



AMERICAN REFORMED CHURCH—Corner Grand and Third Sts.



AMERICAN REFORMED CHURCH,  
NEWBURGH, N. Y.



A BRIEF HISTORY  
PREPARED FOR THE  
SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATION.



FEBRUARY 24, 25 and 27, 1910.







## CHURCH HISTORY.

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It is a fact of general knowledge that the City of Newburgh was originally founded by Germans from the Palatinate. After a few years' struggle with the hardships of a primitive country, they became discouraged and departed to the more friendly climate and more congenial surroundings of Pennsylvania, where others of their race had already settled. They were followed in Newburgh by emigrants from England, and also the Ulster-Scotch, to whom were transmitted all prior claims of the Germans, both as to territory and church rights.

In 1752 the new settlement was given the name of Newburgh, in honor of Newburgh in Scotland. Newburgh became a thriving village, and in the second quarter of the last century her population numbered seven thousand odd. There had been a drift of Holland-Dutch people from Columbia County, Orange County, Dutchess County, Putnam County, Westchester County, and other adjoining counties, to this thrifty village, hence the need for a Dutch Reformed Church was apparent and its founding justified. While, in many of the country sections back from the river, the Dutch founded churches, there seems to have been none nearer than Fishkill and none on this side nearer than New Paltz.

Therefore, in October, 1834, the Rev. William Cruikshank was sent here as a missionary or evangelist to try to gather a Dutch church. In five months he had so far succeeded that it was deemed wise by the Classis of Orange to proceed to the organization of such a society. The beginnings were feeble and the prospects probably not very flattering. There were, at that time, seven churches in a population of as many thousands, and that proportion still exists to the present day. Some of these were old and well established, but the infant enterprise was kindly looked upon and fraternally assisted.

The meeting for the organization was held on February 24, 1835, in the Associate Reformed Church, corner First and Grand Streets, of which the Rev. Dr. McCarrell was then pastor, and of which the Rev. Dr. R. H. Barr is now the pastor.

We find, in The Newburgh Gazette, of January 24, 1835, an advertisement requesting those who had lots for sale which might be suitable for a site for the proposed church, to inform Mr. John Knevels. On the same date, a notice of services to be held by Mr. Cruikshank in the Associate Reformed Church.

On February 14 of the same year, the following notice appeared: "Agreeable to arrangements, recently made, the Classis of Orange, by leave of Divine Providence, will organize a Dutch Church in this village and ordain Elders and Deacons thereof on Tuesday, the 24th instant. Rev. Mr. Vanderveer, of New Hurley, will preach the sermon. Rev. Mr. Lee, of Montgomery, will perform the ordination services, and Rev. Mr. Van Vechten, of Bloomingburgh, will address the people. Male applicants to the Classis for this organization will assemble in the morning of that day at ten o'clock at the house of John W. Knevels, Esq., for the purpose of making the necessary election of officers. Public services will commence at 11 A. M., in the Associate Reformed Church."

These services were duly held, and a card of thanks was published on February 28, acknowledging the kindness and courtesy of the Associate Reformed Church in granting the use of its building.

After April 4, 1835, services were held regularly in the court-room on the upper floor of the Academy Building. Of these services, Rev. Mr. Cruikshank had charge.

The corner-stone of the new edifice was laid October 22, 1835, at 12.30 o'clock. Its first pastor was installed on the morning of that day. After the installation, the congregation moved in procession to the foundation walls of the church in the following order:



First—The Building Committee.

Second—The Consistory.

Third—The Officiating Clergy.

Fourth—The Clergy at large.

Fifth—The Congregation.

Sixth—The Citizens in general.

Addresses were delivered by the Rev. Drs. DeWitt and Broadhead, of New York. Prayer was offered by the Rev. William S. Hyer. The box was set in the stone by Elder Isaac Belknap, who made some feeling remarks. The services were concluded with benediction by the Rev. Seymour Landon, of the M. E. Church.

The edifice, when built, was substantially as it is to-day, excepting for the transepts, which are a later addition. The basement was built and used for worship first on Sunday, November 13, 1837. The building itself was dedicated on December 7, 1837.

It was surmounted by a large dome, but it was found necessary later to remove this, because its weight opened the roof and eaves and kept the interior of the church continually out of repair.

In 1860 a recess was built behind the pulpit and a pastor's study on the north side connected therewith; the interior was entirely renovated and partly remodeled.

