

NINETY YEARS



THE REFORMED CHURCH

EAST MILLSTONE, N. J.



1855 - 1945

- A S K E T C H -

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F. Alvin Langwith
Stated Supply

Friend, you enter this church not as a stranger but as a guest of God. He is your heavenly Father. Come, then, with joy in your heart and thanks on your lips into His presence, offering Him your love and service. Be grateful to the strong and loyal men who in the name of Jesus Christ, builded this place of worship, and to all who have beautified it and hallowed it with their prayers and praises. Beseech His blessing on those who love this home of faith as the inspiration of their labor, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit, and may that blessing rest on you, both on your going out and on your coming in.

From a twelfth century church
in Boldre, Hampshire, England

The East Millstone of today is a far cry from the little village from which it grew. About 1850, this community was known as Johnsville, and consisted of an old hotel, three or four farmhouses, a school, a storehouse and a couple of stores. There was not a house on the street where the church now stands. The town was known as a grain depot. In 1854 the Millstone Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad was built, bringing an influx of workers. Business increased, considerable growth and prosperity ensued.

Up to this time most of the people in this section were members of the Hillsborough Reformed Church. A Methodist Church was organized about a year before the Reformed, but there was a good deal of agitation for a Reformed Church in the town. The Classis of New Brunswick appointed a committee, June 19, 1855, to consult with the Consistory of the Hillsborough Church and the people of East Millstone.

Events followed with great rapidity. On July 19, 1855 the committee reported for immediate organization. Classis met in the Hillsborough Church, Oct. 9, 1855, to organize the East Millstone Church, with sixteen members from Hillsborough and two from Six Mile Run. A consistory of four was chosen. On Oct. 16, 1855 the building committee advertised for bids.

During the first winter services were held in the school; Seminary students and supply preachers conducted the services. A lot for the church was secured for \$300, and the edifice begun in the spring of 1856. Dr. John Ludlow of the Seminary laid the cornerstone and Dr. James M. Mathews of New York preached the dedication sermon. The total cost of the church, ground and bell was \$5,748.23. The new church started with a debt of \$2,353.

The first pastor was called from the graduating class of New Brunswick Seminary, Giles

Vande Wall, a Hollander. He was ordained and installed July 9, 1856. His salary was \$500, a donation and some aid from the Board of Domestic Missions. Through the generosity of other churches, local efforts and friends in New York City, the debt was reduced to \$800. Pew rents were fixed by minister and consistory, varying according to location. When the first pastorate ended, June 8, 1858, the membership was 46.

David Cole came to this church for his first pastorate Nov. 23, 1858, at a salary of \$750 and a donation. He proposed the erection of a parsonage and offered to pay rent toward its cost. At an outlay of \$3,300, it was ready for occupancy in October 1859. The ministry of this kindly and fatherly man ended April 1, 1863, when he became Professor of Greek Language and Literature in Rutgers College. The church membership at this time was 130.

Martin Luther Berger, finishing his studies at Union Seminary, began his ministry May 1, 1863. The entire debt, now \$4,500, was removed. Up to this time the pulpit platform was about half the size of the present one, with a white desk on it. Along the sides of the church were four long pews, running the length of the building. During these early years many men attended the prayer meetings, often going to the sick and shut-in; there were at least sixteen men who could pray in public.

This church became the second pastorate of Rev. William Henry Phraner, 1866 - 1870. It was at this time the platform was enlarged and the alcove built for a pipe organ costing \$1,200. This organ preceded similar instruments in the neighbor churches at Middlebush and Millstone by quite a few years. The choir was moved from the rear gallery to its present place.

Sunday School, for adults and children, was held in the church basement Sunday afternoons following worship. Long before the church was organized there was a Sunday School Association in the village; it became the church school. Housed in the basement was also a private school. The first teacher was Frederick R. Brace, who entered the ministry.

