

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

MAY 2024

VOL. 63 NO. 4

Minister's Musings

As I write this, I can finally, with confidence, say that spring has sprung. The crab apple tree in front of the parsonage is brilliant pink and a variety of colors of tulips that we planted last fall and waited for - and then forgot about! Only to be surprised with delight when they did make their grand entrance.

Like many of you, seedlings were planted inside and transported outside to the harsh world with a blessing of hope - please be able to survive the sun and the wind, grow strong little seeds. This year, radishes, kohlrabi and brussel sprouts have made their way to the outside garden. A couple shoots of volunteer arugula made an appearance early on and the garlic triumphantly blasted through the ground to wave their green leaves to the sky announcing, again, the beginning of a new season.

And, when it comes to simple pleasures and the things of the earth, I'm reminded of the words from Kohelet, the, and we're speculating here, "instructor at the ancient equivalent of a Jerusalem prep school, where his students were the sons of the well-to-do, the next generation of 'movers and shakers.'"¹

He begins, "Vanity of vanities...vanity of vanities all is vanity. All things are wearisome—one cannot express it. The eye is unsatisfied with seeing, and the ear does not get filled from listening. What has been, that is what will be...there is nothing new under the sun."²

This kind of nay saying perhaps rocked his contemporary listeners and still, to this day, makes us sort of shake our heads. But to others, it seems like a balm. A needed sidestep from the hallelujahs and blesseds. "What Kohelet aims to instill in his students is the ability to receive the pleasures of life as the gift they are and to recognize God as sole Giver— 'For who eats or who feels anything, apart from him?'"³

The writer reminds us of the vapor-like quality of everything under the sun. And perhaps that is a good thing. All things have seasons and a stopping point in life - that's part of what makes it so lovely, that it is finite. Perhaps that's what wraps us up in the holiness of the now - the present moment of life; wherever we may find ourselves. The tulip petals will fall, the radishes will burst with life and then shrivel as soon as their season is over - but what joy to receive the gifts that they brought in their short, vibrant lives.

¹ Davis, Ellen, *Getting Involved With God: Rediscovering the Old Testament* (Lanham, 2001: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc), 105.

² Ecclesiastes 1:2

³ Davis, Ellen: 107

Rev. Alisha Riepma-Hosier
Minister of Word and Sacrament

Faith & Education



Bible Study meets on Wednesday mornings at 10:15 a.m. The scripture readings are taken from Year B of the Revised Common Lectionary. Copies of the RCL readings for Bible Study are on the table in the fellowship hall or you may find the readings on the Church website. Everyone is welcome to attend. Thank you to John Roberts for his continued devotion to this loyal group of learners.



Children's Program Teacher Eileen Wambach had a number of children in the weeks leading up to Easter. It was a joy to see them each week. Beverly Kipp has been substituting to give Eileen a break to attend communion. Thank you, ladies!

Commissioned Pastor James Walrath has continued to meet with ninth grader. Whitt for Confirmation Class. They wrapped up their studies on April 21, but their relationship is just beginning. They plan to continue meeting informally.



The Book Club's discussion of *Tom Lake* by Ann Patchett is May 13, at 10 a.m. Book suggestions are always welcome. Anyone who has listened to or read the book is welcome to join in the discussion.



St. John's Monthly Prayer Service meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m., in the sanctuary. The next service is May 7. 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. See *James Walrath* for more information.



Blooming in Faith Women's Fellowship meets on the first Wednesday of the month in the Fellowship Hall. The next meeting is May 1. We gather for fellowship, prayer, and to create art. For more information, please see *Elizabeth Young*.



Scudder Circle meets on the first Thursday of the month at 1 p.m. The next meeting is May 2. Meetings will continue through June and then will resume in September. All women associated with St John's Reformed Church are invited to join us for an informative program followed by fellowship and refreshments and our business meeting. For more information, please contact *Mary Bayer*.



