THE KERK

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November 2026 **VOL. 66 NO. 9**

Minister Musings

Can you believe it is November? Here they are, the last two months of the year 2027. November and December hold for us many emotions, holiday celebrations and a chance to look back on the year; what we accomplished, what we learned and who we became.

The end of November and December offer us, as Christians, a dedicated time to turn inward, embrace the darkness and hold fast for the light, metaphorically, theologically and literally. As we settle into the colder temperatures and turn our thoughts to the incoming holiday season, I invite us to take a collective breath - and remember the reason for this season.

The humble gift of a God who became dust and was born to an unexpected couple under a harsh empire. Our God bringing the slivers of light into the darkness of this world. And as we set out in a very different culture, in a very different historical time; we too look at our world shrouded in darkness. Some of that darkness is spaces of introspection, healing and quiet surrender. Some of the darkness that surrounds us is futures that are uncertain, diagnoses that take us by surprise or a loved one that was taken from us sooner than we imagined.

This Advent, our theme is "Until the Dawn" and it is a series focused on the actions we can take as we move through the night with hope for tomorrow. Night is a time when the way forward may seem unclear, when our senses are heightened and fear may creep in. And the darkness also brings gifts—rest, regeneration, dreams, intimacy with God. In our sacred stories, angels often arrive in the night, calling for courageous action and singing good news. In the night, Mary's labor pains crescendo and Christ is born. In the night, shepherds and Magi follow the stars to get closer to God. And so, in the metaphorical night, we will carry on with the work that is ours to do.

Every Sunday of this season holds a spiritual practice, an invitation, or a tool for your spiritual toolbox. Together, we will move through this holy season, not as passive bystanders waiting for good news, but as active seekers and dreamers who long to stand in the sun.

Just as surely as the sun rises, God's steadfast love and mercy are made new every morning. As we move toward the horizon, we will cry out, start somewhere, speak up, take courage, build up, and choose joy. These actions will help us resist despair and put our prayers in motion. Until the day when God's love reigns and all the earth echoes shalom, let us keep moving, singing, resisting, and rejoicing—trusting that God joins us in the work of Advent.

God bless you all!
~Pastor Alisha

Faith & Education



Bible Study

November's Bible Study will focus on passages from the Gospel of Matthew and a variety of Old Testament books, wrapping up Year A of the Revised Common Lectionary. Hand-outs for 2026 which list the scripture passages can be found on the table in the fellowship hall. Everyone is welcome to read along on their own or can join the study any Wednesday. Bible Study meets Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. in the fellowship hall. The gathering closes in prayer.

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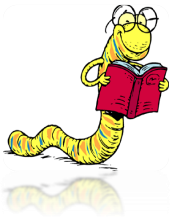
Children's Program

Sunday School attendance has been erratic this Fall. However, we appreciate all the efforts by teachers Eilleen Wambach and Cera Buring to remain flexible and ready to teach as needed.

Nursery volunteers are sincerely appreciated. Those who are available to supervise our youngest children occasionally during Sunday worship are invited to add their names to the sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall.

New Monthly Widow's Support Group

The newly formed Widows Support Group is scheduled for November 16 at 10 a.m. in the fellowship hall. This gathering is open to the public as well as those associated with St. John's. For more information, contact Desiree Albizu at <desireeralbizu@gmail.com>.



Book Club

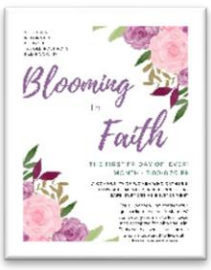
Book Club is scheduled for Monday, November 9th at 10 a.m. The group will discuss ***The Correspondent by Virginia Evans***.

Upcoming Book Club Selections

- My Friends by Fredrik Backman
- An Unnecessary Woman by Rabih Alameddine
- The Only Woman in the Room by Marie Benedict

Join the Discussion

The Book Club meets on the second Monday of each month. Anyone who has read the featured book—or listened to the audiobook—is welcome to participate. Suggestions for future selections are always appreciated. Thank you! Chair: *Desiree Albizu*



Blooming in Faith Women's Fellowship

Meets the second Tuesday of the month in the fellowship hall.
The next meeting is November 10th at 7 p.m. We gather for fellowship and to create art. Chair: Elizabeth Young

Scudder Circle

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Scudder Circle will meet on Mondays, October 12th and November 2nd at 1:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall. Our annual holiday luncheon will be on THURSDAY, December 10th at the Wunderbar Bistro in Rhinebeck at 12 noon. If the weather on December 10th is inclement, we will postpone lunch to Thursday, December 17th. Please mark these dates on your calendar now.

At the September 14th meeting it was decided to donate $200 to the Deacons Fund for the food pantry as there always seems to be a need.

In November the custom is to make personal gifts of money to the missionary families that we support. They are always so grateful for the gifts.

If you are doing any sorting or cleaning this fall, please remember to set aside any jewelry that you might like to donate for our sale of used jewelry at the Christmas Bazaar on November 21st . There is a collection box on the table in the Fellowship Hall.

