

missions

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Editorial Note:

On April 23, 2010 another one of our home mission stations was organized into an instituted church. We rejoice and give thanks to God for His blessing on the work of home missions done in the past few years in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and the fruit of this work. This issue of our newsletter is devoted to tell the story about all of this. We welcome Heritage Church as a member of the Protestant Reformed Churches. We also encourage those who happen to be in the area to visit the newly established congregation in this part of our country.

Heritage Consistory:

Ed Van Egdorn, elder; Kyle Bleyenburgh, deacon; Gaylen Te Slaa, elder.



HISTORY OF THE SIOUX FALLS MISSION | Rev. Allen Brummel

The Sioux Falls mission had its beginning in the work of the Reformed Witness Committee (RWC), which is the evangelism arm of the area Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) in Northwest Iowa and Southwest Minnesota. This committee for years was aware of a number of families who made their home in Sioux Falls and were interested in establishing a Protestant Reformed Church in Sioux Falls. Throughout the 1980s the committee discussed ways in which they might promote the gospel in Sioux Falls. Bible studies were held, and then, with Doon consistory agreeing to take oversight of the work, the RWC decided to start holding worship services on Sunday evenings. These services made use of a rotation of supply from the area Protestant Reformed pastors, who preached three times a Sunday on those evenings. Oversight was provided with local elders and deacons attending the services. I remember occasionally attending those worship services with my family when I was growing up in Edgerton, MN. These services continued from November 1987 until July of 1988, when they were discontinued due to a lack of outside interest.

In the summer of 1990 attempts were made once again to revive a work in Sioux Falls with a Bible Study under the supervision of the Doon consistory. The studies went well, leading Doon to request of Edgerton to allow their pastor to carry out the work. Rev. De Vries, the pastor of Edgerton PRC, led those studies from the fall of 1990 until they were

concluded on December 20, 1993 due to a lack of outside interest once again. For various reasons, in God's good providence, none of these labors resulted in the beginning of a mission work in Sioux Falls. But seeds were being sown.

In the years that followed, still more members of the Protestant Reformed Churches from Iowa and Minnesota looked to Sioux Falls (about an hour's drive away) for employment opportunities not available in their own communities. Some of them moved, preferring to commute on one or two days for church and societies. This, however, was not a favorable set of circumstances. Rev. Key addressed the matter with the RWC at their March 21, 2005 meeting, encouraging them to renew work in Sioux Falls, beginning with a Bible Study. He was of the conviction that, even apart from the presence of Protestant Reformed people, there was good potential for ongoing mission work in Sioux Falls. At the July 18, 2005 meeting of the RWC, the Edgerton sub-committee reported that they had met with a few couples in Sioux Falls and were planning to start a Bible Study. Rev. Daniel Kleyn, pastor of Edgerton, was planning to lead the studies, but when he took the call to Holland, MI, Rev. Key stepped in with the approval of Hull's consistory.

The first meeting was held in Sioux Falls Christian School on September 26, 2005. At that time the group decided to send a letter to all Protestant Reformed members and former members, as well as some other contacts in the Sioux Falls



area, explaining the purpose of the Bible Study and inviting them to join the study. Over the next few months a few more began attending the Bible Study, and enjoyed a time of fellowship and spiritual instruction. The group met through the remainder of 2005 until April of 2006. They recessed for the summer, then resumed the study again in September of 2006, and Rev. Key led them until December of that year.

Already in May 2006 the group expressed to the RWC its desire to become a mission of the Protestant Reformed Churches with regular preaching services. It took several months before the request worked its way through the area church councils and was approved. With that approval the Bible Study group sent a letter dated September 25, 2006 to the Domestic Mission Committee (DMC) expressing the

fact that they now had the approval of the area councils/consistories and were requesting the DMC's assistance in establishing a mission work in Sioux Falls.

The DMC sent a delegation to meet with the Bible Study at one of the biweekly meetings. The delegation was convinced that there was a solid core group in Sioux Falls, who were ready to be a shining light in their community. Accordingly, the DMC delegation recommended that the DMC "immediately look for and send to Sioux Falls a man to work with this group, beginning worship services with them, leading Bible studies and teaching catechism classes, and working on developing contacts in the area." The three grounds were: "1) We have a request to do this (Acts 16:9); 2) The makeup and size of the group is suited to the beginning of a mission in Sioux

Falls; and 3) The group is ready and eager, not only to begin services, but also to be active in mission outreach." The recommendation was adopted, and immediately the DMC requested of Candidate Spronk to move to Sioux Falls and take up the beginning of the work there. In June of 2007 the Synod of the PRC approved the work of the DMC establishing a mission in Sioux Falls and appointed Edgerton consistory the calling church for Sioux Falls.

