

The 2019-Q1 COVENANT CHRONICLE



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How It Was And How It Is

The clock in the belfry of the small church across the pond sounded loud and clear. It had just struck the midnight hour.

The midnight concert was in full swing. Katydid in the trees were serenading the insects below, the violin section of crickets sounding off on the high notes. The cymbals of cow bells in the meadow, the barking dog in the distance all join in the harmony. The back ground music furnished by the hoot owl, and not to forget, nature's own boom box, the bull frog in the pond completed nature's midnight choir. Unknowingly, the creatures were praising their Creator.

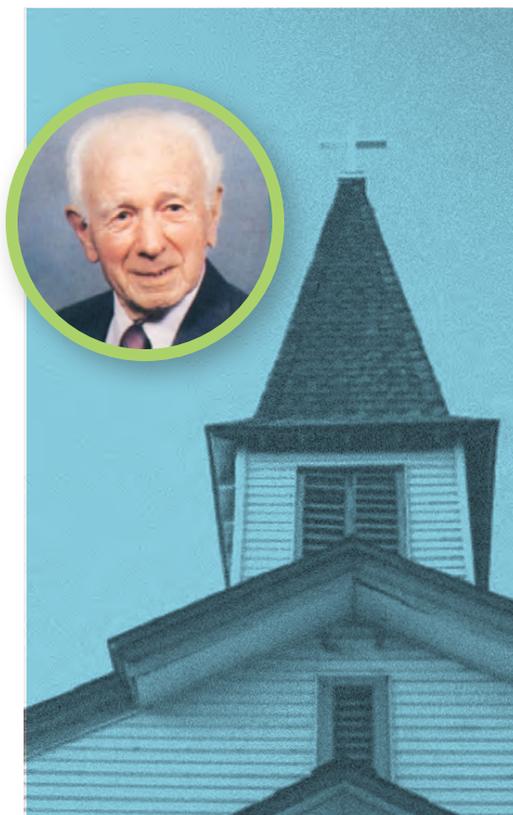
Rocking alone in that old creaking rocking chair I gazed out on what seemed to be a world at peace. The psalmist, years ago, remembered and thought on the days of Old — Psalm 143. Many thoughts went through my mind of days long gone by, which brings me to...

No narthex, we went right into the Sanctuary. Silence prevailed. Some early comers were praying, some reading the Canons of Dort, Bibles or what ever. You could hear a pin drop. If any Civil War Veteran were there he would have been reminded of "The stillness at Appomattox." It was an atmosphere of reverence in the house of prayer.

The service is about to begin, the congregation is comfortably seated on the hard wooden slide easy benches. No padded seats in those days, except for a few ladies who preferred to carry pillows from home.

The sermon was an hour, more or less, mostly a little less. This proved to be a grueling and uncomfortable experience for the restless and weary ones on those hot summer days. Sit still or else, while the man on the platform kept throwing his bait across that sea of humanity before him. After all, ministers are fishers of men. We kids sat through all this.

The cooling system was hand powered by those who felt the need. Fans were furnished free through the generosity and courtesy of the funeral directors, Joldersma and Klein and the Langeland Brothers. On one side of the fan was a beautiful picture of the Good Shepherd, the other side a picture of the funeral parlor plus their ad. That created a little stir among some of the oldsters. Advertising on the Sabbath and of all things in the house of prayer! This was competition with the Kalamazoo Gazette and the Hollandsche Amerikaan. It soon blew over



by a non spiritual wind. The fans remained in the pews, and the funeral directors are still with us, doing business as usual.

How It Is

The difference is as great as night is from day. What's this I hear? "Just an old Fogey" You are right. The 20th century was only eight years and eight days old when I arrived.

How times have changed. The beautiful new church buildings of today have under one roof, what is known as the narthex, a sort of

outer court, where people gather in groups to tell one another about their experiences of the past week. Just stand still and listen. It's Tom, Dick and Harry trying hard to out do Sue, Liz, and Mary. With everyone talking through each other it sounds like an "after wedding" party celebration, or sad to say, like a county fair. All this shatters the silence and the stillness of the sanctuary. Conducive to worship? You are the answer.

Keep silence friend, in reverence meet We gather here, God's face to

seek. Keep silence friends for some have come This day to pray, "Thy will be done." And some from thankful hearts of praise Their voice in gratitude to raise. Keep silence friend, let Him speak anew To every heart – perhaps to you.

