

THE KERK

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

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January 2021

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Pastor's Notebook

EPIPHANY = SIGNS OF DIVINE REVELATION

Into the setting of a very traditional wedding feast at Cana in Galilee, entered Someone totally new, bringing new opportunities to life. The expectations of the wedding guests were very traditional and followed time honored methods. Even the occasion for this Sign of Jesus was born of a fear over breaking the "**host**" tradition by running out of wine. As Jesus declared in response to his mother, the call for help is a call for a great unveiling of himself with new possibility and hope in the face of old traditions. It is a **Revelation** that with Jesus came the availability of re-creation, renewal, healing and new life.

The Wedding at Cana was just the beginning of 7 Signs that Jesus brings a whole new **Revelation** about God and God's Love! This is the way St. John framed the first half of his Gospel account and these 7 signs all point to the culmination of Jesus amazing message in the Passion and Resurrection. We shall explore the facets of that **Revelation** for our lives today. Epiphany means a manifestation or vision of God and during this season, we examine how Jesus made that manifestation 2,000+ years ago and how that impacts us today.

Join us in worship for these reflections on the vision of our God in Jesus. And join us also for the Choir's joyous singing during this season of Christ's revealing. We are God's Family together and may we keep ourselves warm this winter by our love and care for each other in **God's Revelation!**

Shalom --- Pastor Don

Important Notices

“St. John’s in Red Hook” on YouTube

In person services have stopped but we are doing Zoom services on Sundays at 10 a.m. People can go to the website; www.stjohnsreformed.org and click on the link for the service and also the bulletin so they can follow along. The services are recorded and will be available on YouTube. That link is also on the website.

FATIH AND EDUCATION

New Year of Bible Study

Join the people who meet to study the Bible each Tuesday morning at 10:15 a.m. in reading the newly published fourth year, Year D, of the Revised Common Lectionary. This will include Bible passages not included in the other three years of the Lectionary. Reading guides can be found in Desiree Albizu's mailbox in the education wing. If you would prefer, Desiree can postal mail you a copy, or email you a scanned copy. Contact her at (518) 965-7538 or at [<albizu@gtel.net>](mailto:albizu@gtel.net).

Children's Ministries



The children will receive another unit of Sunday School resources in early January. If a child or family would like ideas for other Christian education resources, please contact Desiree Albizu, Coordinator of Children's Ministries, at (518) 965-7538 (texts welcome) or at [<albizu@gtel.net>](mailto:albizu@gtel.net).

Book Club



The members of Book Club will meet on Monday, January 11 at 10 a.m. in the fellowship hall to discuss The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek by Kim Michele Richardson.

The next book will be The Guest Book: A Novel by Sarah Blake. Anyone who has read the book selection or listened to it is welcome to join in the discussion. Reading suggestions are appreciated.

Re-Opening Committee

The Re-Opening Committee has been meeting weekly on Zoom to discuss how to handle the Christmas Eve services and worship services beyond that. There have also been countless meetings at the church with Wayne and Jason Swart, Paul Peterson, Doug and Linda Search and others trying to get Zoom and/or live-stream worship services to work for those at home. So many hours have been put into this effort and much work is yet to be done, especially concerning the sound. Thank you for your patience while people continue to make the services the best they can be for all.

Search Committee

The Search Committee met a couple times in November and once in December. St. John's Self Study has been completed and the results shared with the congregation via email and postal mail. If you did not receive a copy and would like one, please contact the Church Office.

Most of the fall the Committee worked on answering the questions posed in the Church Profile. After a lot of work by individuals and as a committee during meetings, it has now been completed. Once approved by the Consistory, it will be shared with ministerial candidates who would like to know more about St. John's, the congregation, Red Hook and the surrounding communities. During previous searches for a minister, the RCA had a central office where we would submit our profile. This is no longer the case. We will need to be more creative as we reach out seeking our next Minister of Word and Sacrament.

