spirit of generosity toward the church and the Kingdom at large was being manifested in the contributions. At the end of the year 1927 our debt amounted to about \$40,000.00 By united action and donated labor much was accomplished after this in finishing the basement rooms.

Rev. Van Halsema labored faithfully in our midst until the end of 1929, when our congregation numbered 92 families, 438 souls. In November of that year he received a call to the Northside Christian Reformed Church of Passaic, N. J. After prayerful consideration, he felt constrained to accept it. After having been with us for a little more than four years, he preached his farewell on December 29, 1929. We felt the loss of our first pastor keenly, who had so faithfully laid the foundation of our congregational life.

Efforts to obtain a new pastor were put forth at once. After calling successively the Reverends W. Groen, A. Jabaay, C. Van Til, and G. W. Hylkema, who all sent a negative reply, on June 30, 1930, a call went forth to Dr. George Goris of Englewood, N. J., who after due consideration and prayer by both the pastor-elect and the congregation sent us the glad tidings of his acceptance. Because of certain circumstances in the Englewood church, he did not arrive in our midst until the first week in October.

Before Rev. Van Halsema left, in the summer of 1929, the congregation had decided to build a new parsonage next to the church, because he needed more room for his family. Because of the economic depression, which was already upon us, the decision to add an additional \$9,000.00 to our debt was not unanimous. The job was let to Mr. B. Stonehouse, who was then a member of our church. The building was completed before Dr. Goris and the family arrived and they were the first occupants.



DR. GEORGE GORIS

He was installed by the Rev. J. M. Vande Kieft, our counselor, on October 2, 1930, and preached his inaugural sermon on Sunday, October 5, based on John 1:23, "I am a voice." We greatly rejoiced in the goodness of our God in sending us another under-shepherd.

Dr. Goris proved to be a devoted and consecrated servant of the King of the Church. He was loved and respected by young and old. His work was truly blessed, resulting in a steady growth, numerically and spiritually.

Early in 1931 our beautiful Möller organ was purchased and installed and dedicated to the service of our Lord. Total cost of organ, \$4,940.00. \$1,400.00 of this was paid in cash. At the end of the year 1931 our debt had risen to the then staggering sum of \$45,000.00, less an equity in the Fisk Street property, figured at \$2,400.00. The interest alone for the year 1932 amounted to \$2,456.00. Economic conditions were getting worse during 1932 and then 1933, the dark year of the bank holiday came, and the receipts in the General Fund dropped \$2,200.00, to \$6,500.00. Of this amount \$2,469.00 had to be paid out for interest alone. The pastor had voluntarily reduced his salary to two thousand dollars, and was re-funding some of this from time to time. Although things looked rather dark financially, the Lord graciously carried us through, and blessed us, so that in the next years there was a gradual increase in the contributions. Total actual receipts, 1933, \$9,119.92; 1937, \$14,299.39.

During these years the congregation was carrying on heroically, generally sacrificing for the church and the Kingdom. Also numerically a healthy growth was enjoyed. On January 1, 1938, we numbered 182 families, 826 souls.

Because of the closing of the G. R. Savings Bank in 1933, our church mortgage was included among securities given to the Kent County Board of Supervisors to satisfy their preferred claim. The parsonage mortgage remained with the bank. During 1937 negotiations were started to liquidate these claims. Finally the Board of Supervisors offered to accept 75% of their claim in full settlement, if paid within 90 days. The Bank also offered a substantial reduction. The decision to try and raise the necessary money by floating a Bond Issue was then made and carried out with great success. On August 1, 1937, the mortgages, amounting to \$39,188.00, were liquidated for \$30,000.00. Besides, both the Board of Supervisors and the Bank waived interest due at the time of the liquidation, to the amount of \$1,175.64. The same year improvements to the amount of approximately \$3,700.00 were made, including our steamheating plant and the finishing of the assembly room. The work on the assembly room was largely done by volunteer labor. On January 1, 1938, our debt was \$31,080.00, and the interest rate 4%.