At 94, when this article was written, Mr. Janus Vaar was the second oldest member of the Covenant United Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

This article appeared in *The Outlook*, January 2003, and was submitted by Mr. Myron Rau

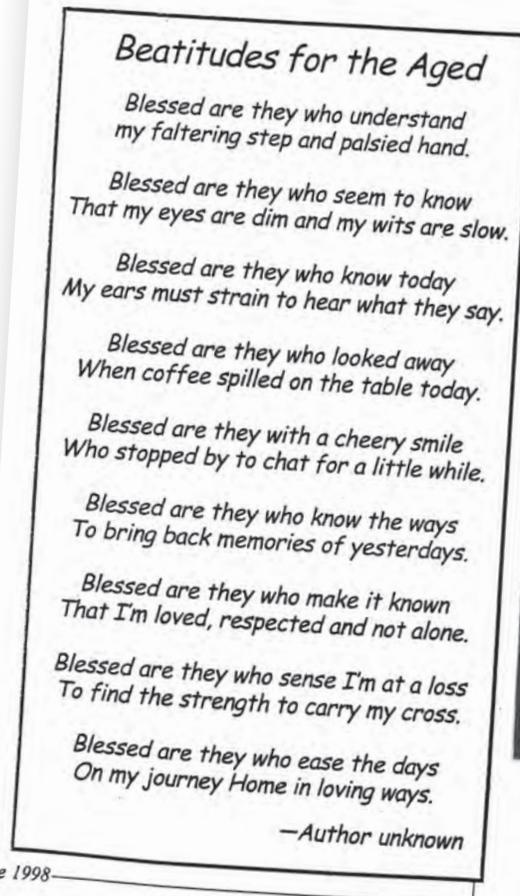
Memories of Mr. Janus Vaar

When our church, then the Free Christian Reformed Church, was in his early beginnings in the 1990s, Janus, who lived in the neighborhood behind the church, was our churches first "night watchman". (This was before the age of electronic alarms). After each church service, as well as every night, he would meticulously make his rounds and check each door to make sure it was locked.

When Roger came to water and care for the flowers, Janus would help by maneuvering the water hose around. He also enjoyed stopping by at coffee/donut time at Langelands with Roger and the staff for some friendly conversation, maybe even sometimes staying for a sandwich. A side note here...he was not always in a hurry to eat at home, as his wife was a vegetarian... he would sometimes say "well, I guess I will go home and have a couple cups of steamed broccoli"

He also enjoyed writing and poetry, as can be seen by this Chronicles front page article.

Memories recalled by Roger Medema



e 1998

THANK YOU ROGER
-AND-
FELLOW EMPLOYEES!



Photo 1942

Mr. Vaar put together this thoughtful little remembrance, put it in a frame and gave it to Roger and his fellow employess at Langelands.

Thoughtfully read and think about the Beatitudes for the Aged message.

Evangelism Night and Soup Supper



On Friday, January 18th 5:30 PM, the Missions and Evangelism Night and Soup Supper was held. The Supper was a fundraiser for the Young People. Rev. Joshua Amaezechi from the jail ministry spoke at 7 PM followed by a short hymn sing.

IN MEMORY 2019



Cal Miersma was taken home into glory February 7, 2019. He was born June 8, 1928. Marguerite G. Nieboer, his wife preceded him in death on June 22, 2016.



Herman H. Franke went home to be with his Lord on February 5, 2019 at the age of 87. Herm was born March 1, 1931

HAPPY 90TH!



Vern Herder February 4

Young People Games and Activities



Would you like some info on our Youth Group? We have 17 students.

We have served at the Deacon's Dinner, gone caroling, and attended the All-nighter.

We are looking forward to our flower sale and car wash in May and serving at the Bravo 4th of July event.



The kids are really looking forward to Convention in Cedarville, Ohio in July. The day away will be a day at the Air Force Museum or Kings Island.

We also have a group that will serve on TASC in Dutton, Michigan in August.

Cornerstone URC Women's Conference 2019



On March 15-16, several women from our church including Kathy Kloosterman, Tami and Clair Hamming, Sophia Stoffregen and Lauren Klomparens attended the Annual Women's Conference hosted by Cornerstone URC in Hudsonville, MI.

We enjoyed four sessions on the book of Proverbs: *"A Woman's Wisdom—How the Book of Proverbs Speaks to Everything"* which was presented by Lydia Brownback. We were reminded that we must always pray for God to give us a desire from Him and that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord! Lydia Brownback has also written several devotionals and works on the editorial team at Crossway Books.

Everyone benefited from a wonderful time learning and also fellowship over snacks, breakfast and lunch with old friends and new!



We would love to have more women from our church join us next year. The conference will be scheduled for the weekend so you don't have to miss work and we can carpool. This experience will offer a great time of fellowship with other church members and it will help you grow in your personal walk with God.

