

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

MAY 2026

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Minister's Musings

Recently, you may have noticed a change I made in the Nicene Creed. The Holy Spirit's pronouns were changed to the feminine she/her pronouns. I know for some of you, it is a gift to hear feminine pronouns for G*d¹ and I know also that for some of you, it was a bit jolting and hard. I'm sorry about that. I know now that for some, it would have been helpful to have had some context offered ahead of the creed with a little context for the reason why I made the change.

To quote Rabbi Moshe Berman, "G*d is beyond our words, beyond our time and space, and beyond our understanding. We describe G*d using words borrowed from creation in order to make him intelligible to the human ear. All of our descriptions of G*d are analogies because we cannot describe G*d on G*d's terms." In Exodus 3:14 we read about an exchange with Moses asking G*d how he shall explain who sent him - G*d responds by saying, "I am who I am".

The third person of the Spirit, often translated in English Bibles (which is where most, if not all of us get our theological understanding and grounding) translates as he/him.

However, in the original languages this looks markedly different, Greek uses *pneuma* which more directly translates to "it" which is a neuter noun and Hebrew uses "*ruah*", which is "she/her" feminine pronoun. The reason I changed it was to first, present a more accurate theological picture of the Spirit and second to stretch our imagination around G*d who is beyond our understanding.

G*d, the creator of time and space, is so much bigger than anything we can imagine. This change was intentional to help gently nudge us in the direction of apophatic understanding. I would encourage you - if it causes you distress - to wonder at why. Why is it important to you for the Spirit of G*d to be portrayed as a man? Why does that feel foundational to your beliefs?

Again, I'm sorry if it disturbed you. My hope and prayer is that if something does upset or confuse you within our worship you will come and talk directly with me about it. I would love to hear your perspective and share mine as well. Please email me (alisha.riepma@gmail.com) or set up an appointment to come by the office.

¹ You'll notice the spelling G*d throughout this article - for myself, this helps take the human understanding of G*d as something that we can easily articulate. It stops a reader and also stops us from assuming we have nothing new to learn about who G*d is.

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

Faith & Education



Bible Study

In May Bible Study will continue to concentrate on passages from John and Acts. Studies this year are from Year A of the Revised Common Lectionary. Hand-outs for 2026 which list the passages can be found on the table in the fellowship hall or on the St. John's website, www.stjohnsreformed.org. Everyone is welcome to read along whether or not you attend. You are also welcome to join the study any Wednesday you are free. Bible Study meets Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. in the fellowship hall. The gathering closes in prayer.



Children's Program

Mrs. Wambach and Cera Buring have been holding Sunday School together to do skits from the Easter book curriculum with the children. Cera led the Easter morning session so that Mrs. Wambach could worship with her husband. Thank you to these ladies for their continued efforts to tell Jesus' story to our young ones.

After the smoky incident on April 12, we will need to determine where we can best meet our preschoolers' needs. Volunteers are encouraged to sign up to take a turn in their care. We especially thank teen Lauren Kenny for help with childcare.



Book Club

Book Club is scheduled for Monday, May 18, at 10 a.m. May's book will be *Becoming Mrs. Lewis* by Patti Callahan. Other upcoming titles are *The Irish Goodbye: A Novel*, *Mona's Eyes: A Novel* and *The Correspondent*. Anyone who has read the featured book or listened to the audio is welcome to join in the discussion.



St. John's Monthly Prayer Service meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m., in the sanctuary. The next monthly prayer service is May 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. For questions, see *James Walrath*.



Blooming in Faith Women's Fellowship meets on the second Tuesday of the month in the fellowship hall. The next meeting is May 12, at 7 p.m. We gather for fellowship and to create art. For questions, please see *Elizabeth Young*.



Scudder Circle

On April 13th nine ladies gathered for our meeting. Karen Roberts presented a program and led a discussion based on the book "A Grief Observed" by C.S. Lewis. The author explored how his faith grew through the illness and subsequent death of his wife Joy Davidman. Refreshments were provided by Alice Colburn. During the business portion of our meeting it was agreed to donate \$100 to the April Mission of the Month, River Haven of Hudson River Housing. Eileen Zeliph provided additional information about the upcoming presentation on Alzheimer's and Dementia on April 19th.