During 1938 Dr. Goris received two calls to other fields. The consistory and congregation gave unmistakable evidence of the large place he occupied in our hearts, and of their appreciation of the work he had, by the grace of God, been able to do in our midst. A healthy growth of the church continued during 1939, 1940, and 1941. During the summer of this year our beloved pastor received a call from the Sherman Street Church, which he accepted. He preached his farewell on September 7, 1941, after a blessed ministry of eleven years. Many and deep were the ties that had been laid. Though the tie of pastor and church had to be broken, I dare say that the ties of love and appreciation will never be severed. During his pastorate the church increased from 100 to almost 220 families, and 183 persons made profession of their faith.

Efforts to fill the vacancy were put forth, and after five calls, successively to the Reverends J. O. Schuring, W. Groen, D. H. Walters, H. Evenhouse, and Wm. Haverkamp, which were declined, we called the Rev. J. Weidenaar of the Dennis Avenue Church, who gladdened our hearts by acceptance. On May 24, 1942, he

was installed in our midst by our moderator, Rev. H. J. Kuiper, assisted by Dr. Goris, Prof. Schultze, and Dr. J. C. De Korne. That same evening the Rev. Weidenaar preached his inaugural sermon on the theme, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says Jehovah of Hosts." Zechariah 4:6b. He started his work among us joyfully, but in humble reliance upon that Spirit.

On December 7, 1941, our country had formally become involved in the Global War. Along with others, our young men were called to serve in army, navy, and air corps. Heaviness filled the hearts of dear ones left behind. How we again learned to pray earnestly and continually, realizing that only the Almighty God, who is our Father in Christ Jesus, could keep them safe in the hollow of His Hand, safe from death, and safe through death, even then, when they had to give up their life for their country. The number of stars on our service flag reached 111, representing our young men and young women in uniform.

Four of these had to be changed to gold stars before the war came to an end. This caused deep sorrow in the homes involved, and the whole church. How joyfully we welcomed the end of that terrible conflict, and how thankfully we gathered in our houses of worship, to give thanks to our God for His great mercies upon us.

It may interest you, that during that same year, the 20th of our existence, the debt resting upon our church and parsonage was officially liquidated. We were free from debt.

In compliance with the great missionary command of our Lord Jesus Christ, our church has since its beginning been interested in mission work. We have, in conjunction with the Oakdale Park Church, carried on the work at the Madison Square Gospel Center, engaging for some time past two full-time workers. At present these are the Rev. Walter Dubois and Miss Gertrude Holkeboer, besides many volunteer workers.

We also carry on evangelization work in the Blodgett Home for crippled children. This work was started some 22 years ago by the late Mrs. J. B. Hulst (Elizabeth Smitter), in the Convalescent Home on Fulton Street, and transferred to the care of our church in 1938.

Since 1943 we have been the calling church for the Two Wells Mission Post on the Indian Mission Field. The Rev. J. B. Swierenga and family are stationed there and carrying on faithfully in the Lord's work, against many obstacles.

Also in 1947 we took upon ourselves as church the responsibility of supporting a missionary upon the Nigerian Field. The Rev. Peter Dekker with his family was sent out in 1948, and are holding forth the light of the gospel in that dark continent. They will be here on their first furlough when we celebrate.

May we as a church keep the home fires burning, by bringing the cause of missions continually and unitedly before the Throne of Grace!

With the inauguration of the Rev. Weidenaar in May, 1942, a new period began in the life of our church. He carried on his work in reliance upon the blessing of our Covenant God. He opened to us the Scriptures. In his particular way of explaining a complete Bible book in a series of sermons, he showed us how firm a foundation we have as saints of the Lord. The riches of Romans, Ephesians,



REV. J. WEIDENAAR

Philippians, the Epistles of Peter and of John were unfolded before us, and we were given a clearer insight into our Doctrinal Standards: the Catechism and the Canons of Dort.

The Holy Spirit was operative in our church, as many young people professed their faith. A total of 186 by confessions and adult baptism are recorded during his ministry.

From September, 1943, to May, 1944, our pastor obtained a leave of absence to pursue post-graduate studies at Princeton Theological Seminary.

The growth of our church continued at a regular pace.

