

THE KERK

St. John's Reformed Church, 126 Old Post Road North, Upper Red Hook, New York 12571

Phone: 845-758-1184; Fax: 845-758-3675; email: office@stjohnsreformed.org

NOVEMBER 2024

VOL. 63 NO. 11

Minister's Musings

Writing something right now feels a bit daunting. As many, if not all of you know, this past Sunday morning, there was a fire in the parsonage. This experience is incredibly difficult. We are all okay and managing, but it is still hard. I am, once again, floored by the outpouring of care and kindness that has been shown to myself and our tiny family in the messy middle of this moment.

It struck me, as I watched fire truck after fire truck show up to the parsonage, that I had been preaching the last couple weeks on suffering and the hard moments of life - and that day, that Sunday, was a bit of a break in the midst of suffering. It was supposed to be a Sunday where we talked about how the hard stuff of this life commingles with the joy that comes with the morning. How the hard stuff of life does not disappear when good things happen eventually. That the hard times and seasons of life coexist alongside the good.

I thought about it as they piled in; how ironic it has been to be preaching about a man who lost everything and found himself seated atop an ash heap, almost a little too close to home. I thought, even in the midst of this, we have a glimpse into what that must have felt like - to have everything stripped away in an instant.

And yet. Alongside all this pain, heartache and turmoil, there have been moments of immense lifting. I am hesitant to say "joy", because I don't think that would be exactly accurate, but definitely moments where the weight of what we're experiencing has been lifted ever so slightly.

You are the body of Christ and we have experienced, just in the last few days, the gift that it has been to be lifted by you. From texts, phone calls, prayers, soup, places to rest our heads and our weary bodies, presence, hugs, calls to insurance agents and cleaning service - it has been incredible and we are extremely grateful for the gift that it is to be a part of this portion of the body of Christ.

Thank you for showing up as the hands and feet of Jesus to us in these precious days. We are immensely grateful for all of you.

Rev. Alisha Riepma-Hosier
Minister of Word and Sacrament

Faith & Education



Bible Study

In the weekly Wednesday morning Bible Study, we are back to following the Revised Common Lectionary passages. Preaching Elder John Roberts leads the group each week on Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. All are welcome whether or not they have read the Bible verses in advance.



Children's Program

Sunday School is held each week for children aged three years through second grade. Mrs. Wambach leads the class with an occasional substitute. We are still hoping to begin a class for older students as well.

We also need nursery care for the little ones who are too young for a Sunday School class. This would allow some of the older students to attend Sunday School as well. Let Eileen Wambach or Desiree Albizu know if you can help teach or offer nursery care on occasion. These are two vital roles as we rebuild the children's program after the pandemic.

Instruction on the Lord's Table will also be offered this fall for those children 9 years old or third grade and up. The bulletin will offer more information in the weeks to come.



Book Club

The Book Club will meet on Monday, November 11 to discuss "Becoming Madame Secretary", by Stephanie Dray. The group is always open to suggestions for new books to read. Anyone who has read the book or listened to it is welcome to join in the discussions.



St. John's Monthly Prayer Service meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m., in the sanctuary. The next monthly prayer service is November 5.

Prayers are offered for St. John's missions, for the local community, for those on the prayer list, for those who are unable to gather with the congregation for worship, for personal prayers, and for anyone in need of God's love.

For more information, please see *James Walrath*.



Blooming in Faith Women's Fellowship meets on the first Wednesday of the month in the fellowship hall. The next meeting is November 6, at 7 p.m.

We gather for fellowship and to create art. For more information, please see *Elizabeth Young*.



Scudder Circle meets Thursday, Nov. 7, at noon, in the fellowship hall. We will be having a soup making workshop and will be enjoying a light meal of homemade soup and bread. All women associated with SJRC are invited to join us.

We have begun the collection of gently used jewelry for our annual sale at the November 23, Christmas Bazaar. If you have items to donate, please look for the donation box on the worship table in the fellowship hall. Many of the members of Scudder will also be contributing pies and other foods for the bazaar refreshments.



