

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

March 2023

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Minister's Musings

We find ourselves in the season of Lent liturgically - and finally, what feels like a season of winter. March finds a blanket of snow covering the rolling hills around us and covering fields, finally giving some rest to the land around us.

Wintering and Lent hold hands in some respects. Winter naturally moves us inside - it nudges us to wrap up in more clothes, in warm blankets and slow down a bit. For reasons like safety and to conserve energy.

In nature, bees winter kind of like this too, in a miraculous way. In her book, *Wintering*, Katherine May writes about their behavior,

The honeybee can disconnect its wings from its flight muscles—rather like putting the car into neutral—then rev those muscles to become heater bees. In the depths of the hive in winter, the bees cluster together to retain heat, and these cold-blooded creatures take turns acting like little radiators, sometimes reaching 45°C, seven degrees higher than human body temperature. Even on the coldest days, a beehive will retain a temperature of 35°C in the very centre. When each heater bee gets exhausted, another bee takes over. The superorganism is

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maintained until spring.

Like bees, we too as a body of Christ, prepare and winter together through Lent and through life. We work together as a unit. We take turns when one is exhausted, overcome with grief or finding themselves in a place that is dark, another steps in to hold that person up. Another comes in and offers prayers, support, love and tangible help in the midst of need.

Lent, like winter, is a time for repentance and time moving closer and inside. It is a time to look at ourselves in an honest way - and in a natural way, to invite others into these spaces where we need help ourselves.

As we start in this season of Lent, let us continue to be with each other, honestly, in the lives that we're living. Honest with ourselves, with our loved ones and with God. When we find ourselves in need of help, my hope is that we would have the courage to continue to reach out to the larger body of Christ for support and love. Stay warm, friend

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May, Katherine. 2020. "March." In *Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times*, (Riverhead Books, Penguin Random House LLC, London), 205.

FATIH AND EDUCATION

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY



Bible Study is now being held on Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. John & Karen Roberts wanted to attend Senior Exercise at the Red Hook Community Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays. 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. Please see John Roberts or Desiree Albizu.

SUNDAY SCHOOL



Eileen Wambach has been carrying the load for Sunday School. She has been using the DWELL Digital curriculum as well as our DWELL curriculum leader guides and hard copies of the children's resources. Class depends on the children's attendance at this point. We had five women who were teaching prior to COVID, but it is frustrating for them to prepare a lesson and then not to have anyone attend class. As a result most Sundays Eileen comes prepared to teach if there are children. The first Sunday of the month the children remain in worship for communion.

BOOK CLUB



Book Club will meet on Monday, February 20 at 1p.m. in the Fellowship Hall to discuss the book, "Last Bus to Wisdom" by Ivan Doig. March 20th's selection is Flight of the Sparrow by Amy Belding Brown.

SCUDDER CIRCLE NEWS

The next meeting of the Scudder Circle will be on Thursday March 2nd. We will not meet during the month of April as our usual "1st Thursday of the month" meeting day is also the date of the Maundy Thursday and Tenebrae Service. We will resume and meet after Easter on Thursday May 4th at 1:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Our June meeting will be lunch out at a restaurant with further information in the next Kerk.

Soup sales continue each Sunday with 16 ounce frozen containers of homemade soup available for sale. Chili was available for sale on Super Bowl Sunday. We plan to continue to provide soup throughout the month of March. Thank you to the soup makers and to the buyers of our soups for helping to support so many missions locally and around the world.

Offerings or donations to the Scudder Circle can be dropped off or mailed to the church office or be made online via Givelify at any time. Please label your donation for Scudder Circle. The Scudder Circle is open to all women associated with St John's Reformed Church. Our meetings are usually on the 1st Thursday of the month at 1:00pm in the Fellowship Hall.

If you would like to be added to our email group, please contact Mary Bayer meb1rh@citlink.net.