In 1942 we assisted in the organization of the Boston Square Church. We have supported the youthful congregation with a substantial contribution to their building fund.

Again in 1946 it became apparent that there was room for another congregation. Ours and other neighboring churches were not able to provide room for all those desiring to attend. The result was that the Calvin Church was organized. This brought some relief.

From time to time calls had come to our pastor from various churches which he declined. However, in 1949 he received an appointment as professor of Bible in Calvin College. He felt compelled to accept this call and on September 11, 1949, he preached his farewell on Romans 8:31-39. He served our church for seven years and four months, except for the seven months he spent at Princeton in 1943-44. His particular talents will no doubt be beneficial to the greater number under his tutorship.

Efforts to fill the vacancy in the parsonage were begun speedily, and with the Lord's blessing were crowned with success shortly. The Reverends W. Van Peurse, Harold Dekker, and J. C. Verbrugge successively received but declined our call. The fourth call was sent to Rev. George Gritter, and to our great joy the Lord moved his heart to accept it.

On Sunday morning, January 29, we met with joyful and thankful hearts to receive our new pastor. The Reverends P. Y. De Jong, John Gritter, and John Weidenaar had a part in the installation service. The Rev. John Gritter's sermon was based on Mark 1:14. "Jesus came preaching." The inaugural sermon of our new pastor in the evening service was on Ephesians 4:11, 12, 13, "Jesus Ministering to His Church."

The pastor and his family were welcomed in our midst, and have already found a place in our hearts. The pastor has found a great deal of work to occupy his time in consecrated service. Feeding the flock of the Lord Jesus Christ and ministering to its many needs.

At present we are engaged in expanding our church facilities; may this also lead to greater consecration and service to our God by us all.

We have come to the end of 25 years of life in the Fuller Avenue Church. Twenty-five years of struggle and blessing. Showers of blessings from our faithful Covenant God and, in comparison, such puny and inadequate service from our side.

He has owned us and blessed us these 25 years, so that today our church numbers nearly 300 families. Let the sentiment of our hearts be, "Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but to Thee be glory given, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake," and let us firmly resolve to go on from here in the Name of the Triune God.

PETER D. BOUMA,

Growth of our Congregation from year to year—giving valuable information.

Year	Families	Souls	Confessing Members	Baptized Members	Infants Baptized	Adults Baptized	Confession of faith	Deaths
JULY 1925	41	203			3			1
DEC. 1926	63	304	148	156	4		3	
1927	80	386	186	200	11		4	2
1928	91	427	211	216	14		15	
1929	92	438	217	221	16		5	1
1930	107	496	274	222	9		15	1
1931	119	550	299	251	13		11	2
1932	124	590	310	280	10	1	21	
1933	133	648	361	287	12	1	11	3
1934	144	684	382	302	12	1	11	1
1935	154	725	401	324	15		8	2
1936	165	739	413	326	13		12	1
1937	182	826	464	362	26		11	5
1938	188	821	466	355	8		18	3
1939	202	855	513	342	10	1	21	2
1940	210	880	531	349	26		17	5
1941	220	910	549	361	29	1	31	1
1942	237	964	580	384	22			3
1943	256	1013	630	383	27		37	5
1944	262	1048	657	391	19	2	24	5
1945	268	1084	683	401	22		21	6
1946	278	1073	679	394	20	2	27	7
1947	272	1047	668	379	31		29	6
1948	286	1085	685	400	38	3	19	5
1949	294	1100	696	404	22	2	21	2
Totals at end of 1949					432	14	392	69
July 17 1950	298	1124	715	409	15		16	5
Totals July 17, 1950					447	14	408	73

Calvin Church Organized

## First Consistory, 1925



TOP ROW (from left to right): J. Kamstra, elder; W. Spoelhof, deacon; N. P. Brouwer, deacon; G. Brander, elder; N. Keegstra, deacon; P. Bouma, deacon.  
 BOTTOM ROW (from left to right): S. Herrema, elder; H. Bosma, elder; Rev. E. Van Halsema; J. B. Hulst, elder; J. Mersman, elder.

