

Dear reader,

In a white church building at 229 Hammond St., Randolph, WI, meets the “Randolph Protestant Reformed Church.” For over 60 years, this church has been in existence. Some of you know of this church, but to many we might be a stranger. It is our desire to tell you who we are so that, if you are interested, you might know us better.

Our name already tells you some things about us. First, our name says that we are a church. To some, a church is simply a religious organization - a group of people sharing the same faith who come together for a common cause. To us, a church is more than that. We claim to be part of *the* church - *Christ’s* church. We are part of the body of those for whom Jesus Christ died, and in whom the Spirit of God has worked faith in Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, as the only Savior of sinners. We do not claim to be the *whole* of Christ’s church, but a *part* of that church.

That we are part of Christ’s church means *first* that we are sinners. Perhaps you knew that about us already. We know it about ourselves, too. We are not happy about our sins; we work hard to avoid them. But regretfully, we still do sin at times against God and our neighbor. *Second*, that we are part of Christ’s church means that Jesus Christ came to take away our sins. We confess that God forgives our sins, but only because He desires to, not because we deserve Him to. *Third*, that we are part of Christ’s church means that we pray to God for power to obey His law, to live in love for God and our neighbor, and to be truly sorrowful for our sins. *Finally*, that we are part of Christ’s church means that we look for Christ to come again some day, to take us to heaven, to live with Him there forever.

Another thing that our name makes known about us is that we are Reformed in our faith, practices, worship style, and government. By “Reformed” we mean that we follow the lead set by men like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and others, who worked hard in the 1500s and 1600s to make the church see that the Bible is to be her only authority for faith and life.

Especially, that we are Reformed means that we hold to the same understanding of Scripture to which Reformed churches have held from the time of the Reformation on. That understanding is summarized in the three Reformed confessions, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordt, as well as in other documents. These confessions are summaries of that which we believe the Bible teaches. We do not consider them greater than the Bible, or even equal to; they are a tool to help us understand the Bible. If you wish to understand better what a Reformed church believes, please write or call us for a free copy of “The Three Forms of Unity,” in which our confessions are found.

A third point that our name makes known about us is that we belong to a denomination called the “Protestant Reformed Churches of America.” The word “Protestant” in our name does not refer as much to our Reformed heritage, as it does to the history by which we came into existence as a denomination in 1924. That history is not our concern now. We are simply saying that we belong to a denomination of other churches who share the same faith.

This denomination is not large, according to today’s standards. We have 28 congregations in the United States and Canada, with a total membership of about 7000 people. Two of our ministers are devoted to establishing new congregations in America, while five others serve as missionaries in the United Kingdom, Ghana, the Philippines, and Singapore.

We give you this information, so that you know something about us. But the next piece of information is what we consider the most important: our greatest desire is that God use us faithfully to speak the truth of Scripture, in love for Him and our neighbor.

Every Christian church that is worthy of the name “church” claims to love God and its neighbor. And most, if not all, Christian churches are concerned with what Scripture says.

But how many churches or Christians claim to demonstrate their love by speaking the truth of Scripture faithfully? To speak the truth faithfully sometimes means that one must speak of doctrines most people do not like to hear. It means that one must condemn certain actions which we all like to do, or of which society approves.

But the Jesus whom we understand the Bible to speak of, loved . . . and hated; He approved . . . and condemned. So it is our concern to understand rightly what God says in the Bible, and to adjust our thinking, believing, and living accordingly. This is not easy to do. We do not do it perfectly. But we work hard to do it to the best of our ability.

Why? Because above all, knowing and loving the truth is important for those who will be saved. In future mailings, then, we hope to explain to you why the truth is so important to us, and what we understand that truth to be.

Pastor Douglas Kuiper

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 16:15-18

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

I Timothy 1:15

We believe that we ought diligently and circumspectly to discern from the Word of God which is the true Church, since all sects which are in the world assume to themselves the name of the Church. . . . The marks by which the true Church is known are these: if the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if she maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin: in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church. Hereby the true Church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself.

Belgic Confession, Art. 29 (The Belgic Confession, written in the 1500s, is a confession to which all Reformed churches subscribe).