MISSION OF THE MONTH-MARCH

RESPONDING TO THE TURKEY AND SYRIA EARTHQUAKE

Our offering to missions in March will go to **World Vision**. World Vision has staff on the ground and has been distributing fuel and heat to shelters in northwest Syria in response to cold and sub-zero temperatures. The zone of destruction is huge. Tens of millions of people have been affected across the area. The situation is desperate. In Northwest Syria hundreds of thousands of people are stranded in the streets. In Turkey people are huddled in cars, in tents or just cramped together with others trying to keep warm. Families are also dealing with potential disease outbreaks and the very real trauma that comes after these horrific incidents.

World Vision is working around the clock to provide survivors with shelter, access to things that will keep them warm including blankets, heaters and fuel. They are working with partners and other humanitarian sources to ensure that the response is coordinated, efficient and meeting the most pressing needs of the most vulnerable, especially the children.

World Vision priorities include helping support affected people with access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene, healthcare, shelter and care for vulnerable children. Their initial response areas will cover Azaz, Afrin and Idib in northern Syria, and Gaziantep and Sanliurfa in Turkey.

World Vision is not only asking for financial support, they are also asking for our prayers.

Wendy Walrath, Elder of Mission and Outreach

CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS

Spring is in the air! 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 camping in 2023 for your child.
Desire



Consistory Minutes 2-16-23 Meeting

Present: Rev. Alisha Riempa

Elders: Desiree Albizu, Glenn Countryman, Terry Laibach,
Deacons: Eileen Wambach, Laurie DeCiutiis, Pete Fenaroli

Absent: Wendy Walrath, Gian Stagnaro

Pastor Alisha opened the meeting at 7:37 pm, with prayer.

A motion was made to accept the agenda and draft minutes from the 1-19-2023 meeting, with no additions or corrections.

Pastoral Report: A motion was made to accept Pastor Alisha's report without questions.

Financial Review: The balance sheet, profit and loss, and months review for January were received. Glenn highlighted a few items, noting that Michele, financial consultant, experienced technical/computer problems, which resulted in discrepancies on reports.

A motion to accept all reports was made and approved.

Doug Westcott- Sound System Proposal: (see his detailed report for details)

Doug presented his proposal for an improvement to the sound system in the sanctuary to include a new soundboard and speakers. The addition of an assistive listening system for the sanctuary may be appropriate as well. Doug discussed the issues, considerations for a soundboard and speaker replacement. He also discussed assistive listening options, issues with that, as well as funding. Doug explained the future of the current sound system. Doug's recommendation is for us to form a committee to research the task of making the soundboard and speaker improvements to the sound system. Once they have the recommendations and cost, they should present options to Consistory for their consideration and approval. Also, the assistive listing system should be reconsidered as well.

After much discussion took place, Pastor Alisha stated that we need a recommendation to bring this information to worship committee. A motion was made, all agreed, and this motion was approved.

Committee Reports:

Faith and Education: Bible Study is now being held on Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Eileen Wambach has been carrying the load for Sunday School. She has been using the DWELL Digital curriculum. Class depends on the children's attendance at this point. The first Sunday of the month the children remain in worship for communion.

Book Club met on Monday, February 20 and discussed the "Last Bus to Wisdom" by Ivan Doig. March 20th's selection is the "Flight of the Sparrow" by Amy Belding Brown. Six students are registering or have already registered for an RCA summer camps. Desiree stated that there are funds in the Emmaus Youth Ministry account to provide for camp scholarships to an RCA camp.

Finance: Glenn highlighted items on the Financial Committee Minutes. Due to computer issues, Michele was not able to accurately enter data or even reconcile reports. Therefore, there are discrepancies on financial reports. The Finance committee discussed these issues. Hop Michaels will review these findings with Michele. Glenn discussed the lack of Endowment Funds and informed Consistory. Finance Committee recommends Consistory sponsor fundraising for the Scholarship Fund. Desiree made a motion that Consistory, "Inform people about the lack of funds for Scholarships and ask the congregation to donate monies, deadline would be April 12". All approved this motion. Discussion took place, details would be addressed in the future. In regard to the computer/technology issues, the financial committee recommends and agrees that the computer system needs to be replaced.