Pictures and article by Kathy Kloosterman and Lauren Klomparens

Council/Consistory Notes | 1st Quarter

From the Council:

- 1.) In accordance with the decision of the Congregational Meeting, the new boiler has been installed.
- 2.) Building and Grounds has reported that they are working on an upgrade package for the kitchen.
- 3.) The Council has formed an *Ad Hoc* Committee to look into finding a solution for the cry room and possibly consider using a video streaming system so that way nursing mothers may watch the services from another room in the church.
- 4.) The Council formed an *Ad Hoc* Committee to update our funeral policy. They have since completed their work and are thanked for their diligence.
- 5.) The Council has decided to make it a policy that the Minister, Clerk, and President of Council will each have a key to the filing cabinet in the Consistory Room. More copies of the key have been made and distributed to these officers.
- 6.) In addition to the upcoming pictorial directory, the Council has requested that our Secretary make a non-pictorial directory which will contain other various pieces of information (list of committees, their members, etc).
- 7.) The Council formed an *Ad Hoc* Committee to update the CURC Policy Manual in accordance with the decisions

that Council has made over the last several years. They have since completed their work and are thanked for their diligence.

8.) The Council has decided to make it a policy to add winter storm warnings to the list of reasons for the cancellation of a worship service.

9.) Several years ago the Council approved to update the Education Wing of the church, but no action was ever taken. We are now receiving bids for carpet, and hope to also paint the walls with volunteers from the church.

10.) The Council plans to discuss the idea of a "Spring Cleaning" day where volunteers come to the church and do various things to help spruce up our building.

From the Consistory:

- 1.) The Elders plan to offer a Profession of Faith Class to beginning in May (DV). This will be taught by Pastor Stoffregen.
- 2.) The Elders passed a motion to change the doxologies and response to the creed.
- 3.) The Elders, having heard no biblical objections, unanimously decided to move forward with the use of the Forms and Prayers Book and the Trinity Psalter Hymnal.
- 4.) The Elders have decided that, for the time being, we

will limited our songs from the Trinity Psalter Hymnal to typically 2 songs per Lord's Day.

5.) Elder visits to Sunday School Classes, Catechism Classes, Cadets, Kingdom Seekers, Youth Group and Bible Study Groups have been assigned and are ongoing.

6.) The Elders appointed Dan Herder and Pastor Stoffregen as delegates to Classis Michigan, March 12. Pastor Stoffregen was appointed to join the "Classis Michigan Missions and Church Planting Committee."

7.) The Elders have placed an order to purchase a few copies of the Acts of Synod 2018, Wheaton. They should arrive later this year.

8.) After being invited, the Elders have agreed that we shall attend a combined Good Friday Service at Community OPC. The plan is that Rev. Cruse will preach with the other ministers of local Reformed and Presbyterian Churches participating in other capacities.

9.) The Elders are in the process of approving material for VBS.

10.) The Elders are considering a Mentorship Program for our church.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Phillip Stoffregen, Clerk

March 2009 Chronicle Article

Dear Congregation:

The first time I experienced it, I was somewhat surprised. I am not surprised anymore. While visiting a member of the congregation in the hospital, I was asked if I would visit another patient and pray with her. Of course! How could I decline such an invitation? When I met the middle-aged woman, she told me that she wanted God's healing. I asked her what church she belonged to and she told me that she did not belong to any church. When I asked her about her relationship with Jesus Christ, she looked puzzled. As best I could, I explained to her the need for spiritual healing. She seemed curious and somewhat interested.

I asked her if she was interested in knowing more about forgiveness and Jesus as her Savior. She replied, "No. I just want you to pray to God for healing." She was not interested in any kind of personal relationship with God.

Last fall, I read a survey that said nine percent of Americans who call themselves Christians do not have a biblical worldview. A more recent survey shows that a large number of people say that they are Christians. Yet, they are genuinely startled when told that being a Christian has something to do with believing in Jesus. Most are offended when told that Christians believe that Jesus is the only way to heaven.

