first Council. Until such a time that God provides the new congregation with its own pastor, worship will be led by Rev. James Slopsema in the morning and by Classical and seminary appointees in the evening. Zion PRC continues to meet for worship at Heritage Christian School, and will be seeking to purchase or construct a church building within the Jenison area in coming months.

As the daughter congregation of Faith PRC, the members of Zion extend heartfelt thanks to their mother congregation and its members for providing a spiritual home in which to grow in knowledge and faith. Through this nurturing process, a new manifestation of Christ’s bride has been prepared to take up her work in building another household of faith within the PRC. Together we give thanks for the extended family of Christ found in the PRC, and look forward to taking an active role in witnessing to the glory of our precious Lord!

A Spiritual House Preserved: A Century in the River’s Bend, Calvin Kalsbeek, ed. Jenison, MI: RFPA, 2016, 728 pages + xxii, $44.95. [Reviewed by Bruce Koole.]

Hope Protestant Reformed Church has set the standard for church memoirs with their book entitled A Spiritual House Preserved: A Century in the River’s Bend. This is a book well worth spending the time it takes to digest its seven hundred and fifty pages of material. Hope’s anniversary committee deserves summa cum laude for the vast amount of organization and labor put forth in the publication of this book.

The title A Spiritual House Preserved is so very apropos. “By my count for Hope’s century of existence as a church militant, she has been without a minister for nearly twenty-five years” (131-132). Further, over her first twenty years of existence she had a minister for just under seven years. Jehovah tells Zerubbabel, “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit” (Zech. 4:6) and, “For who hath despised the day of small things? For they shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven” (Zech. 4:10). Such is the grand story of Hope Church: though very insignificant in the world, she is rewarded for her faithfulness.

The story of Hope and any other true church follows the preaching. Very appropriately, the book begins with Rev. David Overway’s concise meditation on 1 Peter 2:4-5 about a spiritual house built on the rejected cornerstone, Christ Jesus (xi-xiv). Without that foundation there would be no true Hope Protestant Reformed Church. The book ends with an edited version of a 2014 sermon on that same passage (708-720). Both are very instructive. This text had been the sermon first preached by Rev. John R. Brink, whose memoirs of Hope are included as Appendix 1, when Hope humbly began at the river’s bend in the Winter of 1916.

This work of history has about every writing type and historical style possible; comprehensive is an understatement. A Spiritual House Preserved contains early history; a brief history of her twelve ministers (seventy-five years of which were related by Richard Bloem); an architectural history; a recalling of Hope’s experiences in the searing 1924 and 1953 doctrinal controversies; perspectives and autobiographical retrospectives of Hope’s ministers; an opening of Hope’s consistorial minutes book; thirteen very dazzling oral histories; and the memories of those who experienced the 1956 tornado. There is the doctrinal section on the pastor’s labors; the council’s jobs; the member’s responsibilities; the life of the various societies; the sons who have entered the gospel ministry (one of whom was my father); daughter congregations; mission work; covenantal education (637-651); Young People’s Convention memories; and thirteen appendices with graphs, statistics, and charts. Yet more, there is a list of organists (700-701); themes and texts used in family visitation; a description of the card-making work of that guileless dove, Anne Buiter (498-499); a description of the struggles faced by wheelchair-bound Kris Moelker...

BRING THE BOOKS... MR. CHARLES TERPSTRA, review editor

A Spiritual House Preserved: A Century in the River’s Bend, Calvin Kalsbeek, ed. Jenison, MI: RFPA, 2016, 728 pages + xxii, $44.95. [Reviewed by Bruce Koole.]

Mr. Koole is a member of Loveland Protestant Reformed Church in Loveland, Colorado.
(98-100); and the decades-long difficulties of the Kooienga family after Rog’s car accident (222-224). In terms of mission work, Hope has labored in Lansing, Michigan; Christchurch, New Zealand; Victoria, Canada; Singapore; and Yangon, Myanmar. The book is chock-full of maps, diagrams, pictures of members, and buildings past and present. After reading all this, a man can say with the psalmist Asaph, “Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart” (Ps. 73:1).

