

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

January 2023

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Minister's Musings

Happy New (calendar) Year! We celebrated the new year together, liturgically, at the beginning of the Advent Season, but this month we start our new calendar year. 2023! Can you even believe it? 2022 has felt full and beautiful. We had a lot of things happen in the St. John's community and can be grateful for so much as we head into this new year. We started the year masked and ended with more new, uncovered faces.

As Desiree Albizu shared in her Vice President's report and Evie Seils in the Finance article in the Kerk, we have a lot of things to be thankful for and look back on before we spring into this new year.

We are grateful for those who served on consistory this past year - leading and guiding the decisions of the church body, and serving at various capacities. Along with the consistory, we give thanks for the committees who are doing the good and hard work of the church. For the many groups and events that took place - we give thanks for the volunteers and countless hours served cleaning, prepping, cooking and being present.

We have amazing volunteers who are here on the church grounds, almost daily, helping out with odds and ends, fixing things, mowing, taking care of the cemetery stones and trees and anything else that just pops up.

There are volunteers who are in multiple times a week helping a lot of families in the food pantry. They are a witness to those in need and a kind face of St. John's to people in our community in need.

We are grateful for growth in the choir and the many faces who have impacted the music ministry over the course of the year; we think of Gwyyon and Daewon, especially, as they ended their time with us, and Francis as he joined us as a leader. The ongoing people who continue to give time and talents to the music at St. John's is so appreciated. We give thanks for a Sunday of trying something new, with more contemporary music and the talents we got to experience in worship that Sunday.

There are volunteers, every Sunday, who are up in the balcony working to make the Sunday worship pleasant to listen to as well. They work on balancing the sound and have worked diligently this year to get our audio working to the best of its abilities. They also record, upload and operate our zoom every Sunday. It's a huge job and we give thanks for their work!

The fellowship and coffee hour has returned and not without the help of people serving in the kitchen, making delicious muffins and serving coffee and tea. We give thanks for their presence and hospitality.

We are grateful for the time we had with Shari in her many years on staff and we miss her! We are grateful for the transition to Kristi and her willingness to jump right in.

As we look ahead to this new year, we can't help but take a moment to pause and reflect on all the people that have pitched in and helped make this church function. For all that and more, we give thanks.

FATIH AND EDUCATION

December 2022

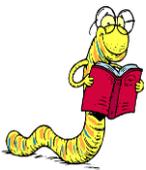
Illness and injury have been affecting attendance at Bible Study on Tuesday mornings. Bible study is based on the Revised Common Lectionary which is available on the Church website as well as online. Paper copies for 2023 are available now. Please see John Roberts or Desiree Albizu.

Although we have access to the new DWELL Digital curriculum, we have not been able to use it much due to low attendance. Annamarie Woelm's work schedule will allow her to bring her family to church on Sundays for two months. This makes Sunday School consistently possible for at least seven weeks.



The Used Toy Sales at the Christmas Bazaar netted over \$150 which will benefit the Children's Program. Thank you to all who donated toys and books, to those who helped sort and display the toys for the sale, and to those who helped during the sale.

BOOK CLUB



The Book Club will meet on a Monday in January. Date TBA. The next selection is Emily's House: A Novel by Amy Belding Brown. It is a fictional work about Emily Dickinson's housemaid, Margaret Maher.

We say farewell to Elder Colleen Grover who has served two terms/six years and thank her for her service. Desiree Albizu will begin her term as Elder of Faith & Education in January after her installation.

We have funds to help parents pay for one of our RCA summer camps, Camp Fowler, campfowler.org, and Camp Warwick, campwarwick.org. Contact Desiree Albizu for more information. Registration has already begun for summer 2023.

SCUDDER CIRCLE NEWS

As we look back on 2022 we are pleased to have had good support for our programs and missions throughout the year, both from our women members and from the congregation in general. Thank you! We look forward to sharing fellowship at our December luncheon with 19 women in attendance.