## Consistory, 1950



TOP ROW (from left to right): G. Boersma, C. De Bruin, C. Bos, L. Scherpenisse, J. Kuipers, D. Schipper, Henry Bratt, R. Stiemsma (Deacons)  
 SECOND ROW (left to right): J. R. Bos, B. W. Hertel, H. Herrema, W. C. Buiten, C. Keegstra, J. Timmerman (Elders)  
 SEATED (left to right): E. Marcusse, A. W. Hulst, Rev. G. Gritter, E. Haan, Geo. Brander, H. Huizingh (Elders)

## Consistory Members, 1925-1950

Following is a list of names, in chronological order, of all those who served our Church as Consistory Members from 1925 to 1950:

## PASTORS (4)

Rev. E. F. J. Van Halsema  
 Rev. G. Goris  
 Rev. J. Weidenaar  
 Rev. G. Gritter

## ELDERS (38)

J. B. Hulst  
 Henry Bosma  
 John Mersman  
 Stephen Herrema  
 John Kamstra  
 George Brander  
 Arie H. Swets  
 Ralph Bos  
 B. H. Dice  
 Wm. Meeuwssen  
 Isaac Hollemans  
 Peter Dieleman  
 Lambert J. Flokstra  
 B. W. Hertel  
 John A. Warners  
 Peter D. Bouma  
 John Kaashoek  
 Edwin Y. Monsma  
 John Orlebeke  
 Henry S. Herrema  
 Martin Smith  
 John Folkema  
 Enno R. Haan  
 Nick Brouwer  
 Nelson Poel  
 Wm. H. Korfker  
 Nick Bierema  
 Edward Marcusse  
 John S. Dykstra  
 A. W. Hulst  
 Dick Bouma  
 B. De Graaf  
 Martin J. Stob  
 Henry Huizingh  
 Wm. C. Buiten  
 C. W. Keegstra  
 John J. Timmerman  
 John R. Bos

## DEACONS (41)

Nick H. Keegstra  
 Wm. J. Spoelhof  
 Peter D. Bouma  
 Nick Brouwer  
 Peter Keegstra  
 John Folkema  
 Sidney Rosema  
 Henry Huizingh  
 George W. Hertel  
 B. De Graaf  
 Martin Smith  
 Dewey Tiemersma  
 Gerrit J. Alderink  
 Nick Bierema  
 Don Stoeper  
 Albert Bosscher  
 Wm. H. Korfker  
 Edward Marcusse  
 Martin I. Stob  
 Henry R. Stuit  
 August A. Rooze  
 John Ibershof  
 A. W. Hulst  
 R. Prince  
 M. Mersman  
 E. Dekker  
 Henry H. Oosterhouse  
 James K. Haveman  
 Harry Greenwood  
 Allie Konyndyk  
 Clarence Bos  
 Donald Schipper  
 Hero Bratt, Jr.  
 John J. Straayer  
 H. Arthur Warners  
 Ray Stiemsma  
 Henry Bratt  
 James C. Kuipers  
 Gerrit J. Boersma  
 Leroy O. Scherpenisse  
 Cornelius De Bruyn

## From Our Missionaries

Rev. J. B. Swierenga



Box 231, Gallup, New Mexico

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

On this twenty-fifth anniversary of our Congregation we look back with deep gratitude for what God has done in the past. We think of His mercy and grace during these years. We praise and thank Him for what He has done in spite of our failures and shortcomings and lack of faith.

Let us, however, not only observe and recall what God has wrought but as we face the future let us look eagerly ahead to know what He will do. And when we consider the missionary aspect of the church with the above in mind, it seems there is no more fitting scripture passage than John 10:16, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd."

This passage tells us what Jesus has done in the past. He has gathered a flock and put them in one fold. Implied in this statement is the truth that there was a fold when Jesus was on earth. He gathered the flock together. That was a wonderful task accomplished. Nothing less than divine power, wisdom, and love could bring a large group of sinful people together. Their very sinful nature is bound to cause divisions. But in spite of that fact He brings them together. He did so

then and is doing so now. He has done so with Fuller Avenue. He has brought us together. Though our unity is not perfect as yet, we know that He will perfect that which He has begun. But though we are not what we will be one day, yet the fact is that here and now a great work of grace has been accomplished. How we should praise Him for bringing us into the fold!

