

# THE KERK

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

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## Minister's Musings

If you haven't already heard, "This Lent, we are focusing on the life and faith of one of Jesus' most famous disciples. In Peter, we see a person who is both steadfast and unsteady, a dear friend and a betrayer, a follower and a wanderer. In Peter, we often see ourselves. By following Peter's journey, we watch the story of Jesus unfold through the eyes of a very normal human trying to figure it all out—just like us."<sup>1</sup>

These are the words that began the devotional we're using for Lent. This creative team at Sanctified Art has created an invaluable resource that we are using for this season of Lent and Easter. They go on to say this about their experience in developing this resource, "As we were studying Peter's faith journey, the lyrics of 'Come Thou Fount' came to mind. It's as if Peter himself wrote this song. And so, for each step in Peter's journey, we have selected a phrase from this hymn. As we follow Peter's story, we will sing our way through Lent, binding our wandering hearts to God.

In this devotional and series, we want to affirm that faith is a constant journey of steadfast pursuit, one that ebbs and flows. We want to affirm the ways Peter keeps going: he drops his nets, he walks on water, he runs to the empty tomb, he swims to the shore to meet the risen Christ. He keeps searching and yearning and loving, even after missteps or mistakes. Ultimately, in Peter's story, we are reminded that God loves imperfect people—in fact, time and again, that's precisely who God claims and calls. We encourage you to engage in the weekly art and reflections at your own pace, looking for the ways your own story may be reflected in Peter's faith journey. As we wander through Lent, let us tune our hearts to sing God's grace. May we rest in streams of mercy, never ceasing. Artfully yours, The Sanctified Art Creative Team: Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity, Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed, Hannah Garrity, Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman, Rev. Anna Strickland".<sup>2</sup>

During this season, you will see art, hymns, poems and words written and shared by this creative team. My hope and prayer is that we will each be able to sink a little further into Peter's story, and in doing so, our own as well.

<sup>1</sup> A Lenten Devotional: Wandering Heart, Figuring out Faith with Peter, ii.

<sup>2</sup> A Lenten Devotional: Wandering Heart, Figuring out Faith with Peter, i

*Rev. Alisha Riepma-Hosier  
Minister of Word and Sacrament*

## Faith & Education



### **Bible Study**

Bible Study has only lost one Wednesday due to snow this winter. 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.



### **Children's Program**

Sunday School families received daily family devotions for Lent. The teens had their own devotions. Adults attending worship received copies of "Guided to the Cross: Devotions for Lent."

Sunday School teacher Eileen Wambach has new resources for Lent and Holy Week for the children. She led a lesson on pretzel-making Sunday, February 11 prior to Ash Wednesday. Beverly Kipp has been volunteering to teach and assist as well.

Commissioned Pastor James Walrath with Elder Elizabeth Young began Confirmation Class for two of our teens on February 18. The invitation was extended to youth from other RCA churches to join the class.



### **The Book Club**

The Book Club will meet Monday, March 25 to discuss *The Masterpiece* by Fiona Davis. Book suggestions are always welcome. Anyone who has listened to or read the book is welcome to join in the discussion.

### **BOOK SALE FEBRUARY 29 TO MARCH 2**

Please join us to peruse what has been collected. The hours are Thursday, February 29 from 5-8 p.m.; Friday, March 1 from 1-4 p.m. and Saturday, March 2 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

Proceeds will go towards missions.



**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



We are also planning another spring clothing sale Thursday April 25, Friday, April; 26 and Saturday, April 27. Times TBA



### **Blooming in Faith Women's Fellowship**

meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. The next meeting is March 6. It's a time for fellowship, prayer, with a focus on creating art. For more information, please see *Elizabeth Young*



### **Monthly Prayer Service**

is the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. The next service is March 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. Please see *James Walrath* for more information.



Our sincerest sympathy is extended to the friends and families of William J. Fitzmaurice and David Baldauf upon their recent passing.  
***Please comfort all those that are mourning.***



### **Scudder Circle News**

Our Scudder Circle meeting in February was attended by 10 ladies of St John's. Karen Roberts presented a program reviewing highlights from the book "Aging Wisely" by Viola B Meeke. Valentine themed refreshments were prepared by Eileen Wambach. During our business meeting it was agreed to donate \$200 to the St John's Food Pantry and \$75 for the Mission of the Month for CWS Hygiene Kits. Soup, chili and bread sales have continued to be popular and will continue in the Fellowship Hall following Sunday worship service through Sunday March 17th. Any remaining soups will be available for sale until gone from the freezer in the church kitchen.