In 1867 the congregation had so increased that larger accommodations were required, not a seat being available. An addition of twenty feet to the length of the church, the erection of the transepts and the installing of a new organ were accomplished at this time. This organ came from a church in the South and showed evidences of having gone through the war, bearing plainly the marks of shot and shell. During these improvements, services were held in the evening in the First Presbyterian Church.

Four-fifths of the indebtedness upon the church was raised during the pastorate of the Rev. W. H. Gleason, and the total amount was finally raised on Sunday, November 5, 1882, during the ministry of Rev. H. V. S. Myers, through

the friendly co-operation of the Rev. F. B. Savage, pastor of the Union Presbyterian Church, of this city.

After the subscriptions for the full amount had been put on the list, Mr. Savage suggested that unless some resolution was made by the entire congregation they would very likely fall into debt again, and by a rising vote of the entire congregation, it was resolved never to put a debt on the church again. This resolution has served as a "sheet anchor" in keeping her from drifting into debt in subsequent years.

During the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Myers, the church was entirely cleared of all indebtedness and put on a paying basis.

It is to be gratefully remembered that during the infancy of this church the Collegiate Church, of New York City, fostered its cause and manifested interest in its welfare, even to the extent of advancing money to the amount of some thousands of dollars.

During the Fall of 1884, the church building was thoroughly painted and roofed.

During the years 1851 and 1852, the parsonage was built at a cost of \$3,277, and subsequently the building was enlarged at an approximate cost of \$5,000.

During the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Beattie, in 1894, the present organ was installed and placed in the front of the church. Hitherto it had been in the choir loft in the rear. A new pulpit platform was built at the same time.

About this time a bequest was made to the church by the widow of Uriah Lockwood to the amount of \$1,000. This money was placed to the credit of the church in the Savings Bank, and afterwards used as a beginning for the organ fund.

About the beginning of Mr. Beattie's pastorate, the parsonage was put in thorough repair at a cost of about \$700.

The Rev. A. T. Brook's pastorate began in 1903. During his ministry the church was cleared of all indebtedness. One of Mr. Brook's first acts, which demonstrated his abil-

ity, his grasp of the situation and its requirements, was an earnest plea for the cause of Missions, both Foreign and Domestic. This enlarged the scope of the church's activity, and the invariable result followed—the church at home prospered.

He next turned his attention to the finances of the church, and successfully raised a debt of over \$3,000.

In 1906, the church was re-decorated at a cost of \$1,675. The work was done under the supervision of Mr. J. K. Magar, who employed Mr. A. T. Rose, a church decorator.

The electric light system was also installed at this time, at a cost of \$392.20.

The next year, 1907, a new roof was put on the building at a cost of over \$700, including the painting.

During the same year, the Ladies' Aid Society furnished the carpets, rugs and cushions for the church at a cost of about \$1,400.

In the Fall of 1909 a new iron fence was placed about the property at a cost of about \$375. The plumbing and interior decorations of the parsonage had already been put in excellent condition.

This, in brief, is a history of the progress which the congregation has made relative to the care and improvement of its property.

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### GLEASON MISSION.

In the early part of the Rev. Dr. Gleason's pastorate, the Gleason Mission was organized, and was conducted for over three years, with Dr. Eager as superintendent and a large force of teachers. The school was held for a time in the upper part of a building on Broadway, opposite Chambers Street, and on Chambers Street near Broadway. The school was abandoned after about three years, and Dr. Eager brought all the scholars who were willing to come to the home school, where they remained for many years.

In the Summer of 1897, the Rev. Mr. Beattie re-organized

the force of workers and again took up the work of the Gleason Mission, with Mr. Uriah Traphagen as superintendent, and Mr. Frank Corwin, Mr. Jabez Wilkins, Mr. Joseph Monell, Mrs. Chatfield, Miss Whitbeck, Miss Radiker, Miss Wilkins, Miss Bessie Gordon, Miss Nois, Miss Calyer, and some others, as substitute teachers. The hour for the school session was set at nine o'clock Sunday morning. On the first Sunday the Mission was re-opened, in the abandoned chapel of the Rescue Mission on Broadway, one scholar appeared in the school, but through the efforts of the Rev. Mr. Beattie and the workers, the number had increased to over one hundred in a year.

The school had its Boys' Brigade, with Mr. Monell as director. Many social affairs were held to make happy the poor children. Some of these children were colored. Many of the children were clothed and helped in various ways. This work continued for about two years and a half, when it was again abandoned, as the field for such labor had become overworked. Again, as at the previous abandonment of the work, such scholars as were willing to come were brought into the home school.