During the past year we gave support of \$25 for each Mission of the Month with additional support of \$410 for the Ukraine MOM and \$100 for the Shadow of His Wings MOM. We sent \$100 to the Fair Street Reformed Church for support of their work with Afghan refugees and \$255 to Church World Service to be used toward famine relief in Africa. We contributed \$192 to our Deacons Fund for support of the food pantry. We sent \$300 to Joshua Bode and family, our missionaries in Oman and we sent \$300 to Aaron and Winnie Horvat and family, our missionaries in Croatia. In addition to a large collection of donated new underwear we are sending \$200 to provide critical support to the people of Haiti. Thank you so much for helping us support these worthy causes.

Soup sales will return on Sunday morning beginning on January 8th. If you would like to make soup and contribute to this fundraiser please contact Mary Bayer at meb1rh@citlink.net. It is helpful in planning to know what soups will be available each week. 16 ounce soup containers and lids are available to soup makers.

There will not be a meeting during the month of January. We will resume meetings in February, generally at 1:00 pm on the first Thursday of each month in the Fellowship Hall.

Scudder Circle supports missions via members' offerings and donations. We also raise funds with our soup sales during winter months and with sale of used jewelry at the Christmas Bazaar. Offerings or donations can be dropped off or mailed into the church office or be made via Givelify online at any time. Please label them for Scudder Circle.

Scudder Circle is open to all women associated with St John's Reformed Church.

Thank you everyone for your support.
In friendship,
Mary Bayer

Mission of the Month

Somebody once said to me, "You never know what difference you make in the life of another person."

This is so true as we reach out, once again to support the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants based in Albany.

We will be collecting items needed by Afghan refugees 'families who are being resettled in the capital region.

We pray for these families. We wonder how it must feel to arrive in a country with a culture so different from your own? They face so many challenges in learning a new language, finding a job, protecting and nurturing children. It is heartbreaking to think that many are separated from other family members and know they face a dark and uncertain future in Afghanistan.

Jill Peckenpaugh, the field Director for the Albany office, writes in her 2022 report that it had been an incredibly challenging year because of the high number of families who have desperately needed their services. She is very proud of the many employees and volunteers who helped throughout 2022. They were very grateful for the donations St John's made last spring and we hope that once again you will consider supporting this mission.

They are desperately in need of the following items to restock their shelves:

- Comforters and sheet sets
- Pillows
- Bath towels
- Tea pots
- Pots and pans
- Baking dishes
- Coffee and tea cups
- Large and small trash cans
- Laundry detergent
- Toilet paper
- Toothpaste

Items should be in very good condition or new. For those of you not fond of shopping, monetary donations are welcomed. James will be transporting our gifts once again to the Albany warehouse.

Things to pray for:

Afghan Families arriving and those who have already been resettled.

The thousands of unaccompanied migrant children who continue to arrive at the US border, mainly from

Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

All the children who were separated from their parents at the southern border and face continuing trauma. We understand that some of those children have still not been reunited with their families.

Wendy Walrath, Elder of Mission and Outreach

Camp Scholarships

The new year has just begun! It's a great time to think about summer vacation and attending camp.

Camp Fowler is the most commonly chosen camp for our kids. It's in Speculator, NY. It's a very woodsy kind of camp - pines and lakes with all the water sports. Camp Warwick is down very close to NJ. Long Island and NYC church kids go there rather than trek upstate. They have had horse-back riding camps in the past that some of our kids have enjoyed.

Both have out-camps for older students.

Check these websites out sooner rather than later as camps fill up with the kids who have gone before and LOVED it. This is especially true for the teen week. Go to campfowler.org or campwarwick.org for more info.

We are offering \$200 scholarships for our families who are in need. Just let me know if you would like a scholarship for your child(ren). We have one family already registered for Camp Fowler and all their cousins, too. That should be a fun week running into each other and having support there for the first-timers.