Rev. Bob Gram has written a two-part novel. It will be available soon as a paperback or an ebook on: Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and BookShop. Contact Bob for details: 845-443-0424; bobgram55@gmail.com



Mission and Outreach

Our Mission of The Month for May is Shadow of His Wings Children's Home in Monjas, Guatemala, a program of James Project of Latin America.

In the past St John's has been extremely involved with this organization and many people in our congregation have had the opportunity to travel to Monjas and work on a variety of projects. In more recent years we have sent a yearly gift to support their valuable work.

When I think of Shadow of His Wings, the word that always springs to my mind is "rescue". Through their tireless work, vulnerable children are rescued from the scourge of abandonment, neglect, abuse, and human trafficking. They are housed in small units with Christian house parents and are loved and cared for physically and spiritually. I believe it is through this love and acceptance that they are healed.

They have created a new website: [James Project International \(reachapp.co\)](http://JamesProjectInternational.com)

It is an excellent resource where you can find out more about many new programs including Rescue One Sponsorship which enables you to support individual children and Rescue One Future which makes education a priority. Every year it is wonderful to see how this organization is expanding to meet the needs of these families and forge closer links with churches in their wider. On their website you can read many stories of rescue, some of them are deeply upsetting. However, they help us to understand how much the work of the James Project is so vitally needed.

We are so grateful that we can continue to support their work at SJRC. When donating please write May MOM, Shadows of His Wings on the memo section of your check or offering envelope. Thank you for supporting this valuable mission. *Wendy Walrath* (Mission and Outreach Elder)

LOOKING AHEAD WITH MISSIONS – Mark Your Calendars

In June, as a church, we acknowledge Refugee Sunday and draw attention to the on-going struggle of refugees worldwide.

Our church has invited JJ TENCLAY, the RCA's Refugee Ministries Coordinator, to our June 2, Sunday service to speak about her role and what projects she is working on.

A LUNCHEON will follow in Fellowship Hall. Everyone is encouraged to come for lunch and hear more about what JJ is doing and her direct experiences with refugees.

From the RCA website:

"As Refugee Ministries Coordinator, JJ works with ministry partners locally, nationally and globally to provide compassionate, Christ-like care for refugees and displaced people. She also educates individuals and congregations on global forced displacement and the people affected worldwide and equips them to live out the biblical mandate to care for those seeking refuge."

Plan to join us for this informative event. *Mission and Outreach Committee*

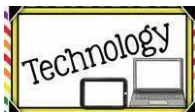


THANK YOU to the rummage sale volunteers who helped in setting up, sales, and cleaning up. It was a **HUGE SUCCESS!** \$645 was received in donations, which will be sent to JJ TenClay for her mission work.

Property
Clean Up Day



Saturday, May 4, at 9 a.m. Volunteers welcome and appreciated!
Please see Glenn Countryman for details.



The Technology Committee, (Tech Crew) continues to adjust the video and sound settings during worship services, which may affect Zoom. Send them a chat message to inform them how the video and sound are while using Zoom. Tom and Carol Staib, ACTS Audio and Visual company have been contacted and invited to St. John's to address issues with the ambience and choir microphone feeds. The choir microphones are being replaced with new ones that are less directional. The current microphones do not pick up all members of the choir properly. If you are interested in learning how to use the equipment for Zoom meetings and other services, the Technology Committee is organizing training sessions.

Please see Doug W., Wayne S., or Pete F. for additional information.



Fresh Flowers in the Church Sanctuary

The vibrant red poinsettias from Christmas and the pastel watercolor of Easter plants are long gone. How nice the sanctuary looks when we have lovely arrangements to focus on to enhance worship! If anyone is interested in placing fresh flowers in church on a Sunday, whether they are purchased from a florist or cut from your own garden, please let the church office know by calling 845-758-1184. We are happy to put a dedication in the designated Sunday bulletin if requested. If you wish to dedicate flowers for a special person, an occasion, or "just because" the summer color palette is so uplifting to those attending in person or on Zoom, all contributions are welcome.

