

Lodi History Highlights

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The Faith Reformed Church

The Faith Reformed Church of Lodi, New Jersey was organized on October 4, 1859. The founders included Deacons Art Janzoon Breen, Nikolas Bogartman, Peter VanVrede, and Gerard Jacob Busch Keizer. On November 27, 1859, Reverend James Huyssoon began his work as church pastor preaching his sermons to 46 members in full communion.

In 1864, Rev. Huyssoon determined it was necessary for each locality to have its own pastor, because of the rapidly increasing number of immigrants who were settling in Lodi and Paterson from Holland. During that time, the Church in Lodi baptized no fewer than 38 children. Among the first to be baptized in the new church were Jennet Breen and Margaret Pieterella Fischer on May 28, 1860. The first marriage in the Church took place on November 11, 1860 between Gerhard Jacob Busch Keyser and Grietje Van Noord.

In 1871, the Church hierarchy proposed to change the name from the Dutch Reformed Church to the Reformed Church in America. This proposal was met with much controversy. Reverend Wust, who was installed as Pastor by the Reverend Huyssoon on July 10, 1864, opposed the name change. He stated that The Church of Lodi "would never fall victim to such an unthinkable act". Because of the protest, both Wust and his Deacons were suspended from service. On May 6, 1871, the scattered members who dissented from Wust became organized and became involved in a legal debate as to who rightfully owned the property.

From 1871 to 1876, the congregations were split in half. The one under Wust had possession of the Church building. Those who seceded had 38 families in the congregation and had received \$330.00 for the Minister's salary. The two thriving congregations kept up-to-date records of baptisms, memberships and marriages. Rev. Wust held services in the Church building, leaving the other congregation to meet in a nearby schoolhouse owned by the Rennie family. In 1876, the court declared the congregation that agreed with the classis to be the legal owners of the property, thereby ending a gloomy period in the history of the Church of Lodi. In June of 1876, the congregation took back their Church building, allowing Rev. Huyssoon to preach his first sermon there.

In 1878, congregation members wanted a church where Sunday school would be taught using the English language. At the time, many Scottish and English immigrants were settling in Lodi and they did not understand Dutch. Thus, the Second Reformed Church was formed on Main Street.

The Faith Reformed Church as we know it today was organized on November 19, 1967. It was formed by uniting the First and Second Reformed Church congregations, the latter of which consisted of diverse national origins.

Since the 1967 merger, the Faith Reformed Church has had nine Pastors:

- 1968 TO 1971: G.T. Sloyer
- 1972 to 1979: Robert J. Greydanus
- 1980 to 1982: George Van Sandt
- 1983 to 1985: Clifford Braman
- 1985 to 1991: Victor K. Downing
- 1992 to 1995: I. Douglas Estella
- 1995 to 1997: James Anderson
- 1997 to 2003: Wayne Briggs
- 2003 to present: Timothy Ippolito