Undie Sundays for Haiti

During the month of November, Scudder Circle is requesting donations of NEW underwear, both genders, child, teen and adult sizes. We refer to this project as Undie Sundays. The underwear will be distributed to those in need in Haiti. We also send funds to be used to purchase foods and other needed supplies for these people. Please bring your donations during the month of November. We will have a box in the fellowship hall for collection of underwear. If you wish to make a monetary donation, please mark it for Scudder/Haiti. For more information, please see Mary Bayer.



Skit and Covered Dish Luncheon:

On Sunday, November 3, please join the Shepherds after the worship service for a delicious meal and fun times! Please bring a dish to share. A sign-up sheet is on the table in the fellowship hall. For more information, please see Eileen Zeliph.



Mission and Outreach

Thank you to each one of you for your love and support for our missions. We were blessed to host a Hunger Lunch in September, which people graciously donated \$611 to our Deacon Fund Food Pantry. We were able to provide school supplies to many of our food pantry families, which were received with much gratitude. The Housewares Rummage Sale held on October 3, 4, and 5, was a huge success. \$576 was donated to the Deacon's Fund Food Pantry. Thank you to all who contributed monetarily and for all those who volunteered!

Hurricane Relief: The M & O Committee would like to give the congregation and others an opportunity to help the hurricane victims of both Helene and Milton. The situation is so very serious and desperate. Both World Central Kitchen, offering food, and World Vision, offering generators, water, blankets and other supplies, are already helping on the ground. We have supported these two excellent organizations in the past. If you would like to contribute to either organization, please write it in the memo line on your check, or on the envelope if cash, which organization you would like to support, or just hurricanes and we will split the monies between the two.



Winter Coat & Boot Drive 2024!

As signs of the seasons changing begin to appear, our thoughts turn towards cold weather preparation. Two of the most requested items for our annual Christmas Presents are coats and boots so our Mission & Outreach committee has decided to hold a Winter Coat and Boot drive. This is our third annual drive, and we hope to make it a tradition. We ask that gently used winter coats, jackets, parkas, snowsuits and snow boots of all sizes be dropped off in the collection boxes located in the education wing and in the fellowship hall. These in turn will be cleaned as needed and gifted to any in need. Of course, new items are also welcome, but it is great to reuse as well. Thank you!



Adopt a Christmas Gift

Season's Greetings! Every year M & O holds an adopt a Christmas gift for our food pantry families. Children, high school age or younger, are presented with one clothing item and one entertainment item (approximately \$25). Our Food Pantry families fill out the Christmas Present Registration form with identification information and their request for one clothing item and one entertainment/toy item. The Mission and Outreach Committee receives the forms and then our secret Santas shops for the items.

For those not fond of shopping, monetary donations are most welcomed, and we have two or three hearty shoppers/bargain hunters that will happily search for those hard to find items. Please see a member of the M & O Committee to participate in this Mission.

A Blessing Bag Idea from M & O Committee

We may not encounter homeless people in our community as often as those who live in larger cities, but we can be prepared to help those in need in this small way. A Blessing Bag contains practical, mostly non-perishable items such as a bottle of water, granola bars, crackers and snacks, beef sticks, tissues, wipes, socks, gloves, deodorant, a toothbrush and toothpaste, whatever you feel appropriate for the areas you travel. The bag could be as simple as a Ziploc, or maybe a mesh bag with a drawstring. Perhaps the winter's mice might get to the food first, but those items can be replaced. You may want to place a small Bible or New Testament or other booklet of inspiration in the bag as well. Be creative and be prepared to bless someone.



Saturday, November 23

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR & LUNCH WITH SANTA

Join us for the annual Christmas Bazaar & Lunch with Santa on Saturday, November 23 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be kid-friendly fare as well as the usual soup, sandwiches and pies. The Scudder Circle has already begun collecting jewelry for their sale. The Arts & Crafts ladies will have Christmas decor items. They are taking donations until November 18. There will be other vendors and the Used Toy Sale in the Assembly Hall. Donations will be taken for other tables as space allows. Please contact Desiree Albizu for more information at desireeralbizu@gmail.com.

A note from the Arts & Crafts Ladies,

Once again the Arts & Crafts Group is hoping to have a white elephant table at the Christmas Bazaar; but, WE need your help! If you have clean, gently used Christmas decorations, ornaments, holiday items and/or Thanksgiving items-please save them for us. We will accept your donations by Sunday, November 17th.