The Worship Committee



Our sincerest sympathy is extended to the friends and families of *Nancy Hetzler*, and *June Vanderlaan* upon their passing.

Please comfort all those that are mourning.



April 13, 2024

Dear *St. John's Reformed Church Family*,
Thank you, with gratitude for being such a supportive community for my Aunt Nancy.

With love,

Kline, Ulrich, and Hetzler Family



Thank you to everyone for all that you do for SJRC!

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"
 Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" Isaiah 6:8

Consistory Minutes April 18, 2024, Meeting

Present: President- Rev. Alisha Riepma-Hosier, Vice-President- Desiree Albizu, Elders- Glenn Countryman, Terry Laibach, Wendy Walrath, Elizabeth Young, Deacons- Eileen Wambach, Clifford King, Pete Fenaroli, Laurie De Ciutiis, Mary Hennessy,

Pastor Alisha opened the meeting, at 7:32 p.m., with a devotion, based on Psalm 23, followed by discussion and prayer.

The minutes and agenda were approved, M/S/C (motion, seconded, and carried) with amendments.

Pastoral Report: Pastor Alisha reported that March was an extremely busy month, “service heavy season”. She led worship on four Sundays, two funerals, a Classis Meeting, RH Ministerium Lenten Service, Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service, and a graveside service for a member. She provided premarital counseling for two couples, supervised Saugerties Reformed Church’s Consistory Meeting, met with Rev. Van Houten and Rev. Schulte regarding Church Life Business, and wrote liturgies for the various services. At the Mid-Hudson Classis meeting, Pastor Alisha was nominated to become the Vice President of Classis. She also stated that the Beacon Reformed Church is being sold and grant monies will be available at a later date. Please see Pastor Alisha’s pastoral report for additional information.

To approve Pastor Alisha’s report as presented, M/S/C.

Financial Review: The Monthly Review, Balance Sheet, and Profit and Loss reports were presented by Glenn. The finance committee did not meet in April. Glenn answered questions.

To approve the Financial Reports as presented, M/S/C.

Committee Reports:

Faith and Education: Bible Study meets on Wednesday mornings at 10:15 a.m. The scripture readings are taken from Year B of the Revised Common Lectionary. Teacher Eileen Wambach had a number of children in the weeks leading up to Easter. Beverly Kipp has been substituting. Commissioned Pastor James Walrath has continued to meet with Whitt for Confirmation Class. They will wrap up their studies on April 21. The Book Club's discussion of Tom Lake by Ann Patchett is May 13, at 10 a.m.

Fellowship: The fellowship team has been hard at work during the Lenten season. We had our first committee meeting. Elizabeth has agreed to be the contact person for families when refreshments are served after a funeral. Our weekly attendance at coffee hour continues to grow. We have put a list on the back table for people who want to sign up to help. We are actively looking at ways to expand fellowship beyond just the weekly coffee hour.

Finance Committee: Glenn reported that in the March reports there is a difference between the YTD expenses on the Budget vs Actual and the P & L YTD Comparison reports. It is in the process of being rectified. Within the March income, the church received 2 annual pledges via QCD (qualified charity distributions). A protocol when receiving QCDs is being reviewed. The search for an auditor continues. The second quarterly payment of the denominational assessment was successfully paid. A Subcommittee is being formed to review the current policies of how and where the monies are to be invested, led by Doug Westcott. If anyone is interested in serving on the committee, please see him. Glenn has been in contact with Central Hudson to obtain a \$1000 rebate claim for installing a hybrid electric/heat pump hot water heater in the parsonage. The new counting protocol has been going well. The system continues to be adjusted as we learn the new system. Kristi and Hop are working on developing a better system to enhance communication between committees regarding their finances.

