

THE KERK

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

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September 2023

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Minister's Musings

As I write this, I find myself reflecting on the joys of summer: gardens, flowers, family gatherings, sunshine, and rain in welcome season. Wendy and I just had all six of our grandchildren with us for two days. Their laughter and joy are contagious; seeing their personalities developing; their little quirks reminding of their parents at that age and perhaps of our own childhood memories.

But in the aftermath of their energetic tumult, the relative silence of a summer morning is welcome: now it's just the birds singing and chirping. In spite of the occasional and sometimes persistent pains of growing into one's later years: life is good, God's grace is sure, and we have a sure hope in God that transcends all: even the tragedies and the suffering of this world. There is a peace in Christ that transcends the cares and concerns of this life.

But with the seemingly perpetual trail of frustrations and worries that so abounds, it is easy for us to lose sight of God's promise of eternal life, joy, and fulfillment. We forget that even in our worst times, God is in us, Christ is in us, and we are in him. Unworthy as we are, that is still true. And we have been given to know this, even in the midst of our preoccupation with personal concerns and worries.

Amazing as it can be, God, who created and sustains the entire universe; this one God loves us. He has chosen you and me not just to receive his love, but to comprehend it, each in our own way. And we can serve Him, not just by believing, but by extending His love and care to those around us.

Lord, help us, help me, to live into that calling!
James Walrath, Commissioned Preaching Elder



Congratulations to Pastor Alisha and Rich on the birth of their first child, a baby boy, Lachlan, who arrived on July 5th.

Faith & Education



Bible Study continues this fall on Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Study is based on the Revised Common Lectionary which is available on the Church website as well as online. Paper copies of the Lectionary for 2023 are also available. Please see John Roberts or Desiree Albizu for a copy.



Sunday School The Children's Program runs on Sunday mornings with the children departing during worship. Teacher Eileen Wambach faithfully prepares for a lesson each Sunday. The first Sunday of the month the children remain in worship for communion.



Book Club will meet Monday, September 11 at 10 a.m.. Members will discuss *Finding Dorothy* by Elizabeth Letts. Due to members being so busy during August, this discussion was postponed. Our next book selection is *Lady Clementine* by Marie Benedict. Date TBA



Blooming in Faith Women's Fellowship will meet on Friday, September 2 at 7 p.m. We want to become a community who gather to fellowship, mentor, and to connect in a safe and supportive environment. It's for all women, no matter of age, background or life stage. We want every woman to feel loved and accepted for who she is in Christ, so that she is transformed and empowered to live out Christ's love and grace. For more information, please see Elizabeth Young



A NEW CALL

Member Elizabeth Young has been interviewed and taken under the care of the Mid-Hudson Classis as she pursues a call to ministry. She has yet to determine her path, but please hold her up in prayer and offer her support as she begins her studies.



Monthly Prayer Service

Please join us on September 5, at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. We will pray for St. John's, and our mission and witness to the local community, for those on our prayer list, for those who are not able to gather with us in this post-COVID era, for anyone's personal prayers, for any and all that God might bring to us in need of love, fellowship, and service.

For more information, please see **James Walrath**.



Scudder Circle News

On September 7, we will meet at 1 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall for a program presented by Desiree Albizu. The Scudder Circle is open to all women associated with St John's Reformed Church. Offerings or Donations to the Scudder Circle can be dropped off or mailed to the church office or can be made online via Givelify at any time. Please label your donations for the Scudder Circle. Our next fundraiser will be at the Christmas Bazaar in November where we will sell gently used jewelry. In the next few months should you have any used jewelry that you would like to donate to this fundraiser, please place it in the box on the table in the Fellowship Hall. The funds that are donated and raised are used to support missions and organizations both locally and around the world. For more information, please see Mary Bayer.



Mission & Outreach

Thank you to all who volunteered. Approximately \$700 was donated to **Support Ukrainian Refugees in the Capital District**. North America for Ukraine (NA4U) is a sponsor matching organization that focuses on safely matching displaced Ukrainians with sponsors in the US as part of the Uniting for Ukraine Program (U4U). On September 10, 2023, Jennifer Moak and a family of Ukrainian refugees will be visiting St. John's. Jennifer is the director of North America for Ukraine (NA4U). They prioritize families in the most dangerous areas and determine their eligibility for the program.



School Supplies

The Mission and Outreach Committee would like to thank all of you for the donated school supplies and for the monetary donations. The food pantry clients' families are grateful and appreciate receiving the items. A special thank you to Jackie for shopping and for the special angel who paid for a significant amount of our school supplies.



Winter Coat & Boot Drive 2023!

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 for the months of September and October. This is our second 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!

North America for Ukraine (NA4U) is a sponsor-matching organization that focuses on safely matching displaced Ukrainians with sponsors in the US as part of the Uniting for Ukraine program (U4U). We offer hands-on support throughout the matching process, which sets us apart from other means of sponsor-matching, including Welcome.US and other social media groups. We prioritize families in the most dangerous areas and determine their eligibility for the program.