If you can help set up on Friday, November 22nd, please let Eileen Zeliph or myself, JoAnn Fisher know. If anyone can help with sales during the sale, it would be greatly appreciated. Any questions, please ask! All profits from the sale will go back to the church for the general funds and needs. Thank you, *JoAnn Fisher and Eileen Zeliph*.



Fresh Flowers in the Church Sanctuary

If anyone would like to place fresh flowers in church, there are a few easy ways to do it! 1. Purchase flowers, or 2. Cut flowers from your garden, or 3. Send the church office a donation.

Vases are available in the kitchen cabinets to the left of the refrigerator. Flowers can be arranged in a single vase; however, double vases are best for communion Sundays. Flowers need to be in place by 9:45 a.m. If you want a dedication in that Sunday's bulletin, please contact the church office at 845-758-1184.



If you would like to place poinsettia plants in the sanctuary for **Christmas**, please complete this form with your payment and put it in the offering plate or mail to the church office.

Form & payment must be returned no later than Sunday, December 1st.

I would like to order _____ 6 ½" poinsettia plant(s) @ \$10.00 each.
Total payment _____

In memory of

Other dedication

Given by

Please email the office if you order won't get in by Dec. 1: office@stjohnsreformed.org

Questions? Please call the Church office, 845-758-1184.

Please make checks payable to: St. John's Reformed Church.
Please indicate "Poinsettia- Christmas Flowers", on the memo section of your check
or on your envelope.

If mailing, please send completed form and payment to:
St. John's Reformed Church
126 Old Post Road North
Red Hook, NY 12571



Volunteer Drivers

To all who recently signed up on the sheet about driving members to doctors appointment, I will be coordinating the rides when needed. If I hear of a person needing a ride, I will speak to the person and then contact one of you.

Thank you for doing this. I feel the need will arise at some point.

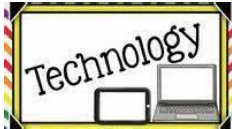
God Bless,

Eileen Zeliph-Shepherd Coordinator



Streaming Sunday Services:

YouTube Live streaming of our Sunday Services has begun. Zoom streaming has been discontinued. To access YouTube Live go to our website and click on the YouTube Live icon.



Help Wanted

The technology committee needs some help running the live stream for our services on Sunday mornings. The change to YouTube Live is significantly easier than using Zoom. The task of running the stream consists of three separate skills, cameraman, computer setup and shut down, and audio operator.

The cameraman task involves which picture from one of two cameras is being sent YouTube, and setting where the camera needs to be aimed. One camera is always set to a wide angle shot. When that camera is selected the cameraman presses a button to select the shot needed next (Sermon, piano, organ, choir, communion table) and presses a button at the appropriate time to switch the streaming camera. No computer skills are needed to do this job.

The audio operator needs to press a scene button to switch from voices to hymns, and musical scenes. This operation also calls for muting the pastors microphone at appropriate times and letting the lectionary speaker talk. This job requires a lot of your attention and can be noticeable if you miss a cue as to when the scene needs to change. No computer skills are needed for this job.

The computer job requires knowledge of normal Windows operations. We use two programs, one that loads the camera buttons when the computer is first turned on after the cameras come on. The second runs YouTube Live streaming, this program is started when the computer is on after the cameras are running. Once this program is on we need to click on a manage stream button, fill in the name we use for our YouTube Live stream, and then press start. After that we press start record and we are streaming. Nothing has to be done while the stream runs. At the end of service we press end record, then stream end and are done. We then shutdown the computer.

You can learn one or more tasks at your own rate. We can use the help. Once you are trained it would be best if you operated your skill at least once a month to retain the skill. The more skills you have the better, but we welcome all help we can get. You need to be there about 9:30 on Sunday mornings to make sure everything is running and stay in the balcony until after the end of the postlude (Organ music played at the completion of the service). If you are interested come up and visit Doug and Wayne in the balcony before or at the end of a Sunday service.