My daughter Jessica went to Camp Fowler until she was 17, she enjoyed it so much. One summer she went to both camps. As a young adult, she was one of the leaders of an out-camp, and paddled 80 miles of the Delaware River with her student campers. She came back tanned and buff. 😊

Happy New Year and happy camping in 2023 for your child.

Desiree

Message from Rev. Aaro Rytkonen:

Greetings from Al Amana Centre. I pray this finds you well.

I am working fulltime with Al Amana Centre still, traveling between Oman and Finland quite a lot because my family is residing here in Finland at the moment. I was three weeks in Oman in September and went back there in October again.

COVID has changed the work of Al Amana Centre quite a lot and we have developed an online curriculum. I have been involved with our peer-to-peer facilitation with people of faith in Tanzania, Botswana, and South Sudan. Currently we are starting a program with women of faith in Ethiopia. We have been very busy with our work for peace and reconciliation, and I am happy to say, now we have begun with our onsite courses and workshops in Oman. In September we had imams and pastors from Nigeria in Oman.

Our family visited St. John's in the spring of 2017 when we were on the way to Oman. I remember that very well because it was my second church visit in the US and only the second time I preached in the US. My wife is Eija. She is a kindergarten teacher but is not currently working outside the home. My son, Franz, who was five years old at the time of our visit, has turned eleven years this September. He is in grade 5 studying both in Finnish and in English. Our daughter Olga was only nine months old at the time we visited St John's; she turned six this summer. She is in English-speaking pre-school and will start grade one next fall.

Please pray for our work and my family. There is a huge need for the work we do, and it is extremely important to have funding from our supporting churches; both for Al Amana Centre as well as to us as missionaries. So please pray also for us finding new ways for raising funds for the work for reconciliation and lasting peace. Pray for Oman as it is raising up from the times of COVID. Things are pretty well in Oman at the moment but we do not know what future entails. There are lots of Christians living and praying in Oman and please pray for them as well. We want to make links not only between Christians and Muslims in the world, but also connecting Christians from different contexts.

Peace and all good,
Aaro

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.

Poinsettias and Wreaths:

Thank you to all who adorned the church with your flowers.

Door wreaths are in loving memory of Donnie Harrison.

Advent wreath in memory of Linda Interlichia.

Poinsettias are given in memory of:

Floyd and AnnaBell Swanson, Austin and Donetta Young, Louise Gartelmann Young, by Steve and Vickie Young.

Myra Barclay King, Kirsten F. Hogan, Kerry Ann Hawver, Ishmael Thomas, by Clifford B. King,

Richard and Elsie Rutter, Benedicto Albizu, Celeste and Carmen Henry, by Ben and Desiree Albizu and Family.

Margaret and Sherman Leach, Nancy and Joseph Jozefowicz, by Jim, Stephanie and Abigail Jozefowicz,

Betty Jean and Ivan G. Moore, Quentin R., Helen and Robert Q. Moore, by Barbara E. Dedrick,

Karen Streifeneder, by Terry Laibach and Carol Ransford,

Beverly A. Campisi, John R. Campisi, Arthur L. and Margherita Fenaroli, by Pete, Jackie and Family,

Margaret and Albert Trezza, Viola and Adlore Smith, by Albert and Gloria Trezza,

George and Edith Michael, Stella Prairie and Robert Bradsell, by Hop and Cathy Michael

Wallace Winchell and Betty Oeland, by Serena Winchell and Michael Fleming,



To all,
Wishing you a Merry Christmas filled with old-fashioned pleasures, happy memories,
and all the joys of the season. Merry Christmas!
From,
Sharon J. & Gloria R.