Rev. Alex. McWilliam, a Scotsman, was pastor from 1870 to 1890. Many new members were received, but the inevitable changes kept the size of the congregation about the same.

With long experience in the pastorate, Rev. Joseph Pascal Strong came to this church in 1890. At the beginning of his third month he suffered a stroke while preaching the evening sermon and died a few hours later. During this very short pastorate the Ladies Aid Society was organized. These loyal and industrious ladies have rendered yeoman service for more than a half century.

The Rev. Alonzo Paige Peeke was installed as pastor Nov. 8, 1891. The chapel was added to the church at a cost of \$1,400 and became the home of the Sunday School. Mr. Peeke's health gave way and he had to stop his ministerial work. He died Aug. 20, 1900, while en route home by train.

Dr. Henry Lockwood served a long pastorate - 24 years, beginning in 1901. By his own pastoral work and as a result of evangelistic campaigns numerous additions were made to the membership. He held very responsible positions in the larger work of the denomination. Hope College conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1916.

In May 1926 Jacob John Sessler, a student in New Brunswick Seminary, began his labors here. Upon his graduation in 1928 he was ordained and installed as pastor, continuing through 1929. He introduced the junior sermon at the worship services; Chris-

tian Endeavor societies were strengthened and much work done for the youth.

Rich in pastoral experience, Henry Clifford Willoughby became pastor in the fall of 1930. He endeared himself to his people by his kindly and fatherly manner. His sudden death on Nov. 22, 1939 brought great sorrow to all.

During the next five and one half years the church was served by students from New Brunswick Seminary. John W. Beardslee III was in charge most of 1940; Francis Edward Potter in 1941, and Lorenz Alexander Proli from 1942 to June 1945. These young men are remembered as excellent preachers, and as time could be spared from their studies, rendered valuable pastoral service. With the manpower shortage reflected in the ministry as elsewhere, the East Millstone Church arranged with her neighbor church at Middlebush to have her pastor, Rev. Frank Alvin Langwith, become

stated supply, conducting Sunday morning worship and rendering pastoral service. In the not too distant future it is hoped that this church may have a pastor of her own to lead this people into paths of greater service.

So brief a story fails to do justice to a fine record. Space does not permit the record of outstanding personalities. The ministers have been men of high caliber; the laymen have been alert and responsive. Self-supporting since 1860 and free from debt since 1863 is an enviable achievement. Built to meet the definite needs of a new and growing community, this church still has a place to fill. Who can tell whether the future years may not present some new challenge?

"This is our faith tremendous,
Our wild hope, who shall scorn,
That in the name of Jesus
The world shall be reborn."

C O N S I S T O R Y

Elders: Henry Powelson
Addison Van Nuys

Deacons: Harry T. Hough
Richard Ruppert
(Armed Forces)

Clerk
Thomas H. Mettler

Treasurer
Harry T. Hough

Musical Director
Mr. James H. Wood

Sexton
Mr. Fred Toulmin

Sunday School Supt.
Mrs. Elton Welsh

The Ladies' Aid Society
Pres. Mrs. William Bird
V. P. Mrs. Fred Toulmin
Sec. Mrs. Frederick Sander
Treas. Mrs. Ida Welsh

P A S T O R S

Giles Vande Wall	1856-1858
David Cole	1858-1863
Martin Luther Berger	1863-1866
William Henry Phraner	1866-1870
Alex. McWilliam	1870-1890
Joseph Pascal Strong	1890
Alonzo Paige Peeke	1891-1900
Henry Lockwood	1901-1925
Jacob John Sessler	1926-1929
Henry Clifford	
Willoughby	1930-1939
John W. Beardslee III	1940
Francis Edward Potter	1941
Lorenz Alexander	
Prol	1942-1945
Frank Alvin Langwith	1945-

NISI DOMINUS FRUSTRA

EENDRACHT MAAKT MACHT

Geluck Een Lelie
Onder De Doornen