The Technology Committee



PROPERTY COMMITTEE - FALL TASKS ARE HERE - AND THEN SOME

You may recall in the last Property Committee Kerk article the mention of the tasks that we were fortunate enough to have completed in the spring and summer months. This included the normal items that are necessary to maintain the sanctuary, the fellowship hall, the Ed Wing, and the parsonage and, of course, the grounds and the cemetery. The field west of the parking lot has been mowed which enhances the view of the Catskills to the west. It was a good summer.

We now find ourselves with two major projects that need to be addressed. The first is the repair and/or replacement of gutters on the church, the fellowship hall and the parsonage. Sixty-four feet of fascia board on the Ed Wing also needs to be replaced. The second major project is the necessary replacement of heating fuel oil tanks in the church. Although the gutter repair project was anticipated, the fuel oil tank replacement was not. We are in the process of receiving bids on both projects and the total cost will be about \$17,000.

As you know, we're in the budget planning phase for St. John's Reformed Church for 2025 and the above-mentioned items are a part of this planning process. Property, Finance, and every SJRC committee works hard to make a reasonable budget for the new year. Please give kind support to this process and if you are able, please consider some additional financial assistance to make it all work. *Many Blessings From The Property Committee*



"The cards, kind words, and prayers during our recent experience with covid brought cheer and encouragement. We are very blessed to be part of the St John's family."

Bob & Angie Haan

"Thank you to everyone who kept my mom, Joan Murray, in your thoughts and prayers during her recent bypass surgery. She is recovering very well and soon she will have her Independence back."

Kristi Colburn, Lori Coon, and family



A special thank you to each of you for all the prayers and support Pastor Alisha received following the fire at the parsonage. Pastor Alisha and family are ok, just overwhelmed. Please continue to pray for them. We are grateful and praising God for keeping them safe and for the church members who helped in anyway. We apologize for those that did not get the message of the cancelled church service. In the future, we will be bettering our communication resources. If you can, please check your emails, texts, and social media posts for cancellation notices, especially during inclement weather days. Thank you to all for your understanding and support.



November 2nd ends Daylight Savings Time.

Don't forget to fall back and set your clocks one hour behind. Change the batteries in your smoke detectors too. Praise report: Pastor Alisha and her family are safe because of the working smoke detectors in the parsonage. Please change those batteries! God is Good! All the time! All the time! God is Good!

Draft Consistory Minutes – October 17, 2024

Present: President - Rev. Alisha Riepma-Hosier
Elders - Glenn Countryman, Terry Laibach, Elizabeth Young
Deacons – Eileen Wambach, Clif King, Pete Fenaroli, Laurie DeCiutiis, Mary Hennessy
Absent: Clerk of Consistory – Kristi Colburn, Desiree Albizu, Vice President

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 by Pastor Alisha. She opened the meeting with prayer, and a “Joy and Celebration” blessing was offered.

Motion made, seconded, and carried (M/S/C) to approve the minutes and meeting agenda with the following amendment: Worship Committee Recommendation #1 to be added to the agenda.

Pastoral Report: Pastor Alisha reviewed all meetings, administrative tasks and ministry being undertaken, including attending the installation service of Rev. Sarah Appleyard Peckich for Odyssey and presenting Hannah Barker Nickolay’s charge for her ordination to Western Theological Seminary. Pastor Alisha has finished drafting the church policy handbook, is working on the 2025 budget, and has been promoting Ministry Development Fund applications through Mid-Hudson Classis for upgrades to the physical space and programming of our church. This is all in addition to regular Sunday services.

Motion M/S/C to approve Pastoral Report.

Financial Review: Glenn Countryman reviewed the new financial reporting format which was presented by Finance at the September consistory meeting. All agreed the format is much easier to understand and the Finance Committee was commended for all the hard work put in. It is still a work in progress. **Motion M/S/C to approve Financial Review.**

Committee Reports:

Faith and Education: Eileen Wambach reported that Sunday School participation is going well; at times up to 7 children are in attendance.

Fellowship: Mary Hennessy noted that more people are socializing and staying longer for coffee hour. The Hunger Lunch and Ice Cream Social help with people feeling more connected. We need to step up efforts to integrate new people coming to services to make them feel welcomed during coffee hour.