Mission and Outreach: Wendy reported that the mission of the month for March was World Central Kitchen in Gaza. \$1,772 was raised. A check was sent April 16 to WCK. The mission of the month for April is Save The Children USA. This month 81 hygiene kits were delivered to CT, to be picked up by CWS. Proceeds from the Rummage Sale will go towards JJ TenClay's mission in Sudan. She will be visiting our church on June 2nd to preach. There will be a luncheon after the service.

Property Committee: Glenn highlighted a few items stating that there are many projects needing attention too. See the Property Committee report for details. The property clean up day has been moved to Saturday, May 4, after the Men's breakfast. Amerigas was called to remove their propane tanks, which was completed and then billed the church for \$300. A dispute with Amerigas has been filed. Todd Abrahams purchased a dehumidifier and will install it into the parsonage. The organizers, RHHS students, of the Sunrise Community Garden emailed Glenn stating that they are awaiting a response from the National Sunrise Movement regarding funding and possible liability coverage for this project.

Worship: Pete reported that it was a busy month with many services. Worship and Fellowship worked together to ensure its success. Big thanks to everyone who helped make this a success. The choir sang an anthem on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Attendance at the Easter Sunday 10:00 service was 91! Sunrise service was led by John Roberts with participants from the RH United Methodist Church. Sunday attendance continues to do well, averaging around 60 attendees.

Technology: Pete reported that file migrations to PC have been occurring on as needed basis. Doug continues to fine tune our sanctuary and zoom sound. We desperately need to build a new church website reflecting our mission statement. Creating a new webpage takes months of work to do properly. Doug and Pete have been discussing how to go about this. We likely will try to recruit a web page committee.

To approve the Committee Reports as presented, M/S/C.

Working recommendations and special reports:

Consistory retreat: Saturday, April 27, 1-5 p.m.

Pastor Alisha reminded all to attend, reviewed the agenda, and the resources needed.

Protecting Houses of Worship Seminar

Glenn reported that he received an email from the Dutchess County Sheriff's office extending an invitation to attend a seminar, on May 29 or June 1, about developing and/or updating security and emergency plans for houses of worship. After discussion, Consistory members agreed that it was important and some members should attend, and then provide feedback. Glenn, Pete, and Elizabeth volunteered to attend.

To approve to adjourn the meeting after prayer, at 8:50 p.m., M/S/C.

The next regular meeting is May 16, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

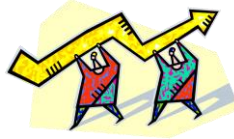
Kristi Colburn,

Clerk of Consistory



Deadline for the June Kerk is May 10.

Personal ads of no more than 3 lines will be accepted for \$1 per issue. Business ads in the form of a business card to be photocopied will cost \$5 per issue. 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 and let us know; office@stjohnsreformed.org.



FINANCIAL REPORT
Monthly Review-March 31, 2024

Income vs. Expenses Current Month

March Income	\$39,933.48
March Expenses	<u>-23,595.59</u>
	\$+16,337.89

Income vs. Expenses Year to Date (YTD)

YTD Income	\$69,246.33
YTD Expenses	<u>-80,430.15</u>
	\$-11,183.82

2024 Budget \$240,300 Average Per Month \$20,025

Did You Know?

St. John's Investment Policy

During the 2024 review of the endowment and cemetery funds, the finance committee realized the Church's portfolio had not been updated in years and no longer gave us the expected returns we should have realized based on recent market performance. Additionally, some investments may no longer be our best choices as a Christian organization. It has become clear that St. John's does not have a clear policy for how funds are to be invested, what our investment objectives are, and how often our portfolio should be reviewed.

The finance committee is therefore assembling a task force that will closely review the current policies, assess where deficiencies lie, and create a new document that will detail such issues as how the monies are to be invested, what are our investment goals, what types of investments are allowed/not allowed, and who is responsible for regular reviews and monitoring these investments. The investment funds we use will be examined and changes may be recommended. The distributions from the various funds will be examined and appropriate changes may be recommended.