The next meeting will be in the Fellowship Hall at 1:00 pm on Thursday March 7th. Meetings will continue on the first Thursday of each month through June 6th. All women associated with St John's Church are invited to join us for an informative program followed by fellowship and refreshments. 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 mark your donations for the Scudder Circle. Funds raised by donation, offering and fundraising are used to support missions and organizations both locally and around the world.

For more information, please contact *Mary Bayer*.



## **Mission and Outreach- February**

Thank you to all who donated supplies or monetarily for CWS Health Kits. The kits will be assembled on Sunday, March 17, and then transported to the Center Congregational Church in Meriden, CT, to be collected by CWS. For more information, see *Serena or Wendy*.



To all who volunteered for the Book Sale making it a huge success.

To the property committee and to all the many hands that continue to spend time beautifying the church building, inside and out.

To the fellowship team for the delicious refreshments and the hospitality after events and Worship Services.

To the technology team for all your dedication and hard work on our sound system to help better the sound in the sanctuary and on Zoom.

To all those that keep in touch with others by sending cards, visiting, and/or making phone calls.

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



Thank you to all who have lifted us up in prayer with cards and emails as Ben journeys on with treatment.

Desiree & Ben Albizu



## **Zoom and YouTube Status**

Zoom audio connection has been changed. The Tech Crew has been adjusting the Zoom audio during worship services. Thanks to all the Zoom listeners for their patience. Send us a chat message to let us know how the sound is. Any questions, see *Doug or Wayne*.



Don't forget to set your clocks one hour ahead and change the batteries in your smoke detectors on Saturday night, March 10, 2024



### Property Committee

There are many projects needing attention to. For instance, the Parsonage's hot water heater is dripping from a corroded valve. It is suggested to purchase a new hybrid electric/heat pump unit. The Parsonage dehumidifier needs to be replaced as well. On a positive note, two additional stove racks have been ordered, which will make cooking easier. Thank you to all who have helped with snow removal. If you would like to join the Property Committee, meetings are held on the second Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. See *Glenn Countryman*, Property Chairperson for more information.



If you would like to place flowering plants in the sanctuary for Easter Sunday, 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 by Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup>**

I would like to order:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Lily @ \$8
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hyacinth @ \$8
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tulips @ \$8
- \_\_\_\_\_ Daffodils @ \$8

Total payment \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of

\_\_\_\_\_

Other dedication

\_\_\_\_\_

Given by

\_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

St. John's Reformed Church  
earmarked Easter Flowers  
126 Old Post Rd. N.  
Red Hook, NY 12571

If you have any questions, please call the church office at 845-758-1184  
or email at [Office@stjohnsreformed.org](mailto:Office@stjohnsreformed.org)

## Consistory Minutes February 15, 2024

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

Pastor Alisha opened the meeting, at 7:30 p.m., with a Lenten Devotional, titled, "Wandering Heart". She read a poem, "All This Time", by Rev. Sarah Speed, and read Palm 25:1-10, followed by prayer.

**The agenda was approved, M/S/C (motion, seconded, and carried) with amendments. The minutes of the January 18, 2024 meeting were approved, M/S/C, with a correction in the Financial Report. It should read, "The Denominational Assessment for this year (2024) will be \$9750 based on \$130 for 75 active church members."**

**Pastoral Report:** Pastor Alisha reported that she has led worship for 4 Sundays. She planned and assisted with Ash Wednesday Service. She continues to supervise Saugerties Reformed Church, has ongoing meetings with Rev. VanHouten, has been organizing a Supervisor Meeting, reading through the book Claiming Resurrection in the Dying Church: Freedom beyond Survival, in light of many churches' circumstances in our Classis, and continues to work on the Consistory Report form. She held the Membership Luncheon on February 4, which was well attended. She began premarital counseling meetings with a couple who have planned a May wedding. **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. January reports had a lot of inconsistencies. Glenn will clarify when he presents the Finance Comm. report. **To approve the Financial Reports as presented, M/S/C.**

### **Committee Reports:**

**Faith and Education:** Desiree stated that Bible Study has been meeting consistently in the winter. Sunday School families received daily family devotions for Lent. The teens had their own devotions. Adults attending worship received copies of "Guided to the Cross: Devotions for Lent." Sunday School teacher Eileen Wambach has new resources for Lent and Holy Week for the children. Commissioned Pastor James Walrath with Elder Elizabeth Young began Confirmation Class on February 18. The Book Club will meet Monday, March 25 to discuss The Masterpiece by Fiona Davis.