Thank you for your continued Christian ministry, Christian witness, and Christian love
in the Regional Synod of New York. Remember, the greatest gift we can give, as
children of God, is to share the gift of Emmanuel!
Christmas Blessings,
Regional Synod of NY



The sacrament of baptism was administered to **Ryan Lucas Morgan**, son of Shelby Morgan, and to **Amelia Rose Abrahams**, daughter of Ben and Hannah Abrahams, at the worship service on December 18, 2022. Pastor Alisha baptized these children with such joy knowing that Baptism is the sign and seal of God's promises to this covenant people. In baptism God promises by grace alone: To forgive our sins; To adopt us into the Body of Christ, the Church; To send the Holy Spirit daily to renew and cleanse us; and to resurrect us to eternal life.



to **JoAnn Fisher, Glenn Countryman, Pete Fenaroli, Terry Laibach, and Pastor Alisha** for decorating the Sanctuary and Education Wing. It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!

to all the people who involved in the Christmas Bazaar. Your efforts are appreciated! Thank you for making it a huge success.

to **Serena Winchell** for organizing and chairing the gifts for the food pantry mission project, and also a huge thank you to all who helped shop and wrap the gifts.

to all who contributed hats, mittens, and scarves for the mites tree this year.

to the Property Committee, lead by Glenn Countryman, for all that you do to keep the building safe and looking nice. Your work does not go unnoticed.

to all who covered for Pete during his illness, especially **Glenn** who had lots of stuff to cover.

to **Deb MacConel, Mary Hennessy, Laurie DeCuitiis and Kayla Bell** for continued refreshments during Coffee Hour and after the Blue Christmas service on December 14. You ladies always have a nice variety of foods to meet our needs and more.

to **Terry and Lauren Laibach, Jackie Fenaroli, Glenn Countrymann, Mary Bayer, Desiree Albizu, Pete and Janice Lawson, Hop Michaels, and Pastor Alisha** for helping with office tasks while I was out sick with COVID. I appreciate all your hard work and willingness to help “run” the church. I can’t thank you enough. If I forgot to mention someone who helped, please accept my apology. Thank you all!

to all that provided me (Kristi) with gifts, cards, and prayers for a joyous Christmas. I appreciate all the goodies. Thank you for supporting and appreciating me. You’re the best!

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****



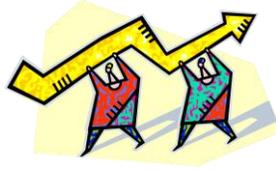
Deadline for the **February** Kerk is **January 10**.

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.

Retired contractor available for small jobs. Carpentry, electric, plumbing, consulting.

Dan 845-464-4953

St. John's Reformed Church



FINANCIAL REPORT

November 2022

Income	\$11,378.63
Expense	- \$14,933.45
	- \$ 3,554.82

Year To Date January - December 2022

Income	\$ 205,290.14
Expenses	\$ 182,502.06
	+\$22,788.08

Thank you to everyone who donated coats, boots, hats, mittens, and Christmas presents for the food pantry recipients during December's **Mission of the Month**.

Did You Know:

Happy New Year from the Finance Committee! A New Year means....that's right, you guessed it: New Offering Envelopes! YAY! I know you get so excited over those small rectangles of paper...sometimes they even come in different colors! That said, if you haven't received your tithes & offerings envelopes, please make sure to pick them up from the fellowship hall. Each set of envelopes is given a number. This number helps keep track of your personal tithing so that you may request a report at the end of the year for your tax returns. If you did not receive a box of envelopes, you may request one from the fabulous Kristi (our new Administrator) in the church office.

Now in case all those wonderful colors & designs on the envelopes confuse you, here is a short explanation.

- The first envelope in the box is the **Initial Offering envelope**. Your contribution of \$5.00 would cover the cost of a box of envelopes.
- **White envelopes** go to the General Fund - the money used for operating expenses like heat, light, salaries, phone and internet... If you pledge a certain amount for the week, month, or year, this is the envelope you will use. The envelope has other options listed so you can add an amount for a specific purpose.
- **Pink Envelopes** are for Benevolence. Money placed in these specifically offset the budgeted amount that St. John's has committed to support our missions.
- **The Green envelope** is for the Denominational Assessment (think church membership fee on a national level to the Reformed Church of America). This year, that Assessment is \$108 per active member. Please give any amount you can to this significant item in our budget.
- **The seasonal envelopes** can be used if you wish to give a special offering during Lent, at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