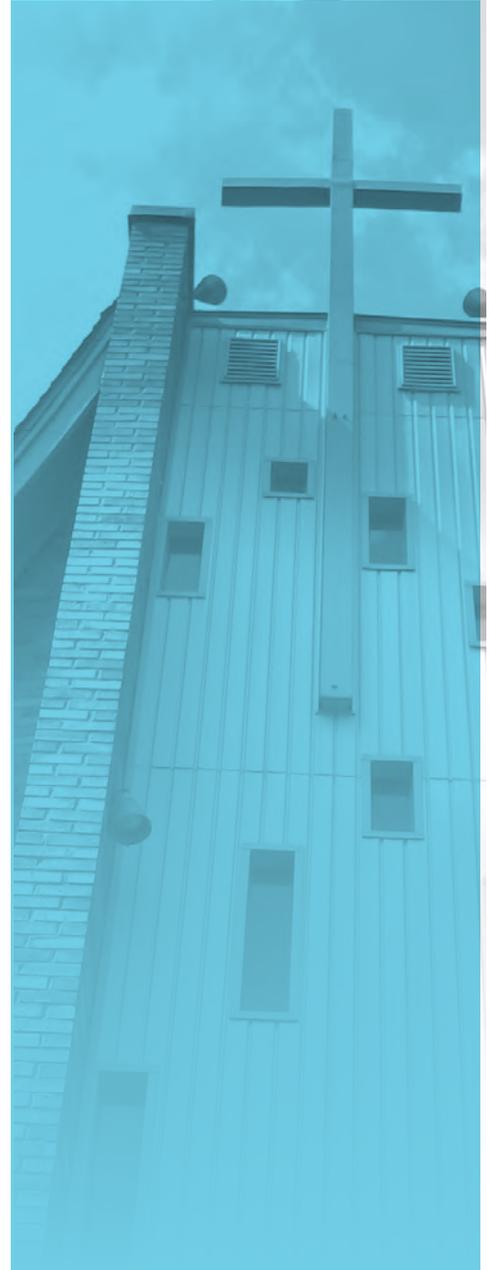
We live in an age of spiritual tourism where people take brief excursions into a variety of religious views. Sometimes they even dabble in the occult, New Age, and Eastern mysticism wondering why such ideas cannot be brought into the church. Many people are spiritually grazing as they float from church to church looking for something that appeals to them before moving on to the next church.

We must be very clear that the message of the empty tomb is not one that can stand alongside others. The gospel of Jesus Christ is not one of many religions to choose from like a used car lot. In fact, the good news of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is not a religion at all; it is a revolution. It is the Son of God winning the victory over sin and death for His people. It is not our selecting what we want from God; it is God's message to us from Himself—a message of His love and compassion for mankind.

When we come to the risen Christ, we must come to Him as our Savior, Lord, and King.

It demands a total commitment to the One who gave His life for us, so that we might have peace with God.

Because He lives.

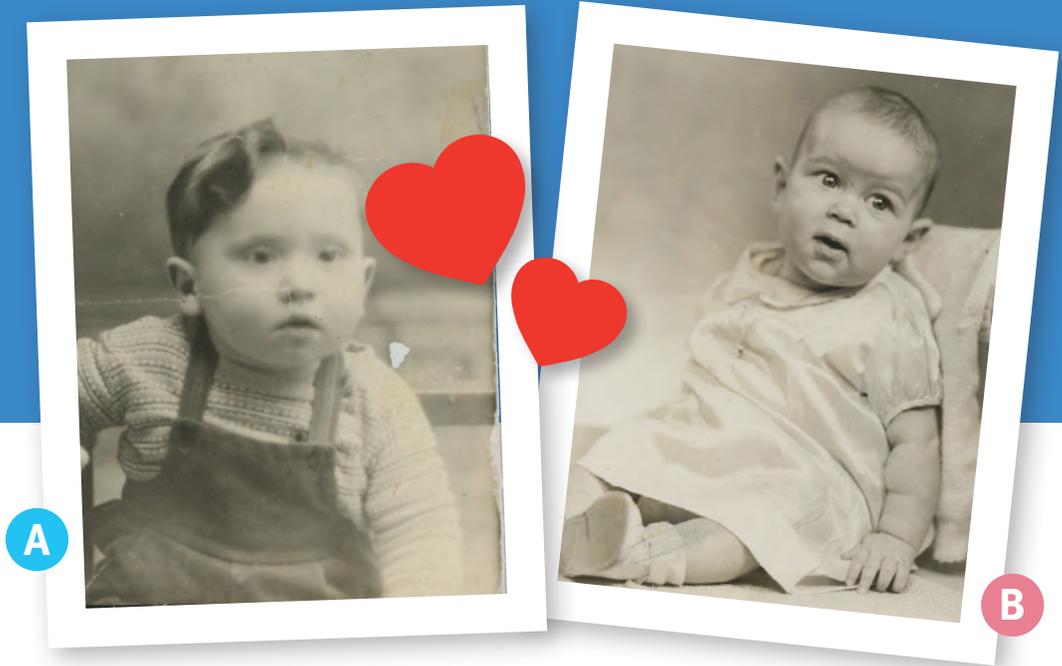


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. W. H. Cook". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Place the face

Give up?
Answers are at
bottom of page

Pictures submitted
by Barb Haan



Remember our seniors... send a card, give them a call or stop in for a visit

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