

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

December 2022

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Minister's Musings

We look forward and wait with expectant hope - it's the season of Advent! We Advent together and wait desperately for a bit of light, and for the light that we know is coming. For this Kerk I have decided to re-share with you the pastoral report I gave for our Annual meeting. I am grateful, looking back over this year, and I pray we continue to walk forward with hope and joy this season.

"We have had a little over a year together as a worshipping body of Christ - and what a year it has been?! When I started ministry with you all, and last year at this time, we were still all mostly masking indoors - for some of you, I hadn't even seen your whole face. I have had the pleasure to work among you for this season - and I give thanks for the opportunity.

This past year has been a year of learning, getting to know people in this space and working together to seek what this church is called to be in this community in this season of life. It looks different than it has in the past - and it should. Change can be difficult and hard, but it's also the most inevitable part of living this life. How we show up to ourselves and the world is what matters. Do we show up with flexibility - holding the pain and loss with grieving what was, along with a hopeful openness for what is to come? It has felt beautiful to get to know what has shaped this congregation in the recent past and further back, as we hold it all together.

And not just in this congregation - but in each of our lives. The things that have taken place over this year. The diagnosis we've received, the people we've lost, the babies that were born, the vows that sealed lives together, the ones who walked gracefully or leaped with joy into retirement, the cement that was poured to bring stones of remembrance back together, the conversations and moments of raw life that all happened this year.

For it all, we give thanks.

As we look ahead to a new year together - liturgically, in the season of Advent, but also with the close of our calendar year, my hope is that we continue to hold space for each other. We are called to be the body of Christ - to be the hands and feet of Jesus together. This year, this Advent, I pray that we re-member together what it tangibly means to be that in our world, in our lives, in our workplaces and schools and with our family and friends. In our work of being Christ in the world, we will re-member to ourselves and each other the gift of what it is to be alive in Christ.

Continue doing good, faithful work. Look back on the year with wide eyes; having the ability to notice the little things that brought glimpses of the Kingdom into sharp focus. And look forward with me to a new year - a year of hope and belonging. A year of expectation and hope for what Christ is doing in and through us."

FATIH AND EDUCATION

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Everyone is invited to join in the Tuesday morning Bible Study. It meets at 10:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Bible study is based on the Revised Common Lectionary which is available on the Church website as well as online. If you would like a paper copy, please see Desiree Albizu.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



We have begun to use the new DWELL Digital curriculum for the Children's Program. Instructors can access lessons online making it readily accessible. Pastor Alisha completed instruction for children to participate in the

Lord's Table with six students. Thank you to Deacon and teacher Eileen Wambach for assisting Pastor Alisha. The students then met with Elder Glenn Countryman for a prayer before the service on Sunday, November 6 when they celebrated communion with the others in worship.

BOOK CLUB



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. Book Club will meet again in the new year.

We say a fond farewell to Elder Colleen Grover who has served in her position in Faith & Education for six years! She has earned her retirement from this committee.

Elder Desiree Albizu will be serving as the Faith & Education Elder with Terry Laibach completing Desiree's term as the Elder of Worship for the next two years.

We hope to see the youth group activated and send our children third grade and older to one of our RCA camps in 2023.

Please note Desiree's new email address:
desireeralbizu@gmail.com

SCUDDER CIRCLE NEWS

Hello everyone,

Thank you to everyone who attended our meeting yesterday. We had a nice group of ten women to listen to Pastor Bob's presentation and to enjoy the delicious spread of refreshments by Marie Votava. We were pleased to welcome Eileen Zeliph and Barbara Westcott to our group. A good time was had by all!

The December meeting will be a holiday luncheon on Friday, December 9th at noon at Savona's Restaurant in Red Hook. If you plan to attend please add your name to the sign-up sheet which is on the table in the Fellowship Hall.

We have received many donations thus far to our box for "New Undies for Haiti". Collection for this mission will continue throughout the month of December.

We will not meet in January, but we will be starting our sales of soup on Sunday, January 8th. If you can make soup in early January, please drop off containers into the kitchen freezer after the end of the year. Please also let me know if you are planning to bring soup and what kind of soup you will make so we have an idea if we will have an adequate selection for the upcoming Sunday. Soup containers and lids are available in the closet off the Fellowship Hall in a box marked "Scudder Circle". Angie suggests that we take some containers home in advance to be ready for those times when we might make soup for our families, but have extra to share for the soup sales.