Traditionally the Scudder Circle ladies also contribute and cook or bake for the "Lunch with Santa" held midday at the Bazaar. All donations are appreciated and enjoyed by those who come for lunch.

Scudder Circle is open to all women associated with St John's Reformed Church. Please join us for a time of fellowship, refreshments and prayer. We also send out a periodic email of Scudder News to interested women in our church. If you would like to be added to our email distribution group, please contact Mary Bayer or Desiree Albizu.



Ladles and Loaves are back !!! Beginning on December 1st and the first Tuesday of every month until May, 2027. 12:00 Noon to 1:30pm. Homemade soup and Bread. Everyone is welcome – bring a friend – or a group of friends! Note: Simple Supper is not starting until after the first of the New Year – we will keep you posted.



Mission & Outreach

The Mission of the Month for December will be <u>WORLD VISION - Animals</u>

We would like to send 16 farm animals to the place that is in most need. "These animals feed families and change lives. When you give one pig, one goat, four ducks and 10 chickens, you're supplying bountiful and lasting sources of nutrition to help many families overcome hunger. Milk, eggs, meat, and dairy products like cheese and yogurt are packed with nutrients that help kids grow and thrive. In addition, families equipped with these animals will be able to sell surplus food - and when the time comes, their animal's offspring - for extra income. " The whole community benefits.
So please join us in giving the gift of farm animals this Christmas season.

Thank you for your constant and continued support of the ***Mission and Outreach Committee*** who represents the servant hearts of this congregation serving The Lord with Gladness.

Our next meeting is Sunday, September 13th after church services. If you are interested in joining the Mission and Outreach committee, please let Beverly Kipp or Desiree Albizu know. You will be most welcome!

Laurie DeCiutiis, Mission & Outreach



Deacon's Fund Food Pantry Update

The Food Pantry has been through some upheaval in the last few months. Our primary shopper (someone outside our church) has had serious health issues, and the church pantry volunteers have had to step up and fill in the current void. We have been fortunate to have had fresh produce donated by local farms this summer and fall as well as extra grocery store baked goods and meats. Mission and Outreach and others supplied us with fresh eggs all summer. However, with the increase in clients (seen across pantries throughout the country) and the general increase in the cost of goods, our donations are just not going as far as they used to. The Deacon's voted to end the $15.00 Hannaford Gift Card program in the pantry beginning in January 2027. We are hopeful that this is the only major change needed to keep the pantry open.



Shepherds Page

November 2026 REMEMBER WHEN

Here we are deep into fall and especially the season of Thanksgiving. What a wonderful time to look back to be thankful for all our blessings, take time to enjoy what today will bring, and to be grateful for what our future will bring to us. Thanksgiving should be thought of as our yesterdays, our todays, and our tomorrows.

When I was thinking about these stages of our lives, one of the best songs I think of is from one of my favorite country singers, Alan Jackson, is his "Remember When" (2003). He wrote this song himself to reflect his life with his wife, Denise, about growing old together. The song follows a couple's
entire life together: 1) Falling in love when they're young, 2) Getting married, 3) Raising children, 4) Enduring hardships and heartbreaks, 5) Watching their children grow up and leave home, 5) Loss of Loved ones, 6) Growing old side by side and looking back on their shared memories. I know this song doesn't scream turkey, pumpkins, etc.; but it sure does, to me, scream thankfulness for all stages of our lives. Thank you, God, for all our blessings.

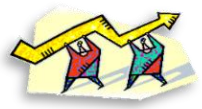
Whether you are or have been married, we have all been in some or in all these stages of life, even if you are the child, grown up and have a home of your home. There is so much to be praising God for all God's blessings. Remember, Thanksgiving isn't just a day to eat, give some thoughtful thanks and then jump right into the Christmas Season. Let your heart and home breathe in each and all stages of your life and give reflections of your blessings and share your memories and stories. Hope everyone makes Thanksgiving the best one yet.

So, everyone, "Remember When".

God Bless, Happy Thanksgiving! Respectfully submitted, JoAnn Fisher, Shepherd

Desiree Albizu	Amie Parker	Mary Hennessy
Kayla Bell	Linda Neilson	Marie Votava
JoAnn Fisher	Denise Gilhooly	Eileen Zeliph
Deb McConel		

SHEPHERDS SERVING ST. JOHN'S REFORMED CHURCH



Finance Report - St. John's Financial Statement

There are three important dates to know:

Monday, October 26th

The 2027 budget will be distributed by email (Postal Service by request only) with three (3) items needing your attention:

1. Copy of the 2027 Budget
2. Informational letter
3. 2027 Pledge Card

Look for its arrival during the weeks of 10/26 – 11/7!

Sunday, November 8th

There will be an all-important 'Congregation Question & Answer Meeting" following the worship service. Please review the budget and have any questions or comments for the discussion. Staff, consistory and committee members will be present to represent all aspects of the proposed budget in hopes of addressing all questions.