Volunteers were encouraged to provide help setting up for and being available at the Clothing Rummage Sale scheduled for April 30 and May 2.

Our next meeting will be on Monday May 11th at 1:00 in the Fellowship Hall. Desiree Albizu will lead a discussion on Remembering Our Mothers and the origin of the celebration of Mother's Day. If you have a photo of your mother that you would like to share please bring it to the meeting. Think about your earliest memories. Your fondest memories. Any questions you wish you could ask her if she has passed. How are you alike or different. How many children have been born since she passed and what events did she miss that you would have loved to share with her. Are there other women who have "mothered" you in your life. We hope you will join us for this time of remembering. Refreshments for the meeting will be provided by Eileen Wambach.

Our final meeting before the summer break will be a luncheon at Noon on Monday, June 8th. We will gather for food and fellowship at The Grove. This restaurant is located at the Red Hook Golf Club at 650 Route 199, Red Hook. We will be able to order off the menu and be provided with separate checks. There will be a signup sheet on the table in the fellowship hall. There are no meetings for our group in July or August. We will resume meeting on the second Monday of the month in September. All women affiliated with St John's Reformed Church are invited to join us for our meetings.



Mission & Outreach

Thank you to all who gave to **River Haven Shelter**, \$305 was donated, plus personal hygiene items were collected and will be delivered to the shelter in May.

Our Mission for May is Shadow of His Wings Children's Home in Monjas, Guatemala.

A program of the James Project of Latin America. Shadow of His Wings provides homes to children from a variety of backgrounds – including physical and sexual abuse, neglect, abandonment, human trafficking, and/or the loss of both parents. The goal is to raise these children in a way that they can find peace and experience the healing love of Jesus Christ.

The boys and girls at Shadow of His Wings live in family units with Christian Guatemalan couples and their biological children, plus up to 12 children from the home (following the model of Christ and his 12 disciples). This gives the children, the experience of being part of a loving family – sometimes for the first time in their lives!

The transition program provides a children with real world experiences. They learn how to get and keep a job, manage a budget, do their own shopping, cooking, cleaning, etc. and have much more freedom to be out in the community and make outside friends. They also learn other important life skills, such as interviewing, using public transportation, etc.

Our church family has had a long connection with Shadow of His Wings. We've had several mission trips to help out on the ground there. We have met the children, the hosts, families, and some of the towns, people and organizers at the time of our visits.

We, at St. John's, love being able to help these good, caring, Christian people help the suffering in their midst. 78% of children there live below the poverty line, 49.8% of their children suffer from chronic malnutrition – the fourth highest in the world, 5000 children live on the streets of Guatemala City. By providing resources to Shadow we help in some small way to make lives better. Children learn of the love of Jesus and go out into their communities and share that love.

Like a pebble in a pond, the rings of positive change can reach far.

Please prayerfully consider helping us to contribute to support this wonderful mission, and the people who are trying to enrich the lives of children, and by extension, communities in Guatemala.

Mission and Outreach Team



LADLES AND LOAVES AND SIMPLE SUPPER First Tuesday of every month.



Ladles & Loaves is a lunch of homemade soup and bread, 12 noon to 1:00 p.m.
Simple Supper is leftover soup, bread, and an one-dish meal, 5 to 6 p.m.
The next meals are on Tuesday, May 5. Meals will reflect the theme of Cinco de Mayo.

Ladles and Loaves and Simple Supper is humming along with only one more date this season. SHARE THE NEWS with all your friends. Lots of opportunities to get involved! This is a free meal-donations accepted to cover the cost of supplies and ingredients.

Ladles & Loaves and Simple Supper are an Outreach program of Mission & Outreach. If you have questions, please text or call *Beverly Kipp*, coordinator, at 845-235-6013.



Mission & Outreach Annual Clothing Rummage Sale

Mission & Outreach is sponsoring the annual Clothing Rummage Sale on Thursday, April 30, from 4-7 p.m. and Saturday, May 2, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Please note that the Rummage Sale is **not** open on Friday, May 1. The Rummage Sale is in the Assembly Hall.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Desiree Albizu or Beverly Kipp. If you find you have torn or stained clothing, it can be dropped off in the Newsy bin at The Ozone on Pitcher Lane. Thank you for your help and your donations.