Mission and Outreach: In Wendy's absence, Laurie and Desiree provided a brief report. Wendy and James brought many items to a warehouse in Albany for the Afghan refugees settling in the Hudson Valley. This month we will be supporting the CWS Blanket Program. Ten dollars buys a blanket which can be sent to those suffering in this country and around the world. CWS was created to give "a kind, loving tangible response to someone facing a difficult time, reminding them they are not alone." Examples of the blankets are in the Fellowship Hall. In March, the mission of the month will be World Vision. More information will follow.

Property: Glenn reviewed the many projects that the committee has been addressing. Please refer to Property Minutes Report (2/14/23) for details. Glenn stated that we received a letter from Steve Cole, Town of Red Hook Inspector, stating we are in compliance regarding our December fire inspection.

Worship: Terry and Pete reported that weekly attendance at services is between 45-50 people. Due to the lack of choir members, a Director of Music will not be pursued at this time. The Shepherds will be greeting service attendances weekly. February is the start of Lent. On February 22, there will be an Ash Wednesday Service with RHUMC's members. Pastor Steve Ernst will be assisting with the worship service. On April 2, Palm Sunday Worship Service, the committee is considering praise music as part of the service. On April 4, for the Maundy Thursday Service, special music is being sought out. On April 9, Easter, there will be a Sunrise Service at 6:30 am, with the RHUMC's members/friends. At the 10:00 am Service, special music is being organized.

Technology: Pete reported that the computer system (internet, router, modem, apple computers) have not been working properly. This problem has greatly impacted productivity in the church office and with financial reporting and data entry. It also makes it difficult to provide zoom service. Per the approval Pete received via email from Consistory, he will be reaching out to PCA to ask them to give us an upgraded internet solution and look at replacing the current Macs in the office.

A motion was made and approved to receive the above reports.

Working recommendations and special reports:

Sound System Proposal

A recommendation to refer to Worship Committee was mentioned, and all approved.

CC#1: Cemetery committee requests that the St. John's Consistory support our decision to deny Ms. Hapeman's request for repurchase of 2 grave sites.

A motion was made to approve Cemetery's request and all approved.

FCR#1: Finance recommends that the computer system be replaced. No vote, not required.

Pastor Alisha News: Please refer to Pastor Alisha for details.

A motion was made and approved to adjourn the meeting after prayer at 9:15 pm.

The next regular meeting is March 16, 2023

Respectfully submitted, Kristi Colburn

Kristi Colburn

Clerk of Consistory



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. 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



to Eileen Wambach for always being available for food pantry even in the snow.

to all the Deacons for showing God's love and serving many Food Pantry Families.

to Doug Westcott for all the research, manual labor, and assistance with the many and continuous technology issues occurring at the church.

to Glenn and the property committee for keeping the sidewalks, walkways, and driveways clear and safe during/after inclement weather.

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****



To the Church Family and Friends,
I offer heartfelt thanks and deepest appreciation for all the prayer, cards, gifts and other kind and caring expressions of sympathy, condolences, and love to our Esteves and Galus families upon the passing of my dear sister Pamela Esteves

Love,
Linda Nielson
Matthew 5:4

Dear Pastor Alisha,
Thank you so much for your fun visit. I'm soiled to hereabout St. Hohn's activities. I miss the members and love to hear about what's new. How I miss the soup sales in the winter weather. Please give my regards and blessings to the chefs taking on the pork dinner. God bless us all.

Love,
Nancy Hetzler



Condolences to Linda Neilson upon the passing of her sister Pam Esteves, to Linda & Roland Page upon the passing of her sister Nancy Baker, to Mary Hennessey and her family upon the passing of her sister, Anne Pomeroy.

Lord, please comfort all those who mourn.



CHURCH RUMMAGE SALE

CLOTHES & SHOES only. Thurs., April 27, 6-9 p.m., Fri.; April 28 1-4 p.m.; Sat., April 29 9 a.m. to 12 noon. \$5/bag sale. Drop off to begin Sun., April 23. Proceeds to benefit the Roger & Bernice Leonard Scholarship Fund.