One of the first activities of the group was to choose for themselves the name Heritage Protestant Reformed Fellowship. A steering committee was appointed, and plans were made to begin worship services at 9:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. in the Ambassador Room of the Holiday Inn in downtown Sioux Falls. Worship services began on January 28, 2007, with Rev. R. Kleyn of the

The congregation of Heritage PRC, Sioux Falls, SD, 2010.



DMC preaching in the morning and Rev. D. Overway, pastor of Doon PRC, preaching in the afternoon. Rev. Spronk's family quickly found a place in the Fellowship, and after five months of labor Edgerton demonstrated their appreciation and desire to see him continue that work by issuing their call to him to serve as missionary to Sioux Falls. Candidate Spronk also had a call from Peace PRC, and God moved him to accept that call in July of 2007.

At the request of the DMC and Edgerton consistory, Rev. Kortering agreed to assist in Sioux Falls until December 16 if necessary. Rev. and Mrs. Kortering spent 10 weeks laboring in Sioux Falls, during which time they developed a close bond with the Fellowship. Rev. Kortering established a good foundation, especially in the way of stirring up the Fellowship to be active in personal witnessing.

Edgerton called Rev. R. Kleyn, and after receiving a decline from him they issued a call to Rev. Allen Brummel to be missionary to Sioux Falls. Rev. Brummel accepted the call, and he and his family arrived on November 1, 2007. He was installed as missionary on November 8 and preached his first sermon as missionary on Sunday, November 11.

The next two years saw many visitors attending the worship services and steady growth through weddings and new members joining the fellowship as we made our presence known in the community. We moved from the Ambassador Room of the Holiday Inn to the Burgundy Room on the 10th floor, which gave us more room and more privacy for worship. We made use of a broad spectrum of advertising media in order to establish a presence in Sioux Falls, including television ads, radio spots, a website, yellow pages, newspaper ads, and word of mouth.

The most effective means to bring individuals into the worship services continues to be personal invitations. We are thankful for members who



Rev. Allen Brummel and his family.

are willing to invite friends and family to join with us in worship. We are privileged to have visitors at almost every worship service. We are currently setting up a Youtube channel on which we plan to post a number of brief introductions to various pamphlets and short explanations of certain doctrines and practices of the Protestant Reformed Churches. We hosted a booth at the Sioux Empire Fair, where we distributed thousands of pieces of literature and had opportunity to speak to many people about our mission work. We are excited to press on, knowing that God will give the increase as we labor in faithfulness to His Word. You can check out our website at www.reformedsiouxfalls.org, where you will find one of our television ads and a link to our Youtube channel.

In January of 2008 the core group consisted of 5 families and 7 individuals (18 confessing members and 6 baptized children). Since then other families and individuals were added, and now the congregation numbers 13 families and 3 individuals (30 confessing members and 10

baptized children), not counting the missionary and his family.

On November 15, 2009 the Steering Committee called a meeting of the men of the Fellowship to vote to seek organization at the next meeting of Classis West. The motion was approved by a large majority. Edgerton consistory and the DMC approved the request, which was presented to and approved by Classis West on March 3, 2010. Edgerton consistory was appointed to oversee the organization of Heritage. The organizational service was held on April 23, with Rev. Dennis Lee preaching on I Peter 2:4-6: "Lively Stones Built up a Spiritual House." Two elders and one deacon were elected at a congregational meeting following the service and were installed into office as the first consistory.

We give thanks to God for providing, in His perfect timing and in answer to many prayers, a Protestant Reformed Church in Sioux Falls, SD. We extend a special invitation to you to come and visit the newest congregation in our denomination.

As Domestic Mission Committee of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America, we rejoice with you in the blessing of God shown in your being organized as a congregation.

It took a great deal of courage and faith for all of us to begin this endeavour.

It took a number of years for you to gain the support and blessing of the congregations in which you had membership. Understandably, the new effort to begin a congregation in Sioux Falls meant that you would leave these congregations, and that is never viewed with optimism. It took faith and courage to press on with the conviction that Sioux Falls needed the witness of the Reformed faith. Now God has blessed this courage and faith with the fulfilling of this vision.