As we were coming up on Christmas, the committee decided this was a good time to take a break. In January we will begin to disseminate the Church Profile to candidates, and we will receive their profiles. Then Committee members will read through each profile and begin the sifting process. After that, it's on to interviews!

Thank you to all on the Search Committee for their work this fall. May their work prove fruitful in 2021.

CONSISTORY NOTES

December 17, 2020, Zoom meeting

Pastor Kendra, supervising minister, opened the meeting with prayer.

Financial Review: Monthly review, P and L, Balance sheet

The question of pledges was brought up and Christine MacNeil from the finance committee joined the discussion. Christine said that comparing 2021 pledges with previous years pledging was discussed at finance but she did not know what the follow through on that was.

The question was brought up and answered regarding what account balances carry into the new year.

Committee Reports:

Faith and Education, Finance, Property, Re-opening and Search reports were received.

It was noted under Search that the exit interview was done with Pastor Eric and Nancy and would be distributed to Consistory.

Working recommendations and special reports:

a. Ordination and Installation of new Consistory members, Pete Fenaroli and Desiree Albizu will take place in the sanctuary with Pastor Don, Jane and Edward on January 10. January 17 will be a snow date. Members of Consistory are welcome as long as attendance is no more than 10 people.

b. Search profile: a copy is to be kept in the office so that members can read it but it will not be distributed. Linda Search had some recommendations which will go back to the Search Committee.

c. Re-opening committee:

Explore the possibility of a Tech person/team-perhaps a paid position. It has taken a lot of volunteer hours to try to get the services taped or Zoomed. This is not just a Covid situation but how to go digital going forward. This will be moved to the January meeting.

d. Christmas Eve services: two services are scheduled for 5 and 8 p.m. More people are needed to help sign people in, taking temperatures, laying out and collecting candles, managing seating assignments and dismissing after both services. This was deferred to a Re-opening meeting on Tuesday to try to fill the positions.

After the Christmas Eve services, we will move to exclusively remote/zoom Worship services for the month of January. Pastor Don, Jane, and Edward will lead the zoom services from the Sanctuary. At the January Consistory meeting, we will re-evaluating this decision for February.

It was mentioned that no recommendation had been made on small groups using the space. This will go back to the Reopening committee.

Outgoing members, Mary Hennessy, Glenn Countryman and Gian Stagnaro were thanked for their service and new members, Pete Fenaroli and Desiree Albizu were welcomed.

The meeting was closed in prayer by Glenn Countryman.

Respectfully submitted,
Shari Juranic, Clerk of Consistory

SCUDDER CIRCLE NEWS

The members of the Scudder Circle thank everyone who donated undies to send off with Rhode Dorius to Haiti this December. People were very generous. Rhode also received cash to allow her to purchase food and other supplies for those in need that she encounters while visiting family there.

The Scudder Circle will not be meeting in January. The next meeting is February 4 at 11 a.m. Place TBA.

Mission and Outreach

A Word of Thanks from Mission & Outreach

I hope everyone had a safe, happy, and blessed Christmas Season. Although this year did not begin well, I personally was able to end it on a positive note. Much of this was in thanks to my St. John's Family. Once again, your generosity leaves me speechless. Thanks to you, we were able to provide **two gifts each to 66 children within 30 families. That's 132+ presents!** Also, a special thank you to my last-minute shoppers, Jackie Fenaroli, Laurie DeCiutiis, and Vickie Young. Another special thank you to Gian Stagnaro, who stepped up to sponsor "tough to shop for" items multiple times. Finally, thanks to Shari for taking time out of her already busy day to scan wish list forms to me.

Here is to a bright 2021!