Dinner

CHURCH FUNDRAISER - ROAST PORK DINNER

There will be a Roast Pork Dinner on Saturday, March 11 at 5 p.m. The dinner menu will be pork loin, Au Gratin potatoes, green beans, salad, and dessert. Food will be served buffet style. There will be one seating limited to 80. Tickets are \$20, please call the church office at 845-758-1184.

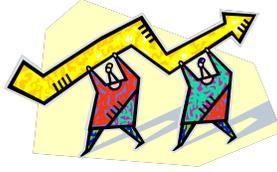
Peta Bartles and Al Trezza, chairs



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

Dan 845-464-4953

St. John's Reformed Church



FINANCIAL REPORT

January 2023

Income	\$ 17,271.15
Expense	<u>- \$ 25,599.37</u>
	- \$ 8,328.22

Year To Date January - December 2023

Income	\$ 17,271.15
Expenses	<u>- \$ 25,599.27</u>
	-\$ 8,328.22

Did You Know: Some years there isn't money available from the Endowment Fund?

Since its establishment in 1997, St. John's Endowment has funded a wide variety of repairs, equipment purchases and ministries with over \$150,000, but this year there isn't sufficient money available for a distribution. You may ask, how does this happen and where did it go? For the answers let's first review some fund management rules.

1. When funds are received, (cash or security gifts from individuals or estates) the running amount of contributions is recorded and maintained.
2. The contributions are to be held in perpetuity and not removed from the fund. **Only the growth or money earned by the contributions is available.**
3. The contributions amount is adjusted annually by the COLA (cost of living adjustment) as an inflation adjustment to maintain the relative purchasing power of the fund. This is accomplished by returning a percentage of the growth back into the contributions.

Now let's apply this to the Endowment Fund numbers as presented December 31, 2022.

Total fund balance	\$191,150
Total contributions	<u>- \$180,138</u>
Amount over contributions	\$11,012

The COLA inflation adjustment recommendation of 8.6% of the fund balance would be \$16,439. This is more than we have available (the amount over contributions). At the January meeting the Finance Committee recommended the entire amount over contributions be preserved as a 5.7% inflation adjustment, which is less than the 8.6% that we would have liked. With the adjustment made, the total fund balance and the total contributions now both stand at \$191,150.

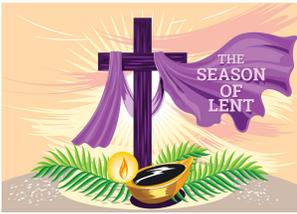
Where did the money go? The Endowment Fund is directly affected by fluctuation in the stock and bond markets. As the stocks in the mutual funds lost value throughout 2022, the value of the Endowment Fund went down. This has happened before. The years 2009 & 2011 had no distributions while 2008 & 2010 offered only small amounts due to the stock market downturn at that time.

So, what happens now? Next January the Finance Committee will see how much growth is above the inflation adjusted contributions to determine if money is available for 2024.

There is always a “silver lining” to stock market downturns. It’s a great time to consider making a gift to the Endowment Fund. When the stock market is lower your gift purchases a greater number of shares, resulting in greater growth potential.

If you have any questions concerning the Endowment Fund or any other finance related concerns, any member of the Finance Committee would be delighted to help.

Finance Committee



Lent—which begins on February 22—marks the forty days leading up to Easter. During Lent, we ask God to show us the world as it really is. It is a chance for the whole church to be on the losing team. A time to tell the truth: Life is so beautiful and life is so hard. For everyone. Easter is coming, yes. But for now, we sit in the ashes of our own broken dreams and broken hearts, knowing that God sits here with us too. Together, might we say: bless *this* Lent.

Kate Bowler and her team developed [Free Lent Devotional Guides](#) as a way to bless whatever this season is actually bringing you. There is a daily guide to be used solo and/or a weekly group discussion guide for small groups—each free download (linked below) includes scripture to read, discussion questions to reflect on, and blessings to pray from our new book of blessings, [The Lives We Actually Have](#).

My hope and prayer is that we can understand that our actual days—pain-filled, lovely, ordinary, garbage—might be blessed. So let’s stop waiting for the perfect life. This is the one we have. Let’s bless it all.

Let me know if you're interested in joining in a group discussion after Sunday Services in March - or if you're doing it on your own by emailing me, or signing up in the fellowship hall after church.