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

Missions & Outreach

The Committee would like to thank you for your generous support of Mission Projects in 2022.

It has been an eventful year: the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan in August 2021 precipitated a massive refugee crisis, in February a war broke out in Ukraine, and there have been

many natural disasters in our country and around the world.

In January we sent a gift to Church World Service (CWS) to help communities in the Southern United States and Ohio Valley who had been impacted by a series of deadly tornadoes.

In February our focus moved to the plight of Afghan refugees and those who remained in Afghanistan. We supported Doctors Without Borders and in March we sent a gift to Fair Street Reformed Church as they partnered in an Afghan Resettlement Program in the Hudson Valley.

In April we felt called to respond to the worsening humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. We did this by supporting the CWS. We also gave a separate donation to World Central Kitchens, who are serving millions of meals in Ukraine.

In May and June we once again supported Shadow Of His Wings Children's Home in Monjas, Guatemala. We have been supporting this Christian organization for many years.

We also collected much needed items for refugee families settling in the Hudson Valley. We delivered them to the US Committee For Refugees and Immigrants based in Albany. The organizer said it was one of the most generous donations they had received and was so very grateful.

In July and August we collected school supplies and responded to help the

communities in Uvalde and Buffalo. We remembered the children and teachers whose lives have been cut short and their grieving families.

In September we sent a gift to the Capital City Rescue Mission in Albany which offers much needed services to the community: shelter, food, clothing, healthcare, education and addiction recovery programs.

In October we sent a gift to the CWS, which is active in Pakistan helping the people recover from the most devastating floods in generations.

In the next two months we will be busy purchasing and distributing children's gifts to our food pantry families.

We can never fully appreciate how the gifts we have sent have impacted individual lives.

It will have made a big difference to faces we will never see.

However, we can imagine that a family in the Ohio valley is able to rebuild what they lost. A sick person in Afghanistan has received medical care and children suffering from acute malnutrition are given help. In Ukraine lifesaving shelter has been provided, and after an arduous journey many have sat down to a nourishing meal. There are Afghan refugees using the gifts you so kindly donated as they start to rebuild a home. Families in Uvalde and Buffalo have felt your loving care through meals delivered and help given in extremity. A man in Albany has walked through the doors of the Capital City Mission and someone has listened. A family in Pakistan are helped and they will never be able to put into words how grateful they are, for it came just in time.

Finally, there will be smiles this Christmas as children open the gifts you have so generously donated.

Thank you St Johns.

Mission & Outreach Committee

CONSISTORY NOTES NOVEMBER 17, 2022

Present: Rev. Alisha Riempa
Elders: Desiree Albizu, Glenn Countryman,
Colleen Grover, Wendy Walrath,
Deacons: Eileen Wambach, Gian Stagnaro, Laurie DeCiutiis, Pete Fenaroli,

Pastor Alisha opened the meeting at 7:33 pm, with prayer and a devotion.

A motion was made to accept and approve the agenda with the next meeting date changed to Nov. 15. not Nov. 22nd.

A motion was made to accept the draft minutes from 10-20-2022 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 October were received without question. A motion to accept all reports was made and approved.

Committee Reports:

Faith and Education: Desiree thanked Colleen for her service as the Elder of Faith and Education. All are invited to Bible Study, on Tuesdays, at 10:15 am in the FH. Sunday School has begun using DWELL Flex Digital curriculum for the Children's Program. Six children attended instruction on the Lord's table and then celebrated communion with others in worship on November 6, 2022. Toys would be sold at the Christmas Bazaar. The profits would be used for the Children's Program. The Book club will meet on Monday, November 28 at 1 p.m. to discuss the Star-Crossed Sisters of Tuscany by Josephine Cosnowski.

Finance- Glenn reviewed the financial report highlighting a few items. The counting program is going well but could use a few more people. The congregational meeting is November 20. A vote to accept the 2023 budget will take place. A question arose concerning the 2023 denominational assessment on what the rate will be. Glenn was unsure of the answer. Kristi will assist in the research of the question.

Mission and Outreach:

Wendy reported that Serena is organizing the coat and boot drive. In November and December, Christmas gifts will be bought for food pantry families. Thank you all for the mission support during 2022.

Property: Glenn reported that on November 19, there will be a Clean Up Day. There has been unauthorized people using the dumpsters. Signs will be made and installed. The roof is being evaluated due to a leak in the narthex below the steeple. It would be fixed in the very near future. A yellow jacket nest on the parsonage porch has been detected and will be removed.