Additionally, the committee will address how reserved/bequests funds are managed and how that can be improved for clarity and consistency.

Doug Westcott has volunteered to lead this task force. The process is expected to begin in early September. The ultimate goal is to review and consolidate the investment policies into one comprehensive document that will then be presented to the consistory for their consideration.

If you are interested in joining the committee or simply making comments/suggestions please reach out to Doug Westcott (845 876 8378 or douglas.westcott@frontiernet.net) or any member of the finance committee.

Finance Committee

Calendar

Worship Service

Sundays **10 a.m. in person** and you can also join live on Zoom.

You can continue to visit “**St. John’s in Red Hook**” on **YouTube** for the Sunday service also!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88588306134?pwd=eW92WFgzUXdjSElwOG5KcFVBZGV6dz09>

Meeting ID: 816 2419 1012

Passcode:

To phone in: Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

The bulletin for each service can be found on the website: www.stjohnsreformed.org.

Click on the dropdown box for worship.

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

MAY EVENTS/MEETINGS:

Blooming in Faith - Women’s Group Wednesday, May 1, 7 p.m., in the fellowship hall

Scudder Circle Meeting Thursday, May 2, 1 p.m., in the fellowship hall

Men’s Breakfast Saturday, May 4, at 8 a.m. at the Elizaville Diner

Property Clean Up Saturday, May 4, at 9 a.m.

Finance Committee Meeting Monday, May 6, at 7:00 p.m., Room 4

Prayer Service Tuesday, May 7, 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary

Old Dutch Village Garden Club Thursday, May 9, at 12:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall

Book Club Monday, May 13, at 10 a.m., in the FH to discuss Tom Lake by Ann Patchett.

Property Meeting Tuesday, May 14, at 7 p.m., in the fellowship hall

Elders Meeting Thursday, May 16, in Room 3

Consistory Meeting Thursday, May 16, at 7:30 p.m., in the fellowship hall

Memorial Day Monday, May 27, Office and Deacon’s Food Pantry are closed

Boy Scout Leader’s Meeting Thursday, May 30, at 7 p.m. in Room 4



Shepherds Page

May 2024

POWER IN THE SUN (SON)

I can remember my grandfather being a farmer since I was a child until his death, when I was an adult. I can remember grandpa always saying, “there’s power in the sun”. Grandpa seemed to always go by the moons and seasons when to plant and harvest. For example, the peas had to be planted on a certain day, no matter if it was snowing, or raining, they got planted. He always said there’s power in the sun, and that the plants, animals, and humans needed the sun to exist, (yes, the rain is good as well!). I know especially in the winter months when it’s cold and gloomy, we all lack the sun. Our moods and bodies seem to hibernate; but, on those sunny days in the winter we seem to have more energy. I think I’ve heard it said somewhere, we need at least twenty minutes a day in the sun to get our daily dose of vitamin D.

Now I know Grandpa always was referring to the sun when he said it, and he was a good Christian man and attended church often. He never talked or referred about “the power of the son!”

Here is where I’d like to turn this around as, “There is power in the son! (S O N) Jesus is that power and is the Son of God. Just look at all the power Jesus had on earth, he walked on water, feed hundreds of people on the Mount, healed the sick, changed water to wine, and showed love just to mention a few of his powerful strengths. Now he sits on the right hand of God and continues his power! So, when we need some strength and guidance, remember the power of our prayers. When you think of the power of the sun, just remember the sun, moon, earth, and all that are in it get the true power from God and His Son.

Since, they have all the power, turn all your troubles and worries over to the best “POWER OF THE SON!”

Respectfully yours, *JoAnn Fisher*- Shepherd

Wishing all those in the congregation, A Happy Mothers Day- Eileen Zeliph

Shepherds serving at 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