

# THE KERK

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

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## “Are we there yet?”

I remember asking this question squeezed into the backseat while my parents rode in the front and patiently answered the same question for the millionth time. The question often pops up with each road trip, no matter how short or long the trip is...whether we are just backing out of the driveway, five miles in or 500 miles in, we will often find ourselves asking or hearing the question “are we there yet?”

I often wonder how many times the Israelites asked this question as they wandered around in the wilderness? I mean an 800-mile road trip is nothing compared to spending 40 years wandering around, making their way to the Promised Land.

The Israelites, as they made their way to the Promised Land, grumbled and complained and longed to go back to the way things were pre-exile. The amazing and beautiful thing of the entire journey is that God continued to show up, provide food, places to safely rest at night, and leadership to guide, lead and encourage the people on their journey. Yes, they were forced at times to slow down, pause, remember, reflect and look around and see God's presence and God at work and remember that the Promised Land was out there, but the journey was vital.

When a church is without an installed minister, it begins to feel a little like wandering around in the wilderness. The questions, what's next, when will this be over, how long O Lord, and are we there yet, are just a few of the questions often wondering about.

And then you add a pandemic, a regional shut down, cultural and political unrest and uncertainty and the questions only get louder and the once ready and understanding energetic body of Christ gets weary, hangry and frustrated that the process isn't over yet.

It was a year ago this month that Pastor Eric took his medical leave (and we continue to thank God each day for the healing and progress he continues to make), then just a few months later, the Coronavirus surfaced, making it feel like you have been without a pastor for a lifetime. I would like to take a moment to encourage you that all will be ok, that while it might not look like it now, while it might be overwhelming and frustrating and you want a pastor 'now!' it will be ok.

Your Consistory and Search and Re-Opening Teams have been doing phenomenal work to discern God's leading in the midst of this season, to guide, pray for and encourage each of you as they lead the church. And yes, like the Israelites, there will be days that will be easy, and others will be challenging, but rest assured, God will continue to provide what you need for each day.

When I am feeling antsy to get the current journey over with, when I am frustrated, overwhelmed and discouraged, I remind myself of two things: the Israelites journey through the wilderness and the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 46, I encourage you to look it up, read it, pause, take a breath and be reminded that God is with you all in these days. For now, I will leave you with the first half of verse 10 “BE still and know, that I am God”

I will continue to hold you all in prayer and will also continue to remind you that God's got this, God's got you... it will be ok. We will journey through this time together, and trust that God is already working out the details and working in the heart and life of your next pastor, and because God is faithfully present and at work, we can simply respond with “thanks be to God”

Grace, peace and prayers,  
Rev. Kendra

## Important Notices

### “St. John’s in Red Hook” on YouTube

Look for John Roberts and James Walrath on alternating Sundays.

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#### FATIH AND EDUCATION

##### BIBLE STUDY

A New Year of the Revised Common  
Lectionary

There is now a fourth year of the Revised Common Lectionary thanks to Project D. The three years of the RCL were labeled A, B, and C. Now the scriptures that were not included in these previous years have been combined into a new guide, year D. This could be a new possibility for Tuesday morning Bible studies in 2021. All are welcome to join Bible study on Tuesday mornings at 10:15 a.m. in the fellowship hall.

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#### Book Club



The Book Club will meet Monday, October 12 at 10 a.m. under the tent to discuss Mrs. Poe by Lynn Cullen. The group will also discuss meeting during the cold weather months.

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#### The Re-Opening Committee

The Re-Opening Committee worked throughout the summer and members were on hand to witness the re-opening of the sanctuary for worship on Sunday, September 13. Immediately after worship the committee met to evaluate the work that had been done and the results of their work to make the service go smoothly. There was only one forgotten item, a box for the used bulletins. We also needed to open pews labeled for 3 or more people to 1 or 2 people. Twenty-eight people attended. No one had a temperature. No one needed to be turned away due to illness. May good health prevail.

The Committee may not continue to meet as often, but will continue to monitor any changes that need to be made either because of the weather or COVID.

