

EARLY HISTORY

Dispatch Christian Reformed Church was organized in 1872 by Dutch settlers. The community became known as Rotterdam, Kansas. In the late 1860's there were many Dutch settlers in the Holland, Michigan area needing more land and a place to worship their loving God in the manner in which they were accustomed. They found this place here in central Kansas where there was still land left to be homesteaded.

These Dutch Settlers came in the late 1860's and early 1870's by covered wagons or by train to the end of the railroad line at Solomon City or Waterville, Kansas. At this point wagons were bought or hired for the remainder of the way to the area northwest of Cawker City.

Dutch settlers also came from Pella, Iowa to this area. In the 1860's census, there were only 45 Netherlands born citizens in Kansas, but this changed quickly as more and more Dutch families came to this area. They continued living their faith in God and soon were gathering in Teunis Kuiken's home to worship together. When Antje Kuiken married Berend Koops, their larger home was the worship place. They organized a Christian Reformed Church in 1872 but it was not chartered until later. For these Dutch settlers, their church was as vital a necessity to their spiritual life as food to their physical being. It was on the suggestion of the home missionary, Rev. T. VandenBosch, that they have a more formal worship service. They then started meeting in the nearby Little Oak Schoolhouse. Soon after this organization, Teunis Kuiken donated 4 acres of his land in the very northwest corner of Section 30 in Erving Township in Jewell County, to the church for the church building and grounds.

The first church building was built on this acreage. It is recorded to have been 28 feet long and 16 feet wide with chairs for seating and a circular stage. Later, this little church was made into a parsonage when the next church was built.