We still have an urgent need for sponsors. Our waiting list of Ukrainians is well over ten thousand, and there is more than one way to sponsor. A hosting sponsor submits the paperwork and provides housing and support when the family first arrives. A paper-sponsor simply submits the paperwork for those who want to join family or another host already here in the US. NA4U confirms that everyone has a viable host, so no one is left stranded when they arrive. We are adamant about making sure matches are safe, as well as protecting the integrity of the U4U program so it is not compromised or prematurely revoked.

At NA4U, we are currently a 100% volunteer-run NGO, and we hope to seek funding to further our efforts. We work hard to recruit sponsors and educate them about the U4U program. No money exchanges hands. There is no fee for our service. Ukrainians do not receive your personal information. Everything is submitted directly to the government, just like when you file taxes. U4U is considered a temporary program to provide protection to people fleeing the war. This is a completely different form of sponsorship (Form I-134A) from traditional sponsorship (Form 864) for people seeking to become US citizens. The Form I-134A is an unenforceable, non-binding contract. Everything a sponsor or host provides is voluntary and considered a moral responsibility over a legal obligation.

Is it time-consuming? For hosting-sponsors, yes — it can be more time consuming for the first few weeks until paperwork is filed, appointments are completed and benefits are secured. Again, coordinators at NA4U are available to help point beneficiaries and sponsors in the right direction to accomplish these tasks. Families typically reside with their hosts 3-5 months until they are able to establish residences of their own, which they are very eager to do. Some live independently almost immediately. For paper-sponsors, the most time-consuming part is gathering your paperwork and submitting the I-134A forms. In a few hours, you could essentially change someone's life forever. It's such a small effort for such a huge reward.

We at NA4U are more than happy to answer questions for anyone interested in learning more about how to help. You may contact Jenn Moak, Director of US Resettlement at jennifer@na4ukraine.org. You can also find North America for Ukraine on Facebook and Instagram, as well as our website at www.na4ukraine.org. Thank you for your consideration!



Camp Kids

On August 20, we were blessed with spirit filled and excited young persons participating in the worship service. They spoke about their camp experiences and led camp songs. Bradley B. told us the story of Noah and the Ark by memory. Thank you to all who participated in the service. The Camp attendees are very thankful for those that contributed to the Emmaus Fund to help with camp expenses.

Dear St. John's Reformed Church,

Thank you so much for helping us go to Camp Fowler this year. We had the BEST time!!! Here are some of our favorite things we did:

- Canoeing
- Singing songs
- Swimming
- Playing with friends
- Polar Bearing (when you swim and dunk your head early in the morning)
- Playing basketball
- Playing 9 square
- Playing carpet ball
- Having flex time
- Center of camp free time
- Having smores and campfires
- Hikes
- Thursday night worship
- Foosball in real life
- Sunset canoeing
- Musical chairs
- Story night
- Ga Ga ball
- Volleyball
- Beach day
- Being Jumpers (when you help set the table, like a waitress)
- Praying with the whole camp
- Last, meeting new best friends.

We will be going back every year!!

Love,

Everlynn McCarthy
Carter McCarthy



To my St John's family,

My deepest appreciation for the prayers, cards, phone calls, visits and gifts of flowers and food. Your expressions of love and concern brought much joy and encouragement and brightened my days.

Heartfelt thanks,
Angie Haan

Dear Desiree and St. John's Congregation,

Thank you so much for the card and your congratulatory thoughts. I deeply appreciate the good will and prayers. They mean so much to me since the church is a place I have much fondness for in my heart. The years I've spent here have been very special. Thank you for supporting me.

With thanks,
Brian Motondi



to the many hands that spent time beautifying the church building and the grounds of St. John's. A special thank you is extended to the Property Committee. They have spent hours mowing, weed whacking, weeding, planting new grass, scraping and painting, cleaning, etc.

to all the silent volunteers who do God's work to enhance the worship and fellowship experiences at St. John's Reformed Church.

****If you want to thank someone, please email the office or drop a note in Kristi's mailbox****



PROPERTY COMMITTEE

As always, the property committee is looking for volunteers to help out in doing anything you like doing to help our property and buildings look nice and neat. And as I've said before, we do what work needs to be done, but we have a good time doing it. Give this committee a try!

Glenn Countryman, Property Chairperson



Our sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Michael J. Horkan, who passed away on August 10.

Our sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Lawrence E. Launhardt, who passed away on August 23

Lord, please comfort all those who mourn.



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



Deadline for the October Kerk is October 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

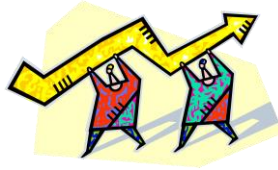


Retired contractor available for small jobs.

Carpentry, electric, plumbing, consulting.