However, there is still a greater work to be done. Other sheep must be brought in. In the days when Jesus spoke these words the believers among the Jews were the flock, and those that would be believers among the Gentiles (non-Jews) were the other sheep. Now, many of the "other sheep" have been brought in. We of the Fuller Avenue Congregation are just a few of the many. Still there are others that must be gathered. These Jesus will bring together. But He uses means as He does in so many other spheres. He uses the Church; its prayers, gifts, and witnessing. He through the Church sends out missionaries to those who as yet know Him not. Fuller Avenue has sent missionaries to the Madison Square district of Grand Rapids, to the Navahos of New Mexico, and to the Africans in Nigeria. Those who are His chosen ones will believe the Gospel and will gather with His own. At first they may be very weak in the faith and ignorant of the Scriptures, but He through His servants will build them up, and they too will be perfected. Then in Heaven, regardless of race and tongue, they will gather with us around our Shepherd.

And lest we be discouraged let us note the promise of success. "... They shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd." There is no doubt about it. His sheep shall hear and become one flock. As it has happened so often before, it will continue to the end of time. Therefore let us not be discouraged. It is our privilege as a congregation to be engaged in a calling that is greater than all others. It not only brings blessings to men and women now, but will bear fruit for eternity. Further, every person that is converted brings glory to God for he turns from sin. Sin dishonors God. Turning from it honors Him. Further, a saved person praises God for His love and grace. There is no greater way of glorifying God than to bring people to a saving knowledge of Christ.

This work will not fail. We may have to wait, work hard, pray much, but it will not fail. What a privilege! What a high calling! And how satisfying!

Yours in Him,

J. B. SWIERENGA.





Rev. Peter Dekker

Sudan United Mission, Lupwe, Wukari via Makurdi  
August 6, 1950

Dear Fellow Members in Christ:

The Lord has indeed honoured the faith of those who organized this congregation 25 years ago. As we rejoice with you in spirit we are reminded of the words of Isaiah in chapter 2:2-3, "In the latter days the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills." While I do realize that Isaiah is first of all speaking prophetically of the Jews as heirs of glory in Christ, we in these "latter days," in this Gospel age, surely have seen its fulfilment. See what great things God has done for our congregation! "The mountain of Jehovah's house has both been established and exalted! The faithful preaching of the Gospel has borne rich fruit; the covenant promises have been realized in many of our young people, and the older folks can testify of the faithfulness of Jehovah in dealing with them. Catechism classes, the Sunday School and the various societies have been instrumental in building up a well informed laity grounded in God's Word. They have not degenerated into mere social clubs and we pray that they never will. God has moved the hearts of His people to give liberally to kingdom causes so that this church might do its part for the advancement of God's kingdom in its midst and in its Grand Rapids environment, but also upon the mission fields of New Mexico and Nigeria. There has been concern for those who do not know the Saviour. Thus in Fuller Avenue Church we see as it were a local manifestation of "the mountain of Jehovah's House established on the top of the mountains; towering above all the hills." As a manifestation of God's

kingdom it towers above all the social and community enterprises of the past 25 years in this city. Even the business world with its vast financial outlay and its magnificent expansion during the past quarter century is dwarfed by what God has done here.

Of course, it is necessary for us to have the proper perspective, the perspective of Isaiah if we are to have an eye for all this. We do thank the Lord for twenty-five years of existence; for material prosperity and for the phenomenal increase in membership. But, our glory is in those who are her sons and daughters, who say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." They are the fruits of the work of the Holy Spirit in our congregation.