Worship: Pete stated that between 40 and 50 people have been attending services regularly. A contemporary service will occur on Nov. 27th. Music ministry has hired a choir leader/pianist, Francis Huang, starting November 7th. A bass singer for Advent and Christmas services continues to be sought out. Pete and Desiree discussed the copyright information and that we need to list our resources in the bulletin

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

Working recommendations and special reports:

Budget:

The 2023 Budget will be voted on during the November 20, Congregational Meeting. Voting of the budget will take place in person and on Zoom.

Garden Club:

Pastor Alisha presented a proclamation stating that the Old Dutch Village Garden Club will pay a \$75 use fee/donation for use of the fellowship hall for its monthly meetings for the _____ (yyyy) calendar year. A letter from the church will be sent out yearly.

A motion to accept both recommendations was accepted and approved.

Nominations Committee:

The nomination committee met and discussed that Terry Laibach was to become the Elder of Worship. Desiree would take on the role of the Elder of Faith and Education. These two nominations would be presented and voted on during Congregational Meeting.

A motion was made and approved to adjourn the meeting after prayer.

Closing Prayer was provided by Desiree.

The next regular meeting is December 15, 2022

Respectfully submitted,
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.

**St. John's Reformed Church Property
Committee 2022**

The property committee had a pretty busy Spring, Summer, and Fall season. Our property has over eleven acres requiring a lot of indoor and outdoor maintenance. Many hours were spent mowing, weed wacking, pruning, painting and other maintenance chores.

Property members and others church volunteers worked on the sound system, the new kitchen stove, the parsonage security system, driveway sealing, tree cleanup after a storm and repair to the mower shed from a fallen tree.

By the time you read this, we will have completed fall cleanup and made some preparations for the upcoming winter.

As always, we are grateful for the skills and the help to take care of the many items requiring attention, repair, or updating.

WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS ON PROPERTY – NO SKILLS REQUIRED – JUST A WILLINGNESS TO PITCH IN AND HELP. We have a good time doing what we do.



Thank you for all the cards, phone calls, and best wishes that I received for my birthday. I appreciate all of them.

Sincerely,
Jane Bier



If you would like to place poinsettia plants in the sanctuary for **Christmas**, 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 no later than
Wednesday, December 7th !**

I would like to order _____ 6 ½" poinsettia plant(s) @ \$12.00 each.
Total payment _____.

In memory of

Other dedication

Given by

Please email the office if you order won't get in by Dec. 7: office@stjohnsreformed.org

Questions? Please call the Church office, 845-758-1184.

Please make checks payable to:
St. John's Reformed Church.

If mailing, please send completed form and payment to:

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



Christmas Bazaar

to JoAnn Fisher and Pastor Alisha for decorating the Sanctuary and Education Wing. It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!

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

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

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****

Thank you again to everyone who worked, volunteered, donated items or provided monetary gifts, etc.. We collected \$1102.50. Your efforts were appreciated. Thank you to all who participated.



From the Christmas Bazaar Committee



Deadline for the **January Kerk** is **December 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

Missions & Outreach

Sponsor A Child/Family for Christmas!

Season's Greetings! Every year M&O holds an adopt a Christmas present for our food pantry families. Children, high school age or younger, are presented with one clothing item and one entertainment item (approximately \$25). We ask that all donations be returned and placed under the tree, with the card attached and wrapped (though we will happily wrap if you are short on time). Gift receipts are encouraged but not necessary. For those not fond of shopping, monetary donations are most welcomed, and we have two or three hearty shoppers/bargain hunters that will happily search for those hard-to-find items. Our annual mitten/scarf/sock tree will also be up for donations- just place them on a branch. This year the deadline to return the wrapped gifts is Sunday, December 11. Also don't forget to designate St. John's as your Amazon Smiles Charity when doing online shopping! Every year, Missions & Outreach is overwhelmed by the extraordinary generosity of our church family. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

The Mission & Outreach Committee



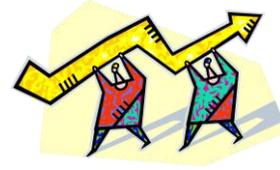
Red Hook United Methodist Church's HollyDay Bazaar

Saturday, December 3rd, 9 am-2:00 pm

We will be selling jewelry, attic treasures, crafts, baked goods, books, toys, themed baskets, and weavings. Our snack bar will be open all day.