Dan 845-464-4953

St. John's Reformed Church



FINANCIAL REPORT
Monthly Financial Review July 31, 2023

July Income \$15,904.24
July Expenses 31,674.45
 - \$ 15,770.21

YTD Income \$ 141,936.37
YTD Expenses 136,512.81
 +\$ 5,423.56

Details to know about these figures:

1. The YTD income includes a generous "Adopt-a-Cost" gift of \$15,200 for the assisted listening equipment and set up.
2. The July expenses includes \$11,840 expenditure for assisted listening equipment and \$5,138 for a planned computer update.

Did You Know: 2024:

2024 budget preparation starts in August and ends in November?

The budget process begins in August as each committee and staff member completes a budget worksheet indicating the anticipated expenses for next year. Property, Fellowship, Mission & Outreach and Worship Committees will review their respective expense lines from the previous year and submit projections for the next. The Personnel Committee makes staff salary recommendations based on required hours, cost of living adjustments and payroll-related liabilities. Mid-Hudson Classis will offer guidance for Pastor Alisha's budget section. By serving on or simply attending the committee meetings, you can be part of this early budget process.

After collation of the worksheet data, the resulting draft budget will be reviewed by the Finance Committee and Consistory at their October meetings.

The tentative 2024 budget will be mailed/emailed to the congregation during the first week of November to make ready for a question & answer meeting following the Sunday November 12th worship service. One week later, Sunday November 19th, a congregational affirmation vote completes the process. Please mark these dates on you calendar as your participation at these meetings is important.

The 2024 budget will have inflation challenges along with an increased health insurance obligation. Your interest and participation in the process is encouraged and welcomed.

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: 713 478 1821

Passcode: 126126

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 is currently on family leave until November 1, 2023.

Kristi Colburn, Administrator Mon, Wed, Fri. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Thurs. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Michele Zagorski, Financial Consultant

Thurs. 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. Every other Thursday

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

SEPTEMBER EVENTS/MEETINGS:

Blooming in Faith - Women’s Group Friday, September 1st, 7 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall

Men’s Breakfast cancelled for Saturday, September 2nd.

Prayer Service Tuesday, September 5th, 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Scudder Circle Meeting Thursday, September 7th, at 1 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Book Lover’s Club Monday, September 11th, at 10 a.m., in the Fellowship Hall

Finance Meeting Monday, September 11th, at 7 p.m., on ZOOM

Property Meeting Tuesday, September 12th, at 7 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall

Old Dutch Village Garden Club Thursday, September 14, at 12:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Elders meeting Thursday, September 21st, at 7 p.m., in Room 3

Consistory Meeting, Thursday, September 21st, at 7:30 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall



Shepherds Page

September 2023

CHOOSE HOPE

I hope this article finds all of you doing well and that you are enjoying your summer. As many of you know I had been waiting to have brain surgery since last year. I have to say as I got closer to my surgery date, I became very anxious and scared. Since this procedure was not an emergency but on the same side that my brain was affected over twenty years ago. I didn't give up hope that I would be taken care of when the time was right. I have to say, I have been blessed again to have God, family, friends, and my church family by my side.

I would like to thank those of you who prayed, called, sent cards, visited, or just listened to me to what I was going through. Those are all examples of what the shepherds do here at St. Johns. I would also like to extend my invitation to you to join our ministry which many are doing these things on a daily basis for those we know.

As I was scrolling through emails, I came across an article about a neurosurgeon, a former combat surgeon in Iraq, who has written books like I've Seen The End of You, No Place to Hide, and A Peek Under the Hood. His new book is out and called Hope Is The First Dose by W. Lee Warren MD. It's about having a treatment plan for when something massive happens to you. What is your plan? Sooner or later trauma will reconfigure your life. It could be a death of a loved one, health diagnosis, divorce, financial needs just to name a few. It is immediate and ongoing leaving you emotional, spiritual, and with physical pain. This author lost his nineteen-year-old son in a car accident. In his new book, he offers empathy and insights to give you hope.

No matter what you are facing, it doesn't have to be the end of you. He helps you find your way back to a new season of hope, faith, peace, and even happiness. I'm going to try and get this book on audio as it is available on line and stores.

We have to remember that no matter the tragedy, God promises to give us hope and encouragement. We just need to reach out to him in prayer to let him know we need him and not try to handle it all on our own. God has a plan for all of us who believe in him.

Please reach out to me if you are interested in becoming a Shepherd. If you know of someone who may need a phone call let me know that too. I would also like at this time to thank my good friend, JoAnn Fisher who has been writing the Kerk articles the past few months. As you know, the shepherds have been greeting those in church also as they come in. I have a sign up sheet on fellowship table if a shepherd is interested in doing this. Also, if anyone is interested in doing a Kerk article from the shepherd group, please reach out to me also.

**Your Sister In Christ,
Eileen Zeliph-Shepherd Coordinator**

Shepherds Serving at St. Johns Reformed Church

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