By the will of Mrs. Jane D. Houston, a bequest was made of about \$1,000, with accumulating interest, which was to be used as a Gleason Mission Fund for the purpose of erecting a church or chapel, if such course should ever be deemed expedient.

This money was held in trust by the Rev. Mr. Gleason. After a number of years and by order of Mr. Justice Dickey, of the Supreme Court, the money was turned over to the Consistory of the Church to be used for the purposes of general church work.

## MINISTERS.

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Rev. William Cruikshank may be looked upon as the founder of the church. He came here, preached, and canvassed in the village, and the first Consistory was as follows:

Elders—Isaac Belknap, Isaac A. Knevels, John W. Knevels and Thomas C. Stanbrough.

Deacons—Cornelius Bogardus, Daniel Corwin, Albert Wells and Thomas Jessup.

These, with their immediate families, made up the eighteen members of the new church. To this Consistory, after their ordination by the Classis of Orange, the Rev. Mr. Cruikshank transferred the affairs and management of the church, so far as he had as a missionary directed them. Mr. Cruikshank labored for and with the church until December 28, 1837, when, from ill health, he found it necessary to resign. The membership of the church had at this time increased to forty.

On June 12, 1838, a call was given to the Rev. I. M. Fisher, and was accepted. He never really came to Newburgh to live, and failing health caused him to resign after only a few months of service. The church was, in December, 1838, again without a pastor.

On May 17, 1839, the Rev. F. H. Vanderveer became pastor and served the church until August, 1842. He was a graduate of Union College and New Brunswick Seminary. He was evidently a man of considerable ability, because he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity at the age of twenty-eight years.

On September 13, 1842, the Rev. A. B. Van Zandt became pastor and remained here for seven years. During his pastorate the church prospered. Mr. Van Zandt, after leaving Newburgh, served in Petersburg, Va., and later in the Ninth Street Church in New York City. He was made a Professor of Theology at New Brunswick. He also preach-

ed at Montgomery during the years 1859 to 1872. As a preacher he had a fiery impetuosity of delivery which not only always commanded attention, but which often thrilled his audience. Yet his preaching was not what would be called emotional. It was clear, sound, solid reasoning, which instructed the understanding and convinced the heart.

In November, 1849, two months after the resignation of Dr. Van Zandt, an urgent call was presented to Rev. Abraham Polhemus, of Hopewell; but his people refused to allow him to come.

For nearly a year the church was without a pastor, but on January 27, 1850, the Rev. Malcolm A. McLaren was called. During his regime the parsonage was built. Dr. McLaren was a graduate of Union College. He was called to Newburgh from the Central Church of Brooklyn, and served this congregation as its minister from 1850 to 1859. He was beloved by all his people.

In August, 1859, the Rev. G. H. Mandeville was called and remained with the church a little more than ten years. During these years, the church was active and thriving. Dr. Mandeville was a graduate of Rutgers College and New Brunswick Seminary. He was made President of Hope College in 1879, and later was Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Education of the Reformed Church. He published several sermons and addresses, as well as articles in magazines, etc. He was a man of profound thought and a powerful orator. The church was especially successful under his ministry. In October, 1869, Dr. Mandeville received a call from the Reformed Church, of Harlem, and left this church.

The next pastor was the Rev. W. H. Gleason, who was called here in 1870. His pastorate was very successful, as the church increased numerically, and there were also evidences of great spiritual activity, so that it has been said that it resembled a veritable beehive of workers. The seating capacity was taxed to its utmost, and the financial

conditions were entirely favorable. An addition to the parsonage was made and the cost of this was borne entirely by the Ladies' Aid Society. Dr. Gleason was a graduate of Yale. He took up the study of law and practiced successfully for thirteen years. He was elected a Member of Assembly from Suffolk County, N. Y., and was appointed by the Assembly as one of the men to pronounce the eulogy over the body of the martyred President, Abraham Lincoln, at Albany, on its way to Springfield, Ill., for interment. Dr. Gleason was licensed for the ministry in 1870 and ordained in the Presbyterian Church. Newburgh was his first pastorate. He left Newburgh in 1876.

The next pastor was the Rev. J. H. Carroll, D. D. Dr. Carroll was a preacher of eloquence and scholarly attainments. He had national fame as a lecturer, and received the appointment of State Lecturer by the New York Temperance Association in 1881. He was a man of wonderful pulpit magnetism and carried audiences before him. There was a personalty about him which was extremely pleasing. He was a man of warm heart and sympathetic nature, and it is doubtful if the City of Newburgh has ever had another such pulpit orator as Dr. Carroll.