But, now we ought to go one step further with the promise as he visualizes a still more radiant glory. "All nations flow into it" and amongst them are also people who say, "Come let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths." Thus Isaiah in vision transcended time and rejoiced greatly. In this our day of great rejoicing, let us transcend space. See the multitude of Africans enter God's house on the Lord's Day with you; see our fine young men enter the society room with you on Friday night (as we are wont to do) to study Scripture; hear our ladies reading the very same passages that you study in your meetings. And be aware that this is duplicated at the Madison Square Mission and on the Indian Mission Field too. I look upon this as a vision of encouragement in this the 25th year of Fuller Avenue's existence. May God continue to give a rich measure of His Spirit to Rev. Gritter and to the Consistory in the years that lie ahead.

These greetings come to you from Rev. and Mrs. P. Dekker, your ambassadors to "the nations that shall flow into it" in Africa.

Sincerely,

REV. AND MRS. P. DEKKER.






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 Rev. Walter Dubois
 

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Congratulations, dear friends!

We want to rejoice with you, because Christ our King has blessed you. By His grace and Spirit you have been a blessing to us, all of us at Madison Square.

We want to thank you, as we thank our God for you. We deeply appreciate your prayers, friendly visits, generous help, ready co-operation, edifying fellowship, and inspiring encouragement.

All our people are thankful and delighted to learn that you are co-operating to build a chapel for the worship of our God and Savior. All of us look forward to meeting with you there. This dream itself is an inspiration to us.

May the Lord generously reward you. May He bless you with many prosperous years ahead. We are certain that your life for Him here shall continue in the perfect world to come.

Yours very sincerely,  
REV. WALTER DUBOIS.




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 Miss Gertrude Holkeboer
 

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Dear Friends of the Fuller Avenue Christian Reformed Church:

Greetings and congratulations from your friends at the Madison Square Gospel Center. Throughout your entire history you have supported us with your gifts and, we feel confident, also with your prayers. For this we are humbly grateful.

We rejoice too that some of our number were brought to the Lord through your work here and are now your brothers and sisters in Him. Pray much for them and for those who are yet to be brought in.

Wishing you God's continued blessing,

Your friends at the M. S. G. C.  
(per GERTRUDE HÖLKEBOER)



## Anniversary Program

Thursday Evening, March 8, 1951, 7:45 o'Clock

Organ and Piano Prelude: "Fantasie Triomphale" . . . . . *Martin*  
MRS. VAUGHN W. KERSTETTER AND MRS. WILLIAM KORFKER

Singing, Psalter Hymnal No. 15 . . . . . THE CONGREGATION

Invocation and Remarks . . . . . REV. G. GRITTER

Anthem: "Give Thanks Unto the Lord" . . . . . *Harborne*  
THE CHOIR

Address . . . . . REV. E. F. J. VAN HALSEMA

Solo: "How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place" . . . . . *Brahms*  
MRS. TRENA HAAN

Address . . . . . REV. G. GORIS

Organ and Piano Duet: "The Lord's Prayer" . . . . . *Malotte*  
MRS. VAUGHN W. KERSTETTER AND MRS. WILLIAM KORFKER

Address . . . . . REV. J. WEIDENAAR

Anthem: "The Good Shepherd" . . . . . *Van de Water*  
THE CHOIR

Greetings . . . . . REV. PETER DEKKER AND REV. J. B. SWIERENGA

Singing, Psalter Hymnal No. 297 . . . . . THE CONGREGATION

Closing Prayer . . . . . REV. J. C. DE KORNE

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After the program refreshments will be served in the basement, and opportunity will be given to inspect the new addition to our church.



## Appreciation

We wish to take this opportunity to thank the Committee for arranging this program as well as the Anniversary Booklet. Members of the committee are: Mr. Clarence Bos, Mr. Henry Herrema, and Mr. Henry Huizingh.

Also our appreciation to the Expansion Committee for assuming the great responsibility for the New Addition. The members: Mr. B. Ondersma, *chairman*; Mr. Ed Borgman, Mr. C. Bos, Mr. G. Hertel, Mr. P. Meeuwsen, Mr. R. Stiemsma, Mr. M. Van der Ley.

And a thank you to the Furnishings Committee: Mr. B. Ondersma, Mr. M. Huizingh, Mr. P. Kolkman, and Mr. J. Folkema.

Last, but not least, we wish to thank Mr. Peter D. Bouma for putting in hours of time in writing "Our Congregational History."