Windows in the sanctuary will be opened for as long as possible this fall. Please consider bringing or wearing a sweater or light jacket to wear inside the sanctuary.

We hope to have pre-packaged elements to serve communion once again on Sunday, October 4, World Communion Sunday.

Some small groups are meeting in the fellowship hall. If you would like to activate your small group, please contact the Church Office. You will have to fill out a Building Use Form and provide the name of a contact person who will take temperatures, ask the CDC questions, and clean up after the group meets.

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#### Search Committee

The Search Committee met once a week during the past month while the members worked on the self study. It is a questionnaire that the members and adherents, those who have regularly attended worship, fill out. The Committee completed their work on the self study and sent it on to the Consistory for their approval or edits at

its September 17 meeting. Once the Consistory approves it or gives it a final edit, then it will be postal mailed and emailed out. Once completed, the self studies need to be returned to the Church Office by **October 18**. There will be a box just inside the education wing door during the week and on the table in the fellowship hall on Sundays for completed self studies.

The Committee members will compile the answers and share that information with the congregation and then use it for the Church Profile.

The next step is for the Committee to complete a Church Profile. It is a document of information about St. John's Reformed Church and the surrounding community which will be shared with prospective ministers. After the Church Profile is as complete as we can make it, it will be sent to RCA Ministry Services to be circulated among potential candidates. Any ordained or soon-to-be ordained minister who is interested in being considered will send their personal profile to our church. The Search Committee members will read ministers' profiles and decide who we might like to interview.

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### **CONSISTORY NOTES**

September 17, 2020

Zoom meeting

James Walrath opened the meeting with prayer.

#### **Committee Reports:**

Glenn noted in the Property minutes the budget item for parsonage repairs for 2021 was \$10,000 to cover the cost of any repairs and updates needed before a new minister moved in.

Glenn noted that the Search Committee's work is really a group effort; everyone is doing their part.

#### **Working Recommendations and Special Reports:**

Mary Hennessy reported on her conversation with Pastor Eric regarding the dissolution of his call. Pastor Eric would like to fulfill his obligation of baptizing AnnaMarie Woelm and Jeff Buring's daughter Dorothea. This was discussed at the Elders meeting.

Pastor Kendra would type up the dissolution which would include the terms of his call package that the Consistory has extending until the end of the year. Pastor Kendra, Pastor Eric, Mary as V.P. and Shari as Clerk of Consistory would meet to do this and it would go to the Consistory for the October meeting. From there, it will go to the Classis meeting five days later for their approval.

The Consistory wished to meet face to face with Pastor Eric on this and Pastor Kendra would ask Pastor Eric if he would attend via Zoom.

**Interim minister:** Pastor Kendra received the job description and salary range and has sent it out to one person and is awaiting the contact information of another and will move forward.

It was agreed that St. John's would not participate in the Payroll Tax Deferral Program.

Consistory approved the self-study form submitted by the Search Committee with some changes. The study will be sent out to members and adherents for their feedback.

Susan Vitolo closed the meeting in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Shari Kilgour Juranic  
Clerk of Consistory

## MESSAGE FROM THE BODES

Dear Classis,

Thank you for your continued prayers and friendship. We feel both far away from you and somehow also extremely close to you. Much love from us Bodes to all of you and your churches in our beloved Classis of Mid-Hudson.

I jotted a note today of update and thought I'd send it to you as a snapshot of the life of the Christian community and Oman as a society and country in this crazy 2020.

End of August check in from the Bodes:

I was thinking this week how 2020 has seen two epochal, unprecedented events in the life of Oman and the Christian community here, which are both ushering in changes at levels of impact not experienced since 1970, including in the RCA's mission here. 1970 is when Sultan Qaboos came to power, ushering in the most dramatic modernization of any country on earth over the next 50 years. In January Sultan Qaboos died, and a new Sultan (Haitham) and his regime is now leading Oman. He is doing a very good job, and the challenges are utterly immense. The economy was in dire straits before the price of oil plummeted and before the pandemic. This country is going through huge and serious shifts.