Serena



SERMON SERIES

"The 7 Signs of John's Gospel"

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3 :

Text: Psalm 121; John 2:1-11

Sermon: "Host of New Life"

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10

Text: Psalm 46, John 4:46-54

Sermon: "Lord of Health"

SUNDAY, JANUARY 17

Text: Psalm 8; John 5: 1-10, 16-18

Sermon: "Lord of True Priorities"

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24

Text: Psalm 114, John 6:1-15

Sermon: "The Lord All Sustenance"

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31

Text: Exodus 3:1-15, John 6:16-21

Sermon: "Lord of the Exodus"

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Text: Psalm 63, John 9:1-7

Sermon: "Lord of Light"

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Text: Psalm 29; John 11:1,3,4,32-44

Sermon: "Lord of All Life"



Ulster Savings Bank and Funshine Nursery School who collected food for the Food pantry in December; **Paul Peterson, Wayne Swart, Doug and Linda Search** who worked so hard to get the WiFi running in the sanctuary so we could record services and continue to work diligently on Zoom services and getting our audio to be better.

Gabriella Coon for the handmade Christmas cards she had for everyone who came to the December 20 worship service.

To all the amazing people who shopped and/or donated money for Christmas presents for the Food Pantry Clients; you are amazing.

The Girl Scouts and Funshine Nursery School who both have collected food for the pantry.

You can continue to drop off food donations in the education wing. The bucket is just as you come in the door.

Food is always needed: meat, fruit,

vegetables, soup, condiments, oil, tea and coffee, peanut butter and jelly, pasta, rice pancake mix and syrup, tuna, cereal, personal care items and we go through a lot of dish and laundry detergent.



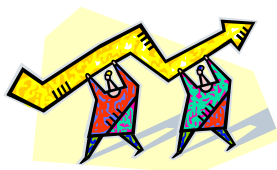
Deadline for the **February Kerk** is **January 10**.

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.

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



Financial Report

November 2020

Income	\$ 14,514.44
Expenses	<u>\$ 11,144.15</u>
	\$ 3,370.29

Year To Date

January - November 2020

Income	\$220,355.38
Expenses	<u>\$185,636.21</u>
	\$ 34,719.17

Did You Know?

Happy 2021! 2020 was a year of changes and transitions. We hope 2021 will be a year of new beginnings! Last year due to social distancing, many people chose to mail in their tithes/offerings or send them through the Givelify App.

This month, we will not be able to physically meet as a congregation. So now it is more important than ever, as our society becomes more digital and less cash/check oriented, to take advantage of apps like Givelify, which allow electronic tithing.

The app is free, user-friendly and has the bonus of keeping track of our tithes, as well as, the ability to schedule weekly or monthly tithing

Last year was life-changing due to COVID.

However, as one user said in their app review: "Givelify eliminates 99% of our excuses. Only got \$1.00, YES I SAID ONE DOLLAR. Right now no one is turning away anything. Maybe next time you have more. Be faithful in little and you will be faithful with more."

For organizations like our church, there are no signup or monthly fees. Givelify takes 2.9% +\$0.30 per transaction so scheduling or tithing once a month instead of weekly, might be a better option. Givelify makes it easy to see your entire history of giving to churches and nonprofit organizations. Whether in the app or on the web, you can track your donations without searching for receipts, bank statements, or acknowledgement letters at tax time.

Did you know? This year the CARES Act gives all donors the ability to write- off up to \$300 of your tax-deductible gift even if you choose not to itemize your taxes. This means your gifts go even further!

The envelope system is still in place if you would like to continue using it. If you haven't already, your envelopes can be picked up in the entry way to the education wing.

The first envelope inside the box is the **Initial offering**. This helps offset the cost of the envelopes, **\$5 will do it.**

The **green envelope** helps offset the cost of the **denominational assessment** that is paid to the Reformed Church in America. Part of these monies go to the Mid-Hudson Classis, The New York Regional Synod and General Synod. The church's cost per member is **\$108**.

The **pink envelopes** help offset the **missionary support** of St. John's.

So these three envelopes help us meet our budget expenses.

You can still use the Givelify App, just specify: initial, denominational assessment, or Mission and Benevolence.



to the family and friends of **Carolyn Otterness** who died November 29, 2020,

Alice Foster, Ellen Nicholas's sister, who died December 4.

to the family and friends of **Ann Swanson**, Vickie Young's mother, who died December 26.