If you would like to save paper, or like me, are just downright forgetful, you can set up online donations (like you do auto-payments on bills) on a convenient app called Givelify. It allows you to assign yourself a number just like the tithing envelopes (please ask Kristi for your number) and creates its own donation report for you at the end of the year for tax purposes. The app is free, user-friendly, and gives you the option to schedule weekly or monthly tithes. For organizations like our church, there are no sign-up or monthly fees. Givelify takes 2.9% + \$0.30 per transaction. A small price to pay for the convenience, but we recommend scheduling your tithing once a month instead of weekly, if using the app.

Regardless of how or if you tithe, know that the Finance Committee appreciates each of you and the gifts/talent you bring to our church family. We wish you a joyous, healthy and blessed year! Here's to 2023!

Happy New Year from the Finance Committee!



Shepherds Page

January 2023

Christmas Giving

As we continue to do our Christmas shopping running around frantically is it possible, we should think more about what the Magi brought the newborn King. Maybe we can learn something from these three wise men.

First, their gifts were given with love as they had gone a long way to find the newborn King. When they finally stood before Him, they fell down and worshiped him. Second, they brought gifts that cost them something not an inexpensive trinket or decoration picked up at a mall along the caravan route. Third, their gifts demonstrated an understanding of the person receiving the gift. He was just a young child but they knew he was a mighty King. They brought gold that spoke royalty, frankincense that represented deity and myrrh that may have been a sign of His suffering and death. These valuable gifts may have even made it possible for Joseph and Mary to finance their escape to and return from Egypt. The gifts were very practical. Is there a lesson for all of us to follow?

A lot of us make a list of those we have to buy a gift for and as we find them a special gift, we check them off and move on to the next person. The joy of giving, the love was maybe less than it could have been. Some families give a special homemade gift to those they love especially if they have little money such as homemade mittens, sweaters, personalized aprons, and photo albums just to name a few. These items were not costly except in time. These gifts communicate that they knew something about each person and how much they cared about them. Sometimes these gifts are treasured the most.

So as you look back on this past holiday season, think instead of Christmas shopping as a holiday chore but looking at gifts as an expression of love and caring to be given from the heart-a reflection of God's gift to us over two thousand years ago. Possibly you can take a lesson from the Magi and offer gifts this year that demonstrates your love, sacrifice of time, and understanding.

The shepherds of St. John's would like to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please know that we are all thinking and praying for you. Let us rejoice that the newborn King is born.

If you know someone who is in need of cheering up this holiday season, there are prayer bears in the back of the church soaking up all our prayers for the taking so please feel free to make someone's day.

Yours in Christ,
Eileen Zeliph- Shepherd Coordinator

Shepherds serving St. Johns Reformed Church

Desiree Albizu	Stan Tremper	Mary Hennessy
Kayla Bell	Linda Neilson	Wendy Walrath
Joann Fisher	Denise Gilhooly	Marie Votava
Terry Laibach	Judy Rockefeller	Eileen Zeliph

Church 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: 885 8830 6134

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

Tues., Wed., Fri. 845-758-1184

pastoralisha@stjohnsreformed.org

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

Tuesdays 10:15 a.m. in the fellowship hall

EVENTS/MEETINGS:

Finance Committee meeting

Monday, January 9, 7 p.m. on Zoom

Property Meeting

Tuesday, January 10, 7 p.m.

in the Fellowship Hall

Old Dutch Village Garden Club

Thursday, January 10, 12:30 p.m.,
in the Fellowship Hall

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, January 16,
Office & Food Pantry are closed.

Elders meeting

Thursday, January 19, 7 p.m. room 3

Consistory meeting

Thursday, January 19, 7:30 p.m.,
in the Fellowship Hall

Boy Scout Troop Meeting

Monday, January 23, 7 p.m.

Boy Scout Leaders Meeting

Thursday, January 26, 7 p.m.,
in the Fellowship Hall