In keeping with the budgetary struggles from her early years through both the economic difficulties of the Great Depression and the loss of members in 1924 and 1953, Hope’s frugality played a role in their church life past and present, as it has in many of our churches. Permit me to elaborate on the sunglasses example mentioned by Professor Russell Dykstra (565-567). This story found its way into some Standard Bearers. This story is shaped by one of my ancestors.

Ken G. Vink explained in the Standard Bearer rubric “News from Our Churches” that during divine worship services the sanctuary architecture was designed in such a way that for five minutes or so of every sermon the setting sun’s luminescence would blind the preacher. Hope debated getting a drapery and made a motion calling for such at a special congregation meeting. In the course of debate, my paternal grandfather stood up and declared with absolute certainty that it was a waste of money to buy curtains. What they should do instead was buy sunglasses for the pastor. My grandfather would go so far as to pay for them himself. Say what you will, this argument proved conclusive to those present. Vink related that a drapery purchase was approved.

A few Standard Bearer issues later, Ken G. Vink reported that someone had instead donated the drapery. He concluded, “The [building] committee further reported that sunglasses were available for emergency conditions, but they were never used.” Even at the late date of 1977, Hope Church was still guided by the extreme financial paucity of her early existence (5-42, 132-150, 679-680). But such a Corinthian attitude toward building fiduciary is not unfamiliar in many of our other churches. Many other stories dealing with poverty, budgets, and architectures are included in the book (77-102).

With all the highlights of the two keys of the kingdom—that is, the preaching and the administration of the sacraments—the third key, discipline, is not left out. It is dealt with mercifully. There was the shocking departure of a prominent member, Tony (253, 304-305). There was a minister who had to read the Form of Excommunication even as the unrepentant member thrust a microphone and tape recorder in his pastor’s face (163). There were the children misbehaving in church (185, 226). And, there was the consistorial motion that only the believing parent may stand for baptism (193). Did you know that the later-deposed Hubert DeWolff (41-42, 142-143, 217-218, etc.) pastored Hope for five years? Read and see.

The true church always has the lines of election and reprobation cutting through the line of the covenant. This impacts me personally. My parents, paternal grandparents, and maternal grandparents all worshiped at Hope for many decades. While the history of this church has elements of hagiography, the history of each of us is hagiographical by the second. We are each covered in Christ’s blood, without whose justifying death for our sins we could not stand in the throne room of Almighty Jehovah and pray, nor have any hope of salvation. Thus, mercy is the watchword.

Something else of note is that Hope Church’s setup today in the modern, suburbanized world is providentially similar to her founding in the era of horse and buggy. Hope’s members can walk to church, societies, catechism, grade school, and high school. In the age of the automobile, plane, space travel, and cell phone, the families and children who walk slow still run the show. What is the old adage? “The more things change, the more things stay the same”? Or, does not the unchanging Jehovah still show us a bit of Himself and have the last laugh?

Editor Calvin Kalsbeek deserves praise for keeping a very readable style throughout the book. With the large number of different authors, the book seems to have only one writer. There is certainly a repeat of various information about persons and their activities, but by no means was any of it monotonous. Credit the editor and the anniversary committee.

Three minor errors I did notice, which did not detract in any major way from the flow of the narrative. The sec-

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The Heidelberg Catechism, one of the three Forms of Unity, is dear to us. It was composed in the city of Heidelberg in 1563 at the request of Elector Frederick III. The first edition contained 128 questions and answers. The second and third editions contained 129 questions and answers. Do you know which question and its answer were added at the behest of the Elector? Answer later in this column.

Young People’s Activities

The Young People’s Society of Cornerstone PRC of Dyer, IN held a basketball game fund-