

## MEMORIES FROM JAMES & RITA ADMIRAAL

We arrived in Rock Valley in September of 1971. I was a candidate for the ministry who had accepted the call to serve Trinity CRC. After passing the classical examination (held in New Holland, South Dakota CRC), I was ordained in the Trinity CRC.

Soon after, we moved into the parsonage, which had just been completed. When we came, we had two children, a 1-year-old daughter and a 4-month-old son. When I arrived, they were still holding their worship services in the Christian School gym. The gym had to be set up prior to each Sunday with a podium and folding chairs. I remember that the singing in that gym was fantastic. It truly sounded loud inside and made for enthusiastic services.

Then the first church building was constructed “up the hill,” next to the parsonage. Each day we could see the building going up and the progress being made. There was a set-back, however, which I also recall vividly. One night there was quite a windstorm and the newly-erected walls of the church had collapsed. So the builder had to start over putting up the frame. After the building was completed, we enjoyed a beautiful sanctuary. It’s interior stone front gave it a majestic look.

More importantly, the congregation continued to grow. Trinity was not only my first congregation, but I was also their first pastor. That made for a special bond. The many young families, alongside a small number of older members, provided many small children and lots of baptisms, for which we thanked the Lord.

When we left in the summer of 1975, the church had grown considerably – numerically, but also spiritually. Our time at Trinity was a blessed time – for me as a young pastor and for our family.

The fellowship and friendliness of the congregation was something my wife and I have never forgotten. Even though the evening worship service in those years began at 7:00 PM, the church was filled, including the children and youth. And then we still went out afterwards for visits with church families. Two more children were added to our family in Rock Valley – both born in Hegg Hospital.

In the summer of 1975, I accepted a call to the Pleasant Street CRC in Whitinsville, MA. That was our longest move to a quite different, long-established and large congregation. From there, we went in 1980 back to the Midwest to serve the Second Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, MI. In 1987, we moved to Zeeland, MI to serve the North Street CRC. In 1992, we returned to farm country, as I took the call to serve the First CRC of Prinsburg, MN. From there, in 1998, we moved to Randolph, WI, to serve the Second CRC. I officially retired from the CRC in 2002 and we moved to Wayland, MI, to live near a daughter and family there. We have lived in our own home there ever since.

In 2003, I served as interim pastor of the Cornerstone United Reformed in Hudsonville, MI, as they were vacant. In 2005, that church decided to call me to become their “regular” pastor. So I came out of my retirement, and continued to serve them until the end of 2010. Since then, I have been kept plenty busy filling the pulpit of vacant churches or those needing pulpit supply.

A quick note on our family. The Lord granted Rita and me 7 children. All of them are married and living in various places of our country and world – far and near (Japan, Indonesia, Texas, Alabama, Pennsylvania, and Michigan). Through them, and by God’s grace, we enjoy a boatful of 26 grandchildren. My vice-admiral (my wife) is responsible for keeping track of their birthdays, grades in school, etc. May the Lord grant His continued blessing to the Trinity congregation.

Our Love in Christ,  
Pastor James and Rita Admiraal