We are located at in the village of Red Hook on 4 Church Street.

St. John's Reformed Church



FINANCIAL REPORT

October 2022

Income	\$30,359.38
Expenses	\$ 17,746.09
	+\$12,613.29

Year To Date

January - December 2022

Income	\$ 193,911.51
Expenses	\$ 167,568.61
	+\$26,342.90

Thank you to everyone who donated coats and boots for the food pantry recipients, the **Mission of the Month.**

Did You Know:

Did you know?

The St. John's family has much to be thankful for as we come to the end of 2022.

The Finance Committee is very glad to know that the church is ending the year in the black. Although our regular general fund contributions still do not meet the expenses, extra donations have made up the difference. Two generous donations from individuals included money for the general fund. An appeal to the congregation for the stove and hood project brought in \$5,000; this, added to the \$10,000 from the Endowment Fund, means that the project is paid in full. The new organ was fully funded by donations given last year and this year. \$2,500 has been donated for the Audio Visual Program. Giving to the General Fund has improved significantly since the earlier months of the year.

Many people have donated time and talent, which not only help keep our church programs operating, but also means we don't have to pay others to do the work.

Thank you to..

- all the people who help keep the buildings and grounds in good shape,

- those who staff the food pantry,
- the counters who help out in the office,
- choir members who are once again enhancing worship through music
- those who operate the audio-visual equipment to improve the sound in the sanctuary and provide Zoom and YouTube opportunities for those at home.
- the faithful people who ensure that we have good snacks for Fellowship Hour
- and any other volunteers that we haven't mentioned!

After the Covid years, we are glad to see more people re-engaging with the church. We had four young people celebrate their first communion in November. Church attendance is increasing. We see many positive signs for 2022, and hope for even more in 2023.

The Finance Committee

2023 C O L A = 8.7%

COLA = COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT

WHAT IS IT?

1. It's usually associated with the annual adjustment to Social Security Benefits to counter inflation.
2. It's determined from the CPI (Consumer Price Index) and represents the rate of inflation. It is calculated from the 3rd quarter of one year to the 3rd quarter of the following year with the percentage change made available in mid-October.

How does it impact our personal & church expenses?

During an inflationary period, the cost of all the goods and services we need increases. This is true in our individual lives as well as in the church. On the income side we can only hope to receive a corresponding increase to offset the higher prices. Social Security and many employers apply the annual adjustment, but that isn't the case for everyone. Therefore, inflation can be challenging for some households.

How does it impact pledging?

For pledging you can think of **COLA** as the percent adjustment needed to make a pledge for the new budget equal to the purchasing power of your last year's pledge.

Example: A 2022 gift of \$100 would require 8.7% more (\$108.70) to purchase the same goods & services in 2023.

What's the bottom line with inflation and pledging?

Inflation along with high energy costs will make 2023 challenging for everyone. If your situation allows a pledge inflation adjustment of any amount, it will help meet rising costs for the church. If this isn't possible for you; it's **OK**. Inflation hardships are not the same for everyone. As it has been for well over 200 years, St John's 2023 expenses will be satisfied by a congregation, giving as able, from the blessings they've received from God.

Thank you for being part of the legacy.

Finance Committee

Church Calendar

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, December 5, 7 p.m. on Zoom

Prayer and Meditation Service
Tuesday, December 6, 7 p.m., Sanctuary

Old Dutch Village Garden Club
Thursday, December 8, 12:30 p.m.,
in the Fellowship Hall

Scudder Circle Luncheon
Friday, December 9, 1 p.m., at Savona’s

Property Meeting

Tuesday, December 13, 7 p.m.,
in the Fellowship Hall

Blue Christmas Worship Service
Wednesday, December 14, 7 p.m.,
in the Sanctuary

Elders meeting
Thursday, December 15, 7 p.m. room 3

Consistory meeting
Thursday, December 15, 7:30 p.m.,
in the Fellowship Hall

Boy Scout Leaders Meeting
Thursday, December 22, 7 p.m.,
in the Fellowship Hall

Christmas Eve Candlelit Worship Service
Saturday, December 24, 7 p.m.,
in the Sanctuary

Christmas Day
Sunday, December 25, pre-recorded Service on
YouTube and Facebook

Christmas Holiday Observance
December 26, Administrative Office and the Deacon’s
Food Pantry are closed