Then the pandemic hit, which is still technically underway reshaping the economy, society, and future of Oman. Especially the expat, migrant workforce here—part of which we Bodes are, along with the entire Christian population—is in deep anxiety. So many jobs being lost. So many people are having to leave Oman to uncertain fates back home (you can't live here as an expat unless you have a job). The Christian community will look dramatically different when this is said and done.

The church, which was started by the RCA, will of course still exist, as it has in some form for 120+ years, but its life and purpose and mission, as well as its socio-economic status, will be very different. Please pray for Oman in these deeply uncertain times.

Pray for the Christians here, who have come to the Gulf countries to earn money in order to get their families around the world out of poverties and deprivations, and also to serve the common good of this land in the name of Jesus. Pray especially for the poor laborers and marginalized who are most at-risk in these shifting times. Pray for the Protestant Church in Oman, that God will deliver this community into a new phase in its existence with a renewed and clear sense of its purpose and service.

Josh  
with Erica, Gabriel (11), Ruby (10) and Alex (6)

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## SCUDDER CIRCLE NEWS

The Scudder Circle will meet Thursday, October 1 at 11 a.m. under the tent. There will be a short program and business meeting. Discussion will address meeting throughout the cold months. That result will be reported in the next issue.

Once again, no food will be served as per CDC guidelines. Bring any food or beverage that you may need. Also bring your own lawn chair or let President Mary Bayer know if you will need one. Masks must be worn and social distancing maintained.

All women of the church are welcome to attend.

-Desiree Albizu

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**Glenn Countryman** for mounting the wall sanitizers in the education wing.

**Allison, Whitt and Cordelia Meek** for volunteering at the Food Pantry the day we saw 23 clients!

Also the **Red Hook Responds Volunteers, Rich, Patricia and John**, who came to help out.

**the many members of the congregation** who dropped off food on Thursday, Friday and Sunday to stock those countertops again!

**Linda Search** for all the nice signs to help us through the reopening.

**The Reopening Committee** for all their diligent work on providing a safe environment to worship in the sanctuary.

**Choir members** for recording themselves and **Edward** for putting it all together for YouTube and hopefully Sunday mornings.

**Thank you to everyone who continues to support the CLYNK bottle return program at St. John's.** Last quarter's check was for **\$104.90**.

The bag continue to hang on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. They can be picked up anytime the office is open.

**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 at lot of dish and laundry detergent.**

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**Congratulations to Madison Wright** who received the 2020 Rev. Roger and Mrs. Bernice Leonard Scholarship Award in the amount of \$1000.

**Anita Sprague** who will celebrate her 100th birthday on October 16!

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Deadline for the **November** Kerk is **October 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](mailto:office@stjohnsreformed.org).



to the family and friends of **Catherine Hall**, Marsha Piacente's mother, who died September 13;

to the family and friends of **Henry Wilga, Jr.**, long time friend and partner of Alice Colburn, who died September 13.

to the family and friends of **Elsie Rutter**, Desiree Albizu's mother, who died September 23.

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## Church Calendar

Sundays 10 a.m. in the sanctuary

You can continue to visit "**St. John's in Red Hook**" on **YouTube** for the Sunday service also!  
If you scroll down to the bottom of the description and click on show more, you will see the words to the hymn and you can sing along!

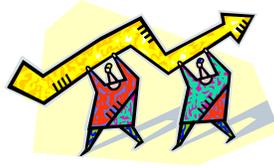
Shari Juranic, Administrator  
Mon, Wed, Fri. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Thurs. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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

**St. John's Reformed Church**



**Financial Report**

**August 2020**

<b>Income</b>	\$ 18,880.20
<b>Expenses</b>	<u>\$ 10,911.82</u>
	<b>\$ 7,968.38</b>

**Year To Date**

**January - August 2020**

<b>Income</b>	\$185,592.00
<b>Expenses</b>	<u>\$145,018.21</u>
	<b>\$ 40,573.79</b>

If you look only at these numbers, you see a healthy bank balance. This is due to a number of factors:

1. As explained last month, we received \$21,900 in memorial donations and \$17,800 as a government PPP loan which we expect will be forgiven.
2. Pastor Eric's salary has been satisfied by the disability insurance since May.
3. We don't have a contract or interim minister (but should have one)
4. The supply minister fee of \$175 is relatively inexpensive
5. A few people have paid their entire pledges for the year.