The Mission & Outreach Committee Members



PROPERTY COMMITTEE – April 2026

Greetings and Happy Spring from the SJRC Property Committee. It has been a Yo-Yo spring so far, but the days are longer, the forsythia and many other early flowers are blooming and the warm sun is helping to 'green-up' our lawns. Trees are budding as well.

Speaking of lawns, the mowing season has just started at St. John's. Mowers were serviced and have already been used around the parsonage and in front of the church. Including the cemetery, we have several acres of grass to mow, taking nearly 16 hours to do from start to finish. Thankfully, a couple of you have agreed to join the mowing and weed whacking team. Thank you.

Thank you also to those who helped when the fire department had to be called on Sunday morning, April 12, for smoke in the nursery. There were lessons learned that morning. The nursery has been thoroughly cleaned, smoke detectors will be replaced and eventually, new breakers will be installed in the electric panel.

The Property Committee has also undertaken many other maintenance tasks during the winter and early spring. These are all documented in our maintenance calendar, which is reviewed at our monthly meetings. As the spring season progresses, outside chores such as painting, the already mentioned mowing and landscaping, and other repairs to the parsonage, church and Education wing will be undertaken. There is never a lack of something to do or fix. You are cordially invited to join us for fresh air and exercise when the spirit moves you, even if you don't formally join this committee.

Cheers and a happy and safe spring from your *Property Committee*.



Shepherds Page

MAY 2026

Accidents

I want to start this article with a disclaimer: I'm not promoting or discounting any vehicle. I recently was in a car accident and at the time of writing this article I have no idea if my car or the other person's car is repairable or totaled? The poor 18-year-old ran a red light and crashed into me in the intersection causing me to end up in another direction and needless to say, a little dazed and scared. But he admitted right away that it was his fault and he was so sorry. The main thing, no one was hurt and we all were able to walk away, with no blood or broken bones.

When I arrived home that same Saturday night, I had to call the insurance company to report the accident. I had a very courteous person on the phone. When I went to bed, I tried so hard to say my prayers but my mind wasn't shutting down. I think at least three times, I started and left my prayers unfinished. After the 1st attempt, I then started off saying, Dear God, it's me again and I'm so sorry to leave you hanging on for the 2nd and 3rd times. But I think God knows me by now, that this isn't the 1st time (and maybe not the last) that I come and go in prayers with him.

However, sometime later that night (I'll admit during my sleep I can honestly say I don't remember if I heard a voice or if it was just a thought) but it woke me up and the thought was "thy rod and thy staff will comfort". I will say it kind of got my mind going again but I think from exhaustion, I fell asleep. I kind of forgot about it on Sunday. But on Monday I kept thinking about that; why, WHY this sentence? Of all of the 23rd Psalm or even any other Bible verse, why this sentence? I thought more about this. When I was shopping for a car years ago. The salesman said, "Subaru's have metal "rods" all along the car for extra protection in case of accidents" etc. SO, there is the 'rod' part and the staff (if you look up the definition there is a few, mostly a group supporting/working with each, also that it's a slender 'rod' or shaft, and lastly a musical meaning as well.

Then I started to put more together, God was telling me to remind me, he's got me and "His rod and staff are my protection and comfort." Like the footprints in the sand, he carried me safely as well as that young man and his occupants, out of any more danger. And, about the "staff", not only thinking of the metal "rods" for the staff but of group of people who helped me that day. First, I had a 'gentleman' police officer, who gave so much comfort and support. The first tow truck driver told the officer and myself that he was across the street and saw it all. He advised, "The other driver ran the red light and it was not your fault", Eileen Zeliph, my friend and shepherd, came and picked me up and brought me home. The insurance people that I've spoken with were helpful and nice. I truly believe God sent his team of 'staff' to be with me. (and I know God was there also for that young man and his occupants as well).

Once again, God carried me as well as the other party safely not to "green pastures" but safely to the side of the road. So hopefully, you all know even in bad times, God has your back and will carry you safely in the palm of his hands. Never doubt God's love and the caring God gives. Also, in the 23rd Psalm, remember "I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me!" And I know and feel this daily,

I hope no one ever has a day like this; but, just know God is a loving God and things happen for a reason. God does talk to us, just like he did in my sleep to remind me of "thy rod and thy staff will comfort you" God Bless! Sincerely submitted Jo Ann Fisher, Shepherd.