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Alisha

***Red Hook Council of Churches’ Mid-Week Lenten Services,
Wednesdays, at 7 p.m. All are welcome!***

March 1 - Host/Liturgy: St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Red Hook, Minister: Pastor Jim

March 8 - Host/Liturgy: RH United Methodist Church, Visiting Minister: Pastor Jon, Christ Church Episcopal

March 15 - Host/Liturgy: Christ Church Episcopal, Red Hook, Visiting Minister: Pastor Steve, RHUMC

March 22 - Host/Liturgy: St. Paul's and Trinity Parish, Tivoli, Visiting Minister: Pastor Alisha, SJRC

March 29 - Host/Liturgy: SJRC, Visiting Minister: Father Michael Phillips, St. Paul's and Trinity Parish

Holy Week:

April 2, Palm Sunday, 10:30 am Worship Service

April 6, Maundy Thursday, 7:30 pm, Worship Service

April 16, Easter Sunday, 6:30 am, Sunrise Service & 10:30 am, Worship Service



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 19

I would like to order:

- _____ Lily @ \$8
- _____ Hyacinth @ \$7
- _____ Tulips @ \$7
- _____ Daffodils @ \$7

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

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: 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

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

Wednesday at 10:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall

EVENTS/MEETINGS:

Scudder Circle Meeting

Thursday, March 2, 1 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Men’s Breakfast

Saturday, March 4, 8 a.m., Elizaville Diner

Prayer Service

Tuesday, March 7, 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Finance Committee meeting

Monday, March 6, 7 p.m. on Zoom

Pork Dinner

March 11, one seating at 5 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Property Meeting

Tuesday, March 14, 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Old Dutch Village Garden Club

Thursday, March 16, 12:30 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall

Elders meeting

Thursday, March 16, 7 p.m. room 3

Consistory meeting

Thursday, February 16, 7:30 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall

Book Club

Monday, March 20, 1 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall



Shepherds Page

March 2023

LOVE

As “shepherds” for our flock, let’s go above and beyond His love. His love covers a multitude of sin. His love empowers us to sacrifice as He did for us on the cross. His love is the answer to the unanswerable questions, that come our way from hurting sheep who ask “Why?” when there is no apparent answer to what they may be dealing with.

LOVE CAN BE SPELLED SHEPHERD

Sensitivity to the Spirit as He leads and to the sheep who need a loving touch. Help your way through difficult and confusing issues that sheep face. Empathize and feel their anxiety, joy, fear, hurt, disappointment in your heart. Pray before, during, and after your caring contacts. Hear beyond words to their deepest troubling issues. Expect the Lord to use your compassion to bring clarity to their confusion, healing to their heart and hope to their hopelessness. Return and revisit. Your love shown by a follow up visit cannot be measured or be more appreciated. Drink from the well (The Word) of Living water so you will be encouraged and strengthened as you give yourself to others.

As Paul said, “Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. 1 Cor 13:7-8 May the Lord bless our ministry as we share the never-failing love of Christ with those around us.

This article was written for the shepherds at First Presbyterian church in Mt. Holly, NJ.

The shepherds recently have put new pew cards in pews. If you have a prayer concern, would like a visit from the minister etc. please fill out card and put it in offering plate. We are preparing in the next few weeks to greet people as they come into church. This way we will be able to meet anyone new to welcome them. We will invite them also to join us for coffee in the fellowship hall. Don’t forget prayer bears in the back of the church also soaking up all the prayers of the people. Take one and put a smile on someones face.

At this time, I would like to send my sincere thanks to all who called, emailed, and sent cards during our recent sickness. My brain surgery has been postponed so when I know more I will definitely be asking for prayers.

May you feel the LOVE of the Lord always as He is always by our side.

Eileen Zeliph- Shepherd Coordinator
Shepherds Ministry serving St. Johns Reformed Church

Desiree Albizu

Terry Laibach

Stan Tremper

Kayla Bell

Linda Neilson

Mary Hennessy

JoAnn Fisher

Denise Gilhooly

Marie Votava