Finance: Glenn Countryman reviewed the report with consistory. An auditor is being recommended to be hired to review the financial operations of the church. There is an endowment fund policy/management review underway; Finance has formed a sub-committee to put a policy of guidelines together. Once the policy is adopted an Investment Committee will be formed to review the management of the endowment/scholarship/cemetery funds. Pete Fenaroli gave an overview of the 2025 budget preparation which is underway.

Mission and Outreach: Laurie DeCiutiis reported that September’s MOM for the food pantry and the Hunger Lunch, a total of \$1,246 was raised. Another donation of \$576 was brought in through the housewares rummage sale in October making the total donated to the food pantry \$1,822. The school supply drive was a success, the coat and boot drive is underway, and M&O is preparing for the Christmas gift drive for the children of our pantry patrons.

Property: Glenn Countryman reviewed the many projects being undertaken by the committee and specifically highlighted the church oil tank issue. Property has been advised that the fuel oil tank needs to be cleaned out, removed and replaced with a new one. This will be a significant expense and it was pointed out that this is where the Ministry Development Fund grants could be helpful with offsetting expenses.

Worship: Pete Fenaroli reviewed the committee report and noted particular concern with Joey Breslau's funding ending at the end of 2024. We will have Zoe Auerbach and her husband Nick perform Sunday October 20 with violin and bass and expect this will be a moving musical enhancement. The sanctuary is decorated for the fall season; thanks to JoAnn Fisher and Eileen Zeliph for their contributions.

Technology: Pete Fenaroli raised concerns about having backup for Doug Westcott and Wayne Swart in the balcony running the technology for Sunday services. Pete will make an announcement this coming Sunday appealing for people to volunteer.

Motion made by Glenn Countryman, seconded by Elizabeth Young and carried to approve all committee reports.

Working Recommendations and Special Reports:

Finance Committee Recommendation #1 (FCR#1): Finance recommends consistency hire Emily Halstein as an outside auditor to review the bookkeeping of St. John's Reformed Church at the rate of \$60/hr. with a cap of 50 hours for an approximate total of \$3,000. This arrangement can be revisited if more hours are required.

Motion seconded by Elizabeth Young and carried to approve this recommendation.

Finance Committee Recommendation #2 (FCR#2): The Finance Committee recommends consistency approve the increase in the allocation of the Endowment Fund from 4% to 5% to comply with IRS regulations. This will increase the current allotment of \$8,000 to \$10,000.

Motion seconded by Terry Laibach and carried to approve this recommendation.

Finance Committee Recommendation #3 (FCR#3): The Finance Committee recommends consistency place the \$20,000 in donations as well as the anticipated Judy Rockefeller bequest in a short-term CD for the time being.

Motion seconded by Elizabeth Young and carried to approve this recommendation.

Worship Committee Recommendation #1 (WCR#1): The worship and finance committees jointly recommend using the funds from Ben Albizu's memorial donations to pay for the hymnals purchased earlier in 2024 plus purchasing 18 more hymnals. This will give the church a full complement for Christmas and Easter services and will reduce our general fund deficit for 2024.

Motion seconded by Glenn Countryman and carried to approve this recommendation.

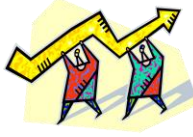
Safety Seminar Update

A safety walkthrough of the church was held with James Marcello, U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency representative on October 10. Pastor Alisha, Glenn Countryman, Mary Hennessy and Elizabeth Young all attended. Mr. Marcello made recommendations such as camera installation and replacement of the door to the administrative wing. There are grants available to offset the cost of these security upgrades. A walk-through of the parsonage will be scheduled as well. Mr. Marcello will generate reports to help us prioritize the work we wish to undertake and apply for grant funding. His report will cover in depth the changes being recommended to St. John's Church. Pastor Alisha would like to see a balance between safety and remaining welcoming and open to those in spiritual need; she recommended a committee be formed to keep up with all the work still ahead.

Motion M/S/C to approve adjourning the meeting after prayer.