Shepherds Serving St. Johns Reformed Church

Desiree Albizu
Kayla Bell
JoAnn Fisher

Denise Gilhooly
Linda Neilson
Marie Votava

Amie Parker
Mary Hennessey
Eileen Zeliph



*Alexia Doyle who recently passed away.
May the Lord provide comfort to all those who are mourning.*



Congratulations!

Peta and Steve are grandparents. Their daughter Carra gave birth to a big boy, Killian John Kelly, 9 lbs., 1 oz. Congratulations to Jamie, Carra and their newborn son and to the grandparents as well.



"I would like to thank all of you who have been keeping me in your prayers but at this time I am happy to share that so far, I am in good health after blood work and other scans. I am still not feeling the way I used to, but I will be continuing some other tests, so prayer is always good.

You have been praying also for my nephew Michael Castillo who recently had triple bypass heart surgery. He is coming along but those that have had this know it takes time and patience to get through it. So please pray for a full recovery as my dear sister Nancy Castillo died from heart disease since never caught until too late.

I would like to thank all that came to Alzheimer's discussion, helped set-up, prepared food, and cleaned up too. I hope those who attended found it informative and got to take some resources too. Hoping to have another speaker in the future.

Thank You and God Bless,
Elieen Zeliph-Shepherd Coordinator"



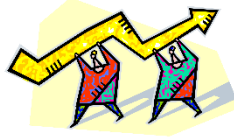
How to Access Chmeetings from your Computer

On your web browser search for www.chmeetings.com

- Click on **Login** in the upper right corner
- Under I am a church member click on **Find My Church**
- In the Find box enter **Red Hook NY**
- Click on the **St John's Reformed Church Red Hook NY**
- This takes you to our Guest page.
- To login click on the **round circle with a head** on the upper right corner. This takes you to the Login page.
- Then enter
 - your **email address** and
 - your **login password**.
- Once you enter these click on the **Log In box** and you will get to our Member home page where you can use the member directory and see our groups.



Streaming Sunday Services: To Stream Sunday Services- Go to our website (www.stjohnsreformed.org) and click on the box, "join live". To access the weekly bulletin and announcements click on "services" and then "bulletins and announcements". If you miss services, SJRC's YouTube Channel is the place to go. Find the service you missed and click on the picture of the church.



Finance Report St. John's Financial Statement

Month of March

Income	\$36,709.53
Expenses	\$23,023.51
Net	\$13,686.02

Year to Date 2026

Income	\$79,878.07
Expenses	\$70,061.11
Net	\$9,816.96

The Finance Committee extends a huge thank you to all who give to St. John's Reformed Church in order to carry on our mission.

Finance Narrative to Consistory for March 2026

We are in good shape financially at present. This needs to be tempered since we received three large donations in this quarter. These donations are usually received in the early part of the year. The total amount for these large donations is up a few thousand from last year. The year is 25 percent complete, and we have 42 percent of last year's envelope giving year to date. 20 percent of our income is received in December. You need to watch this space as the year proceeds before drawing any conclusions on the health of the church's finances.

Contents of the safe deposit box have been moved from Key Bank to a new safe deposit box at Rhinebeck Bank. As part of this move a physical copy and a physical and digital copies have been made of the contents of the box and will be kept in the office.

We have closed the Key Bank checking account and CD. The Key Bank credit card account is still active, but unused. The Key Bank representative advised us to keep the credit card active, as closing it would effect our credit rating.

FCR#1: Finance recommends that an account be established with Stripe.com solely to accept online payments to the church. This will be integrated with Chmeetings for online donations and to pay for events (dinners for example). Stripe can also be incorporated into our website through WIX for donations and to pay for events. Givelify will be phased out once we have integrated this and have migrated our donors to using Chmeetings to donate. Kristi Colburn and Doug Westcott need to be authorized to establish this account with Stripe.com.

Note that Stripe.com provides many financial tools in addition to credit card processing. We are only authorizing the acceptance of online payments.