**Fellowship:** Our weekly fellowship attendance has been stronger than in the recent past. We had a successful Turkey Dinner Fundraiser cooked by the talented Peta Bartles and Beverly Kipp. We are anticipating hosting our regional Classis Meeting on March 19. There is a Shepherd's Luncheon on Palm Sunday, March 24. A document explaining which group is responsible for providing fellowship services is being developed.

**Finance Committee:** Glenn explained some of the inconsistencies in the January reports. Kristi and Hop are working together to pay the bills. An error occurred on Pastor Alisha's paycheck, which reflects a larger than normal pay. Hop is working on finding an auditor. The Denominational Assessment's first quarter was paid. Hop updated the bequest board. The scholarship allotment is \$700, which could increase due to individual financial donations or proceeds from sales. Wendy has been in contact with Gael Uwera at RCA Global Missions to transfer our Partners in Mission (PIM) contribution from Aaro Rytkonen, who has now left the Al Amanda center to JJ TenClay who is Missionary and Refugee Ministries Coordinator. We will be continuing our support of Joshua and Erica Bode in Oman. Since PIM Shares have increased in price, Mission and Outreach will be overbudget by \$600. Finance recommends M & O to use the \$600 budget overrun from the PIM Shares to be satisfied from the M & O liability line which currently holds \$2000.

**Mission and Outreach:** Wendy reported that the Mission of the Month for January was to prepare a meal for the Hudson River Housing shelter in Poughkeepsie. We thank Peta Bartles, Beverly Kipp and their team of volunteers for making this possible! Thank you to all who donated monetarily, \$365 was collected. This month we are collecting items for CWS kits. They will be assembled on March 17. At the next M & O Meeting, a vote will take place as to the destination of the proceeds of the Book Sale.

**Property Committee:** Glenn stated there are many projects needing attention. The Parsonage hot water heater is dripping from a corroded valve. The unit is an old oil-fired unit and about to fail. Todd Abrahams recommended replacement with a new hybrid electric/heat pump unit. The cost of the unit would be approx. \$2600 plus labor. The Parsonage dehumidifier needs replacing too. A recommendation to purchase a commercial unit would be the best option, which costs approximately \$1500 to \$1600. The hot water heater is the priority. (See PCR#1

**Worship:** Pete reported Sunday attendance has held steady during January with around 50-65, including zoom. Zoom service continues to be well attended and is an important offering for those who cannot be physically present in the sanctuary. Joseph Breslau has been hired to sing with the choir again through the end of May. He will help Pete with directing a choir anthem and provide additional music assistance as requested. St. John's will host the March 19th Mid-week Lenten Service. There will be refreshments after the service. Worship will be working with Fellowship on details.

**Technology:** File migrations to PC occurring on as needed basis. Doug has continued his work on our sound system. He has identified our issues with the ambience mic and the left choir mic. He has reached out to Tom and Carol Steib.

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

**Working recommendations and special reports:**

**Constitutional Inquiries:** Pastor Alisha presented the Constitutional Inquiries to the Deacons and Elders, responses were recorded on Zoom.

**Elder/Deacon Contact Lists:** Pastor asked all to review, correct, and provide the correct information to Kristi, Clerk of Consistory.

**Invite to Classis:** Pastor Alisha extended an invitation to all the members of Consistory to the Classis Meeting on March 19. Fellowship will be organizing refreshments for this meeting.