Pastor Alisha closed the meeting in prayer. Meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.
The next regular meeting of consistory is November 21, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Laibach, Elder of Worship



Financial Report

St. John's Financial Statement

	Finance Committee September Narrative	
Month of Sept	Income:	\$12520.75
	Expenses:	<u>\$20025.02</u>
	Net:	-\$5016.29
Year to Date	Income	\$149419.13
	Pass Through	<u>\$3,555.00</u>
	Net Income	\$145864.13
	Expenses	\$177917.79
	Prepayments	\$1,156.86
	Net expenses	<u>\$176760.93</u>
	Net	-\$30896.80

Consistory Motion: That a contract with Emily Holstein to audit the way we are keeping books at \$60 per hour be approved. Capped at 50 hours. (\$3,000 max). This is a one-time expense to change the way we handle our finances. She will review our financial procedures, reports, and practices and make recommendations on how to improve how our finances are handled and reported.

The Finance committee recommends that a Certified Financial Planner be hired so we have a coherent financial plan rather than us blindly making financial decisions that may not be in the churches best long term interest. The interaction of our checking, Bequest Restricted CDs, endowment plan, and potential new reserve fund and operating endowment fund are items for consideration.

We are changing the 2024 allocation for the endowment payout from \$8,000 to \$10,000 based on the IRS laws dealing with endowments. The IRS requires all endowment funds grant a minimum of five percent per year. \$5,655 is left unused in the current year based on \$10,000 allocation.

Parsonage utilities for the ministers next year housing costs will be based on actual usage for the previous year July 1 thru June 30. This is set in the FICA calculations for ministers parsonage allowance and the church's contribution.

Consistory Motion: That money from the gift \$20,000 and any bequest from Judy Rockefeller estate be placed in a 7 month CD and no decision on the distribution of the money be made at this time. Once we have a financial plan we will make recommendations to the donor of the \$20,000 and to consistory. The donor of the gift is comfortable with this action.

2025 Budget Preparations

Entering the 4th financial quarter of 2024, there are three St. John's financial issues the Finance Committee would like to bring to your attention.

A. Directly after the Sunday worship services, we need your input during the Q&A Congregational Meeting on November 10th followed by the annual Congregational Meeting one week later on November 17th.

The 2025 budget will be mailed (email or USPS) the week of November 4th along with a stewardship letter and the 2025 "Estimate of Giving" card.

Here's a list of things to do in preparation for these important meetings:

1. read the stewardship letter found in the mailing
2. review the proposed 2025 budget and note any questions or observations you wish to discuss during the 11/10 Budget Q&A
3. fill out the "Estimate of Giving" card for presentation at the 11/17 Annual Meeting.

Please consider filling out this card so we have some idea of expected income in relation to the proposed budget. Note: the card doesn't ask for any identification, only your estimated amount of giving for 2025. You are not locked into the commitment and you can always modify it as circumstances may dictate.

B. The 2025 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) is 2.5%

WHAT IS IT?

It's a percentage associated with the annual adjustment made to Social Security Benefits to counter inflation. Calculated from the CPI (Consumer Price Index), it represents the rate of inflation from the 3rd quarter of one year to the 3rd quarter of the following year. It's released annually in mid-October.

HOW DOES IT IMPACT CHURCH GIVING?

It's a useful tool to understand the purchasing power of our offering gifts in relation to church expenses. COLA is simply the percentage adjustment needed to keep the purchasing power of the new year's offering equal to last year. Please consider making a similar adjustment to your giving for the new year.

C. As of September 30th, there was a deficit of \$28,500 for 2024.

Expenses were approximately \$28.5K more than the current income for this year. Fortunately a generous member presented a \$10,000 gift to help counter the problem but further financial assistance may be needed to satisfy all the 2024 expenses. Thank you to our donor for making the shortfall more manageable. Please know any additional help will be greatly appreciated.

The Finance Committee is grateful for the support of our dedicated congregation. Thank you to everyone.

The Finance Committee

Calendar

Worship Service

Sundays **10 a.m. in person** and join us on YouTube Live.

Access our website, (www.stjohnsreformed.org), scroll down on the page and click on YouTube Live icon. You can continue to access the weekly bulletins by clicking on the dropdown box "worship service" and select bulletins. Each Sunday's bulletin and announcement page are posted.

Children's Ministry Program Sundays at 10 a.m.