Church Calendar

Worship Service

Sundays 10 a.m. on Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88588306134?pwd=eW92WFgzUXdjSElwOG5KcFVBZGV6dz09>

Meeting ID: 885 8830 6134

Passcode: 126126

The bulletin for each service can be found on the website.

You can continue to visit "**St. John's in Red Hook**" on **YouTube** for the Sunday service also!

Shari Juranic, 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

remains outside only, distribution from kitchen

Mon. 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Wed. 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Bible Study

Tues. 10:15 a.m. in the fellowship hall

Choir Rehearsal

Tues. on Zoom, 7:30 to 8:15 p.m.

Book Lover's Club

Mon. Jan. 11, 10 a.m. fellowship hall

The Book Women of Troublesome Creek by Kim Michele Richardson

Finance Committee meeting

Mon. Jan. 11, 7 p.m. on Zoom

Elders meeting

Thurs. Jan. 21, 7 p.m. on Zoom

Consistory meeting

Thurs. Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m. on Zoom



Welcome to **Olivia Ann Grover**, daughter of Christopher and Minton Grover, grand-daughter of David and Colleen Grover. Olivia was born December 11, a few weeks earlier than expected, but she weighed in at 6 lbs. 5 oz. Best wishes to all of them and big brother, Jack.

Greta Louise, born 12/28/20, the daughter of Carly (Migliorelli) and Dan Stafford. Grandmother is MaryEllen Mann

Ulrich Scott Buring, born January 1, 2021, son of Annamarie Woelm and Jeffrey Buring.



Shepherds Page

January 2021

Resolutions

Well 2020 sure isn't like most years we've faced. It seems like one thing after another. Our country has faced fires, floods, riots; not to mention the political, financial and emotional unrest. Then there's the biggest thing of all – the effects of Covid-19 and the pandemic.

The year 2020 surely has challenged us, stretched us, and yes even enabled us to grow in ways we really didn't know were even possible. As we close the door on 2020, and open the window on 2021, we need to reflect each one of us what we have accomplished or not, what challenges we've overcome or not, and what success we've made or have not. The main thing is to acknowledge the good and bad in each of these. You can't take a step forward until you pace your step and direction you are headed in.

So going forward into the New Year and what lies ahead for each of us, we each need to concern ourselves with what we hope to accomplish. Before you start out, try to reflect on what behaviors you used to be successful or at least helped you get through the hurdles of the past. Perhaps instead of trying to set yourself up to fail or struggle with all our resolutions we've set for ourselves; try to start off small and be kind to yourself. God knows we are all human and when we try as well as when we fail. God also knows we are the children of God. God, like the good parent, does guide us, comfort us, as well as gives us hope, strength, and the tools needed.

Perhaps the best resolution we should all try to do is promise to bow our heads more in prayer and let God be the leader of our destinations. Perhaps in prayer remember more the sick, lonely, poor, oppressed and others who's help is greatly needed before ourselves. Sometimes taking on the concerns of others, helps us deal with our own issues. Prayer is such a strong communication with you to God and God to you. As they say, NEVER UNDER ESTIMATE THE POWER OF PRAYER! If you should need help, perhaps a shoulder to lean on, an ear to listen or even a smile don't be afraid to ask. Our Church has so many good resources like from the pulpit, consistory, lay pastors, shepherds, prayer chain, bible study group, musicians, choirs, and other groups of Our Church. As well as Desiree Albizu, John Roberts, and James Walrath. Thank you all for each of your special talents and strengths.

Respectfully Submitted by Joann Fisher

Let us pray that 2021 will bring love, peace, joy, and hope to all. Yours in Christ Eileen Zeliph

Shepherds serving St. Johns Reformed Church

Desiree Albizu	Nancy Castillo	Stan Tremper
Kayla Bell	Nancy Finkle	Linda Nielson
Joann Fisher	Denise Gilhooly	Marie Votava
Terry Laibach	Judy Rockefeller	Eileen Zeliph