As calling church, Edgerton PRC hesitated but pressed on with the same courage and faith. They saw the need but wondered whether they could fulfill the awesome responsibility of serving Christ and His Church in the position of a calling church. God provided that faith with the necessary courage. We have read your many reports, which indicated to us that you did not sit back or in any way turn back from the work involved. Your supervision of the work is a wonderful testimony that a small church can make a big contribution to the work of missions.

As you stretched, even beyond your limits, God supplied the necessary wisdom and grace to see this work to its consummation. You have driven many miles, spent many hours, and interacted at many meetings to share your insights and lead this work in the proper direction. God has blessed this labor of love and we trust you have benefited spiritually as well.

A few years ago, God moved a busy and energetic young pastor to accept

the call to be missionary in Sioux Falls. He had everything going his way, a large congregation that loved him, a parsonage that was more than adequate for his growing family, a comfort zone in his work that made staying in South Holland very attractive. Yet, he accepted the call to take up this new work in Sioux Falls.

That took courage and faith on his part and on the part of his dear wife and family as well. He gave his heart and soul to this work, and as DMC we look back with great satisfaction that we could work together in harmony and peace and see God's work of grace as the church was gathered and grew into a viable congregation within three years. God be praised as He blesses faithful laborers in His vineyard.

Now that you stand at the threshold of your own congregational history, we marvel at what God has done and commend you to the continued care of God.

Obviously your labors are not ended, they now are increasing. As there will be a continued need for work among the churches of the mid-west, Sioux Falls is now an option for those members of the churches who cannot find work in their smaller communities. We thank God that these individuals and families can live in the area and benefit the work of God among you.

We are aware that there is always a certain shift from rural communities to cities. This is not to say that we anticipate the end of the Lord's work in small rural areas. We trust that God will always have His work among them. Rather, this is an opportunity for those who are trained for work not available in a small rural community, to benefit from the opportunities of Sioux Falls. The foresight of the leadership is now realized.

At the same time, there are many

opportunities of outreach to those who are unchurched or non-Reformed in your community. It was a joy to see you put forth efforts to make contact with these people.

We encourage you to press on in this work as the Lord gives you opportunity. The good witness of the Reformed faith, set forth by your combined labors and individual Christian lives, God will use as the means to the continued gathering of His church in Sioux Falls.

As Domestic Mission Committee, we extend this public welcome to you as a congregation. May you continue to be a blessing within your newly established congregation.

This will demand much of you, you will be asked to do work you never considered yourself capable of doing. You will have to make financial sacrifices that may intimidate you. With God's presence by His Holy Spirit, this will give to each one of you opportunity to serve our great God and receive from Him blessings you can enjoy only in the way of serving.

To the newcomers, may your presence and contribution enable you to feel at home and enjoy the comforts of a Reformed church family.

We join you in lifting our voices in praise and thanksgiving to God for this token of His blessing. Your future is in His hands.

May the courage and faith with which you were blessed at the beginning of this work continue now to be your strength as you mature as a congregation.

Rev. J. Korterling, Secretary



Sioux Falls, S.D. skyline. Photo by Sdgjake

THE CITY OF SIOUX FALLS | By Mrs. Kate Bleyenburg

Heritage Protestant Reformed Church is proud to call Sioux Falls home.

With over 154,000 citizens, Sioux Falls is the largest city in the state of South Dakota. It features all the amenities of a big city, while maintaining the values and intimacy of small town charm.

Founded in 1856, the city gains its name from a location on the falls of the Big Sioux River. Much life is still focused on this beautiful landmark, as the falls are now home to a 122-acre park, connected by trolley to the quaint downtown area and a featured stop along 20 miles of bike path that wind along the river and through the many city parks.

With four distinct seasons, finding a variety of recreational activities in Sioux Falls is not difficult. The city is home to many attractions:

golf courses, Washington Pavilion Science Center, Great Bear ski hill, water parks, zoo, minor league baseball, hockey, indoor football, basketball, and much more. Plan your visit, as the city makes an excellent destination for family vacations!

Not only is Sioux Falls a great vacation destination, it is also an affordable place to live. The cost of living is well below the national average, leaving households with a median disposable income of nearly \$4,500 each year, ranking 87th out of the nation's 300 largest metropolitan areas. As one of the fastest growing metro areas in the Midwest, Sioux Falls continues to offer many opportunities for professional growth, particularly in the fields of healthcare and financial services. As of December 2009, the Sioux Falls metro area reported an unemployment rate of only 4.7, significantly lower than the national

rate of 9.7. In the past five years Sioux Falls has received many awards and accolades relating to quality of life, water purity, recreation, and work opportunities. Just to mention one: Forbes magazine named Sioux Falls the #1 Best Small Place For Business And Careers in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009.