Sunday, November 15th

There will be another even-more-important "Congregational Meeting" following the worship service to address the three (3) tasks:

1. Affirmational vote on the 2027 Budget
2. Election of new consistory member
3. Presentation of your completed 2027 Pledge Card. Please bring your pledge card to this meeting so we can present them as a congregation.

This is the time when the congregation makes financial plans for next year and supports it with newly elected consistory members along with a financial pledge. Please mark your calendar to be part of the 2027 planning at St. John's.

REMINDER -C.O.L.A. for 2027
SOCIAL SECURITY was announced on
OCTOBER 14, 2026, 3.6%

COLA = Cost of Living Adjustment

What is it?

1. **It's usually associated with an 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 and is usually made available in mid-October.**

How does it impact our church giving?

COLA is the % adjustment needed to make a pledge for the new budget equal to the purchasing power of your last year's pledge. It's a useful tool to understand the purchasing power of church dollars spent, as well as our pledge dollars toward expenses.

Finance Committee



Property Committee – October Report

Autumn Greetings from your St. John's Property Committee. As this is being written, the fall colors are gorgeous and there have been several days of dry sunny weather. This has allowed us to start leaf cleanup around the church and cemetery. The dry leaves can be mulched with our mowers which not only makes them disappear, but puts the nitrogen back into the soil. A final weed whacking is being done in the cemetery to neaten it up for the winter. Again, thank you to those folks who have been pitching in to mow, weed whack, trim and maintain the flower beds and shrubs around the church and the cemetery.

The fire alarm system for the church and Ed Wing is now awaiting an engineering design before any installation can begin. The faulty heater in the nursery has been replaced, and electrician Chris Grover replaced a bad circuit breaker in the electric panel.

We are very pleased with the newly sealed and restriped parking lot and the proper painting of the handicap parking spaces. That was step one. Step two will be a future project to install ADA compliant automatic doors at the Ed Wing entrance.

That's all for now. Please consider joining the property committee or any other committee here at St. John's. All our committees are so important to help this church accomplish its many goals.

Blessings from your Property Committee

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 ***logon 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.

Chmeetings and the Kerk

Several people have clicked on the unsubscribed from email message sent from Chmeetings sent by the church. This option is located at the bottom of every email sent using Chmeetings. You need to be aware that we use Chmeetings email lists to send the Kerk. By unsubscribing from Chmeetings messages sent by the church you are also unsubscribing from the Kerk.

Streaming Sunday Services:
To Stream Sunday Services- Go to our website (www.stjohnsreformed.org) and click on the box, "join live". It's at the bottom of the home page. 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 that you missed and click on the picture of the church.

Deadline for December is November 23rd 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



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.

Note: The Kerk is now distributed every other month.

Children's Ministry Program - Sunday at 10 a.m.

Bible Study - Wednesday at 10:15 am in the fellowship hall

Food Pantry Distribution - Mon.-9:00am to 12:30pm / Wed.- 9:00am to 2:30pm.
More information pertaining to the Food Pantry is on SJRC's website.

Rev. Alisha Riepma-Hosier Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs. (off site), Fri.-Sabbath Day

Marguerite Kerrigan, Administrator M-9:00am–1:30pm; T-9:00am – 3:30pm; W-9:00am – 4:30pm; Thurs.-9:00am – 1:30pm; F – office closed

Pete Fenaroli, Volunteer Bookkeeper Tuesday mornings

Annual Christmas Bazaar

Saturday, November 21st, 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
Join us at St. John's for the annual Christmas Bazaar, featuring festive food, shopping, and activities for all ages.

Lunch with Santa

The popular "**Lunch with Santa"** returns with:

- Soups and sandwiches
- Kid-friendly foods
- Pies and other desserts

Holiday Shopping

Fellowship Hall:

- Christmas crafts and housewares
- Gently used jewelry
- Plants and knitted items

Assembly Hall downstairs:

- Children's books and toys

New This Year

- Door prizes
- Scavenger hunts for adults and children

November EVENTS/MEETINGS:

Men's Breakfast	**November 7th @ 8:00am @ Red Hook Diner (1st Saturday of ea. mnth)**
Property	**November 10th @ 7:00pm (2nd Tuesday of each month)**
Garden Club	**November 12th @ 12:30pm (2nd Thursday of each month)**
Finance	**November 9th @ 7:00pm (2nd Monday of each month)**
Scudder Circle	**November 9th @ 1:00pm (2nd Monday of each month)**
Consistory	**November 19th @ 7:30pm (3rd Thursday of each month)**
Elders	**November 19th @ 7:00pm (3rdThursday of each month)**

- **Book Club,** Monday, November 9th@ 10am in the fellowship hall
- **Blooming in Faith Women's Group,** Tuesday, November 10th @ 7pm Fellowship Hall
- **Widow's Support Group**, Monday, November 16th@ 10:00am
- **Mission and Outreach Meeting**, Sunday, November 22nd, following the worship service.

*****Please refer to the weekly calendar on the announcement page found in your bulletin and in the online bulletin for updates*****