Rev. Alisha Riepma-Hosier Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs. (off site), Fri.-Sabbath Day

Kristi Colburn, Administrator Mon., Wed., Fri., 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Tues. & Thurs. 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Michele Zagorski, Financial Consultant working remotely

Food Pantry Distribution Mon. 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wed. 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Bible Study Wednesday at 10:15 a.m. in the fellowship hall

NOVEMBER EVENTS/MEETINGS:

Men's Breakfast Saturday, November 2, 8 a.m. location to be determined

Skit and Luncheon, Sunday, November 3, following worship

Monthly Prayer Service Tuesday, November 5, 6:30 p.m. in room 3 or 4

US Election Day, Tuesday, November 5, all day

Blooming in Faith - Women's Group Wednesday, November 6, 7 p.m., in the fellowship hall

Scudder Circle Meeting Thursday, November 7, noon, in the fellowship hall

Congregational Question & Answer Meeting, Sunday, November 10, following worship

Book Club Monday, November 11, at 10 a.m., in the fellowship hall to discuss the book, "Becoming Madame Secretary" by Stephanie Dray.

Property Meeting Tuesday, November 12, 7 p.m., in the fellowship hall

Old Dutch Village Garden Club Thursday, November 14, at 12:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall

Finance Committee Meeting Thursday, November 14, 7:00 p.m., in the fellowship hall

Congregational Meeting 2025 Budget Vote & Consistory Nomination Vote

Sunday, November 17, following worship

Elders Meeting Thursday, November 21, 7 p.m. in Room 3

Consistory Meeting Thursday, November 21, 7:30 p.m., in the fellowship hall

Boy Scout Leader's Meeting Thursday, November 21, at 7 p.m. in room 4

Christmas Bazaar Saturday, November 23, at 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. in the fellowship hall

Thanksgiving Day Thursday, November 28, Office is closed.

Deadline for the December Kerk is November 24

If you would like to receive the Kerk by e-mail (a little more reliably on time than the paper version being mailed to your home) e-mail the church (office@stjohnsreformed.org) and let Kristi Colburn, Administrator, know.



Shepherds Page

NOVEMBER 2024

TIME FOR THANKSGIVING

As time is flying by, it won't be long before it will be Thanksgiving time. The more people talk history or of the past, I cannot help but think of what I've been told about the first Thanksgiving. The Native American Indians and Pilgrims gathered in peace together to show how each were grateful of their bounties and blessings. There was no pre-planning, going to the store to get the biggest turkey and all the fixings. In fact, they probably sat around on logs, tree stumps, tables, or even on the ground. They say that first time may not have even been a turkey but fish, venison, corn, nuts, and berries. No pumpkin pie either. The main thing was to be gathered together to bless the food, time spent, and all they had to be thankful for.

Seems like now Thanksgiving is more a kickoff to the Christmas season, holiday shopping with Black Friday sales and decorating. We need to remember back in time and treat Thanksgiving like that first one. Don't worry if we have the biggest turkey, how many side dishes or what kind of pies to have; just be thankful for what we do have. Don't worry if the people coming will wonder if you gave it your all as the main thing is to give your prayers for thanks for all your blessings and bounties we all have. I know sometimes we want more and think we all deserve it but we need to remember God is Our Father and "Thy will be done" and gives us all we need. Remember that first Thanksgiving, people who as history tells us, were not always the best of friends or neighbors, they actually gave their thanks and broke bread together. Isn't that what this holiday is all about! So, share what you have, be true to yourself, and love your neighbor as yourself. Take time too to thank God for all we have always.

Speaking of Christmas earlier, there is a saying, if I remember it correctly, "It's not the presents under the tree that's important, it's the presence around the tree." So thinking then about Thanksgiving my thought is. It's not the size of the turkey, how many sides or pies you have but the presence and prayers of those around the table giving thanks together. So enjoy!

Wishing each of you and yours all the best Thanksgiving. May it be equal to the first one and make it your new history.

God Bless,
Respectfully yours, JoAnn Fisher-Shepherd

Eileen Zeliph- Shepherd Coordinator- Wishing All A Happy Thanksgiving

Shepherds Ministry serving St. Johns Reformed Church

Desiree Albizu	Amie Parker	Wendy Walrath
Kayla Bell	Linda Neilson	Mary Hennessy
JoAnn Fisher	Denise Gilhooly	Marie Votava
Terry Laibach	Eileen Zeliph	Stan Tremper