Along with access to solid Reformed preaching and Christian education, each of these factors contributes towards making Sioux Falls an ideal place for Christian families to visit and live.

Sources:

www.siouxfalls.org

www.siouxfallscvb.com

www.siouxfallsdevelopment.com/Publications/community_profile_2009-2010.pdf

Cascades of the Big Sioux River at Falls Park.



Being a member of a small mission-fellowship is very different from being a member of a large, established church. Worshiping in a group of 15-20 people is quite an experience compared to worshipping in a larger congregation. A rented room of a hotel is not much like a church sanctuary. Making financial ends meet on a mission field or in a small church is often more difficult than in a larger church. And outreach and evangelism, "letting your light shine"—well, it's just different on a mission field.

Or is it?

Having been a member of the larger, more established churches of Peace and Doon before moving to Sioux Falls, I won't say it didn't feel a bit awkward at first, meeting in a small room where if you sat in the front row, you could literally reach out and touch the pulpit. It felt strange the first few times we had casually-dressed visitors wander in off the street or from the hotel lobby to join our worship services. And for the members at Heritage, it forces us out of our comfort zone when we engage complete strangers at the Sioux Empire Fair in conversation, or walk up and down the streets of our neighborhoods with fliers, or talk about our love for Jesus to the visitors at our worship services, or participate in one of several TV ads.

But thinking back over the past few years, I would say that the differences between the larger, established churches and a small mission-church are minimal when compared with all the similarities.

Our worship services are very similar to any other Protestant Reformed Church. Granted, you have to navigate through the hotel lobby, past the bar, and up the elevator ten stories to get to the Burgundy Room.

But once inside, the atmosphere is very similar to what we're all used to: quiet, respectful, and reverent. We still have the same KJV Bible, the same order of worship, and the same biblical preaching. Rev. Brummel faithfully preaches through the Heidelberg Catechism every Sunday morning, just as other Protestant Reformed pastors do, and our catechism students memorize out of the same books as hundreds of other Protestant Reformed children across the nation. And although we haven't had Communion now in over three years, we have been privileged to witness the sacrament of baptism several times.

Just like any established church, and even more so, a mission field needs to be focused on outreach and spreading the gospel. We've learned at Heritage that the best means of outreach is personal evangelism. It's much better than newspapers, radio programs, or TV ads, although those means have their place as well.

We've had many visitors over the past three years. In preparing to write this article, I decided to look back through our guest book. Since October 2007, there have been just over 200 non-Protestant Reformed visitors that have signed the guest book, and of course others that didn't sign. How exciting that so many have been able to hear the preaching of the Word! There have also been over 400 visitors from churches within our denomination. Thank you for visiting, and please come again!

Perhaps the biggest struggle for many of us has been to see so many visitors come, many of them for multiple worship services, and then to see most of them leave and not return. We hope and pray that their brief time with us, worshipping and learning about God, will stay with them through their lives. We know that the preaching is never

ineffectual. It always serves to soften the hearts of His elect and harden the hearts of the wicked.

For those of us with school-aged children, we've been privileged these last few years to be able to use the Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed School in Doon (about 40 miles from Sioux Falls) and Trinity Christian High School in Hull (about 55 miles). Although the drive is long, we are thankful to be able to send our children to Protestant Reformed schools, where we know they will be taught the same truths they hear every Sunday. Perhaps someday we, too, will have our own Protestant Reformed School in Sioux Falls. We wait on the Lord's will. I'm sure the kids would appreciate a shorter drive.

I'd like to close this article with a word about church family. Those of you who are members of other small churches will understand when I say it is truly a blessing to be part of a small, close-knit church family. We are blessed at Heritage with unity, harmony, and peace. It is a joy to see the members sticking around for a long time after the worship services to talk with each other and with our visitors. It is encouraging to see Bible study well attended, well prepared for, and the discussions sincere. We all look forward to our monthly fellowship luncheons and the many other outings that the ladies of the Activities Committee put so much work into organizing.

The Lord has blessed us these last few years with both spiritual and numerical growth, and our worship services have grown from 15-20 people to 40-50 people. Lord willing, by the time you read this article, we will no longer be Heritage Protestant Reformed Fellowship, but Heritage Protestant Reformed Church. May the Lord continue to bless us as we start this new and exciting stage of our existence!