For more information, please contact the Finance Committee

Draft Minutes for Consistory Meeting, April 16, 2026

Present:

President- The Rev. Alisha Riepma-Hosier, Vice President - Beverly Kipp

Elders- Paul Finch, Paul Hallenbeck, Elizabeth Young, Eileen Wambach

Deacons- Colleen Grover, Mary Hennessy, Clif King

Guests- Peter Fenaroli, Doug Westcott, Steve Young

Clerk: Desiree Albizu

Absent: Deacons Kayla Bell & Annamarie Woelm

Opening Prayer: The meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m. by Pastor Alisha. She opened the meeting with the poem and then a prayer.

Approval of Minutes & Agenda: It was M/S/A to accept the agenda as presented and the minutes with amendments to Paul Hallenbeck's name in two places.

Pastoral Report: Due to the number of services during Lent and Holy Week, Pastor Alisha's report elaborated a very busy month including extra meetings that do not usually make up her schedule and a graduation for the Ignite individuals. She also incorporated a new section, looking ahead, to keep the Consistory members informed what will be taking place in the month to come. **It was M/S/A to accept the Pastoral Report.**

Committee Reports and Working Recommendations:

Finance- Pete reviewed the Finance Committee minutes and many of the reports that had been sent out to the Consistory members. He commented that there would be a General Endowment disbursement of about \$5000 in June to help keep up with summer expenses and the expected diminished giving.

Finance Committee Recommendations:

FCR#1: Finance recommends that an account be established with Stripe.com solely to accept online payments to the church. This will be integrated with CHmeetings for online donations and to pay for events. Givelify will be phased out once we have integrated this and have migrated our donors to using Chmeetings to donate. Kristi Colburn and Doug Westcott need to be authorized to establish this account with Stripe.com

Note that Stripe.com provides many financial tools in addition to credit card processing. We are only authorizing the acceptance of online payments.

After the motion for FCR#1 was seconded, discussion ensued. When the vote was called, the motion was unanimously accepted.

Committee Reports were presented and additional comments were given.

A motion was M/S/A for all committee reports.

Old Business

The Building Sub-Committee members were conflicted on allowing the former "one alcoholic toast" policy to stand and be part of our usage rules. After discussions, a vote passed with one abstention to disallow this practice going forward.

New Business

Steve Young laid out the timeline of what happened the morning of April 12 concerning the bean bag chair that was melting on the baseboard heater in the nursery. Steve offered a few suggestions to prevent such a thing from occurring again which will be addressed to the Property Committee.

It was M/S/A to close the meeting at 9:10 p.m. Desiree closed the meeting in prayer.

The next regular Consistory Meeting will be Thursday, May 28, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Desiree Albizu



Calendar

Worship Service

Sundays at 10 a.m. in person and join us on YouTube Live.

Access our website, (www.stjohnsreformed.org), scroll down on the page and click on YouTube Live icon. To access the weekly bulletins, click on the dropdown box "worship service" and select bulletins. Each Sunday's bulletin and announcement page are posted.

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.

Pete Fenaroli, Volunteer Bookkeeper Tuesday mornings

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

MAY EVENTS/MEETINGS:

Men's Breakfast, Saturday, May 2, 8 a.m. at the Red Hook Diner

Rummage Sale, Saturday, May 2, 9-1 p.m. in the assembly hall

Ladles & Loaves, Tuesday, May 5, 12 noon-1:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall

Simple Supper, Tuesday, May 5, 5-6 p.m. in the fellowship hall

Monthly Prayer Service, Tuesday, May 5, 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary

Scudder Circle Meeting, Monday, May 11, 1 p.m. in the fellowship hall

Finance Committee Meeting, Monday, May 11, 7:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall

Blooming in Faith Women's Group, Tuesday, May 12, 7 p.m., in room 3

Property Committee Meeting, Tuesday, May 12, 7 p.m. in the fellowship hall

Mission & Outreach Meeting, Sunday, May 17, following the worship service

Book Club, Monday, May 18, 10 a.m. in the fellowship hall

Elders' Meeting, Thursday, May 28, 7 p.m. in room 3

Consistory Meeting, Thursday, May 28, 7:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall

Boy Scout Leaders' Meeting, Thursday, May 28, 7 p.m. in room 4

Garden Club is not meeting at the church this month.

Kristi Colburn, Administrator, will not be in the office from May 15 - May 25

Deadline for the June Kerk is May 23 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