**Procedure for E-votes:** Desiree presented the steps for an Email Vote. First, the Elder or Deacon presents it to Pastor Alisha and/or Desiree. If an e-vote is needed, the Clerk of Consistory (Kristi) sends out an email with the recommendation. The count of responses are recorded and then relayed back to the members of consistory. The results of the vote are recorded and reflected into the Consistory minutes from the meeting that the recommendation was made. After Desiree explained the steps, she asked, "Are you comfortable with a majority?" People can respond to the vote by either affirm, negate, or sustain. **After discussion a motion was made to approve the Procedure for E-votes, as presented, M/S/C.**

**Deacons Food Pantry Discussion:** Terry and Pete stated that the pantry will be going through some donation cutbacks shortly. The "Angel" who has been donating 2/3 of the items has to cutback on her donations. It was felt that the congregation needs to be aware of the Food Pantry's situation. The pantry volunteers have met to discuss moving forward and will update the congregation. Terry has drafted an informational document that provides details pertaining to the food pantry. The purpose of the document is to see how we can keep the food pantry going. Pete talked about the Deacon's Fund and how the funds are used. Discussion took place, questions were asked and answered. Pete stated that more meetings are needed to determine the future of the food pantry.

**Matthew Finch Request- Garden Project:**

Desiree presented Matthew’s request (see email/PDF report) for starting a garden at the church. After discussion, the request was tabled until further information was obtained. The committee’s suggestion was to contact Matthew to and ask him to consider attending and speaking at the next Property Committee meeting to clarify and to answer questions that were presented by Consistory.

**FCR#1: Finance recommends that M&O to use the \$600 budget overrun from the PIM Shares to be satisfied from the Mission & Outreach liability line which currently holds \$2000.**

**A motion to reject FCR#1 as presented was made and approved.**

**A motion to table FCR#1 as presented, for further discussion to gain more information, was seconded and carried.**

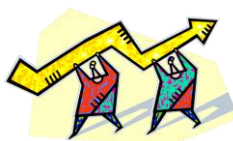
**PCR#1: Property recommends replacement of the parsonage hot water heater with a new hybrid electric/heat pump unit (Premier AI Smart Hybrid Electric Heat Pump, 66 gallon) as soon as arrangements can be made, using monies from the Endowment Fund.**

**To approve the Property Committee recommendation as presented, M/S/C.**

**To approve to adjourn the meeting after prayer, at 9:30 p.m., M/S/C.  
The next regular meeting is March 14, 2024.**

Respectfully submitted, **Kristi Colburn**, Clerk of Consistory

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**FINANCIAL REPORT**

**Monthly Review\_January 31, 2024**

**Income vs. Expenses Current Month**

Jan. Income	\$16,879.71
Jan. Expenses	<u>-35,903.19</u>
	- \$19,023.48

**Income vs. Expenses Year to Date (YTD)**

YTD Income	\$ 16,879.71
YTD Expenses	<u>- 35,903.19</u>
	- \$19,023.48

**Did You Know? There are giving strategies that can benefit the giver as well as the church.** Here are a couple of ideas you might discuss with your tax professional when planning for the 2024 tax year.

**1. Donating appreciated publicly traded securities (stocks & mutual funds) to the church.**

Shares of stocks &/or mutual funds are relatively easy to donate and can be a means to maximize your charitable giving while creating a significant tax savings. The benefits can be three-fold:

- Whatever the appreciated value, the capital gains tax is eliminated if given directly to the church (or any qualified charity).
- No security sales fee is incurred.
- With itemized deductions the entire fair market value is a charitable deduction for the tax year in which it is given.

The shares must be held for more than one year and the transfer must be directly to the church. **If YOU sell the shares, you’re responsible for the capital gains tax!**



Although this strategy is good for satisfying an annual pledge, it's also an excellent method to make legacy gifts to the endowment fund. Finance committee members can help you with the information you'll need to make a gift of this type.

## **2. Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from a traditional IRA.**

Age 73 begins the required minimal distributions (RMD) due from your traditional IRA. If you direct your IRA custodian to transfer your gift directly to a 501(c)(3) charity like St. John's, you don't owe any taxes on the gift amount and it satisfies that much of your annual RMD. Things to consider with this strategy:

- The QCD must be sent from your IRA fund to the charity (check made payable to St. John's). **If YOU receive the funds, it's considered income and will be taxable.**
- For a QCD to count towards your current year's required minimal distribution (RMD), the funds must come out of your IRA by December 31.
- The maximum annual amount that can qualify for a QCD is \$100,000.
- Your adjusted gross income will be reduced by the amount of the gift. This may lower your tax bracket, Medicare premiums &/or SS benefit taxation.
- **However, you cannot additionally claim a charitable deduction because the funds never became income to you.**

No matter your type of tax return (itemized or standard), this can be a convenient way to satisfy your entire annual pledge with one IRA distribution.