The successor to Dr. Carroll, was the Rev. H. V. S. Myers. As a church worker he was especially strong. He enjoyed the work, was always earnest, and during his administration the entire debt of the church was paid. Dr. Myers took special interest in the young people, and many of the young people's organizations which still exist were formed during his ministry. Three of his children have proven the Christian training of their home by selecting the mission field for their life work.

The next pastor, Rev. Robert H. Beattie, was a graduate of Princeton College and Seminary. He was a teacher in the Mission College of Beirut, Syria, from 1885 to 1889; and Latin tutor in Princeton College from 1890 to 1891, in which year he was called to Newburgh. After preaching here one year, he was granted a leave of absence for a year.

so that he might study in Europe, having won a scholarship at Princeton University. During his absence the pulpit was filled by the Rev. Mr. Miller. Dr. Beattie had a very sympathetic nature and was particularly interested in the poor. His ministry was faithful, and every feature of his work was a success. Mr. Beattie left Newburgh to take up a larger field of work in Chicago, where he has been very successful. Ere he left Newburgh he was tendered a reception by the congregation, at which many friends from other churches were present. During this reception, Hon. B. B. Odell, as President of the Consistory, on behalf of the congregation, presented Mr. Beattie with a beautiful gift as an appreciation of the esteem in which he was held by the congregation.

Succeeding Mr. Beattie, the Rev. A. T. Brook was called in 1903. Mr. Brook was a graduate of Hope College and New Brunswick Seminary. The call extended was unanimous, and the church was particularly favored in the choice of Mr. Brook as its pastor, for he was a man of unusual ability in the pulpit, which was the more marked as he came to this church directly from the Seminary. He early manifested his ability as an organizer and the church grew along all lines of progress. The missionary interests of the church immediately increased; the contributions became large, and were maintained throughout his entire ministry. During his pastorate he organized the Dutch Arms, which is the parent society of many others of the same name. As an adjunct to this, there was organized the Dutch Arms Bible Class, which is still hale and hearty. The Christomathean Society was also organized by him, and the Christomathean Bible Class. Each of these organizations is prosperous and growing strong in the work for which it was intended. One of his earliest efforts was directed towards the liquidation of the church debt of about \$3,000. This was successfully accomplished. His ministry was marked as a most emphatic success. His friends of long standing learned to know him as a man of sterling worth.



The climax of his successful pastorate was a call to the Clinton Avenue Reformed Church, of Newark, N. J., which is in the topmost rank of the churches of our denomination.

The present pastor, Rev. Seymour Purdy, was a classmate of Mr. Brook. He was called here in 1909, from the Reformed Church at Athens, N. Y. Under his administration, the church has maintained its membership and financial standing, and the missionary work is up to the standard. A cordial relationship exists between the people and their pastor, who bids fair to carry on to a successful completion the work so ably inaugurated by his predecessor.

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It is fitting in the memorial history to make a brief record of a very dear friend of our church for many years, from its organization until his death in 1885. We refer to the late John Forsyth, D. D., LL. D. He was a graduate of Rutgers College and completed his preparation for the Presbyterian ministry in Scotland, in the fellowship of Dick and Chalmers. He was massive in form and brain. His knowledge— theological, biblical, historical, classical, and general—was vast. He was sublime in his simplicity, in his friendliness and in his great common sense. He was broad and tolerant in his religious views. He had been the beloved pastor of two churches; a teacher and professor at college and theological seminary, and ended his professional career as Chaplain and Professor at the West Point Military Academy. This man for many years, by frequent presence and ministrations, deeply impressed the heart and mind of this church. His fellowship with its pastors was very close. He offered his congratulations at its semi-centennial celebration and preached the evening sermon. He often preached from its pulpit; was frequently an attendant upon its regular services, its Sunday School, and meetings for prayer, and assisted often in the administration of the Lord's Supper.

So we bring to a close this cursory history of our beloved church. For seventy-five years she has stood as a witness for God and for the proclamation of the Gospel. May her future be one of usefulness to mankind and service unto our God.

“I love thy Church, O, God;  
Her walls before Thee stand,  
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,  
And graven on Thy hand.

“For her my tears shall fall,  
For her my prayers ascend;  
To her my cares and toils be given,  
Till toils and cares shall end.”

The Committee desires to express its thanks to Messrs. Magar and Traphagen, the Rev. J. F. Shafer, and Dr. W. S. Gleason, for valuable suggestions and material, of great assistance in its work.

JOSEPH VAN CLEFT, Chairman,  
DE WITT McKINSTRY,  
IRA D. MINARD,  
H. SCOTT CORWIN,  
Historical Committee.