Please remember: these giving tax strategies need to be evaluated and discussed with your IRA Fund manager and tax professional to ensure it's the right thing for your situation.

### ***Finance Committee***

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## **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](http://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

## **MARCH EVENTS/MEETINGS:**

**Book Sale** February 29-March 2

**Men's Breakfast** Saturday, March 2, at 8 a.m. at the Elizaville Diner

**Prayer Service** Tuesday, March 5, 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

**Blooming in Faith - Women's Group** Wednesday, March 6, 7 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall

**Mid-Week Lenten Worship Service** Wednesday, March 6, 7 p.m., Christ Church Episcopal

**Scudder Meeting** Thursday, March 7, 1 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall

**Finance Committee Meeting** Monday, March 11, at 7 p.m., on Zoom

**Property Meeting** Tuesday, March 12, at 7 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall

**Mid-Week Lenten Worship Service** Wednesday, March 13, 7 p.m., St. Paul's & Trinity Parish

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

**Elders Meeting** Thursday, March 14, at 7 p.m. in Room 3

**Consistory Meeting**, Thursday, March 14, at 7:30 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall

**Book Club** Monday, March 18, at 10 a.m., in the Fellowship Hall

**Mid-Hudson Classis Meeting**, Tuesday, March 19, at 6 p.m., Sanctuary

**Mid-Week Lenten Worship Service Wednesday**, March 20, 7 p.m., SJRC, Sanctuary

**Boy Scout Leader's Meeting** Thursday, March 28, at 7 p.m. in Room 4

### **Holy Week Services**

Sunday, March 24, Palm Sunday, 10 a.m., Worship Service, in the Sanctuary

Thursday, March 28, **Maundy Thursday Service**, at 7:30 p.m., in the Sanctuary

**Sunday, March 31, Easter-Resurrection of the Lord**

6:30 a.m., Easter Sunrise Service, in the parking lot

10 a.m., Resurrection Worship Service, in the Sanctuary



**Deadline for the April Kerk is March 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](mailto:office@stjohnsreformed.org).

**AD:**

**Retired contractor available for small jobs.**

**Carpentry, electric, plumbing, consulting.**

**Dan 845-464-4953**



# Shepherds Page

March 2024

## PREPARING OUR HEARTS FOR LENT

Lent begins forty days before Easter on a Wednesday that the church calls Ash Wednesday. It ends on the day of the resurrection, Easter Sunday. Lent is intended to be a time of preparation and anticipation of our Celebration of the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It turns our eyes upon Jesus and reflects on His great love when Jesus left Heaven came to Earth to dwell among men. He then offered Himself for our sins. Lent is considered a “season” of preparation in the church. Observing Lent can be very beneficial to spiritual growth.

Besides remembering what Jesus has done and preparing for Easter, Lent is a time of sacrifice which is the practice of giving something up for the forty days of Lent. It teaches patience and endurance when one is tempted to give in to their own desires. If you don't want to give something up for Lent that is okay too as God will not love you any less. His love for you is based on who you belong to—Jesus!! You have been saved and belong to Jesus. God loves you fully and eternally. The best way to observe Lent is not giving up things to Him but giving—up of our hearts to Him.

Lent is about looking forward to what's coming—Resurrection Sunday. Lent is a special time for remembering:

1. Who God is – Merciful & Gracious
2. What God has done for you - He sent His Son to save you; and
3. Who you are in Christ – Redeemed, Blessed, and Marked as His Own

As we look forward to Easter during Lent, when we keep our eyes focused on Jesus, and our hearts devoted to Him, we will live our lives for the joy that is set before us. The glory that is yet to come.

So let us ALL prepare our hearts for this journey through Lent.

God Bless Eileen Zeliph-Shepherd Coordinator

Desiree Albizu  
Kayla Bell  
JoAnn Fisher  
Terry Laibach

Linda Neilson  
Denise Gilhooly  
Eileen Zeliph

Wendy Walrath  
Mary Hennessy  
Marie Votava  
Stan Tremper