However, there is cause for concern:

1. Much of the "extra" is from a one-time contribution or temporary condition.
2. Envelope giving, our usual source of funds, is down \$7,000 from the same period last year.

**Did you know...**

the 2021 Budget Process Is Underway?

In the financial workings of St. John's, fall is budget preparation time for the next year. The process begins in early September with departments, committees and staff submitting worksheets with their respective line item suggestions. This is a time for direct congregant participation through any committees you serve on. Accountant Michele Zagorski organizes the information into a tentative budget for review by Finance, Consistory and ultimately the Congregation. Following is an outline of the due dates and meeting dates to mark on your fall calendar:

September 11<sup>th</sup> - completed budget worksheets due from all departments

September 17 - 24<sup>th</sup> - worksheets organized into a tentative budget

September 28<sup>th</sup> - Finance Committee review & discussion of tentative budget

October 15<sup>th</sup> - draft budget for Consistory 1<sup>st</sup> look

October 26<sup>th</sup> - Finance Committee meeting to finalize budget received from Consistory

October 29<sup>th</sup> - print out for Consistory final approval

November 2<sup>nd</sup> - email and USPS mail for congregation

**November 8<sup>th</sup> - Congregation budget review, question & answer (following worship service)**

**November 15<sup>th</sup> - Congregational meeting for affirmation of 2021 Budget and Consistorial elections (following morning worship service)**

First, be part of the process through the committees you serve. Then study the budget when it is distributed by email November 2<sup>nd</sup> or mailed by USPS (if you prefer and request).

Finally, plan to attend the two all-important congregational meetings: **November 8<sup>th</sup>** for budget question & answer and **November 15<sup>th</sup>** for budget affirmation and consistorial elections.

Thank you for your interest and support in the ministries of St. John's Reformed Church.



# Shepherds Page

October 2020

BALANCING OUR LIVES

**How's everyone doing. Hope your summer was all the best it could be and that you are ready to "fall" for Autumn.**

**We all need balance in our lives. Without the clouds, rain, gray days, we wouldn't realize or appreciate how wonderful the sunny days are. Likewise, without the harder moments in life, we could not appreciate and enjoy the brighter, happier moments. Some times the struggles bring their own sunshine when we come out on the other side. We are on the way to whatever our normal is going to be. We have come so far and while it's been trying at times, we've gotten through most of the quarantine. We are working through this big grey cloud that has been present since mid-March. At the same time we have gained moments of sunshine. We have slowed down and taken stock of what's important to each of us. I think we have all gained a new appreciation for life in general. Would you ever think grocery shopping is like going on an expedition to uncover gold...or least finding that item you thought would never be sold out, like toilet paper? Or even remembering your face mask or mastering which isle you go up and which you travel down on? Not to mention cost of food and cleaning supplies... perhaps it is like uncovering gold!**

**So, if you have rain and thunderstorms today, look at them in a new way; savor the energy and the rain they bring. Remember the clouds and storms will pass and the sun will come again. Life will stay in balance. Remember God's promise to Noah and His promise to each of us. Let his light shine on us and guide us through the storms of life.**

**If you still feel the storms in your life, after prayer, try these helpful hints:**

- . Look at your daily accomplishments**
- . Look at your inner strengths**
- . Find joy and contentment with the best moments in your days**
- . Focus on your achievements**
- . Identify ways you are accomplishing your purpose**
- . Give yourself rewards and that pat on the back for things you've done**
- . If your goals haven't been met, give yourself more time and encouragement**

**. Be grateful for everything in your life, even the bad things perhaps will give you wisdom and courage to grow from them**

**Remember God knows your strengths and weakness. “With God All Things Are Possible.” Always remember “Thy will be Be Done On Earth As In Heaven.” God Bless!**

**Now just to add a little twist to this page here are a few words of comfort, strength, and a little humor:**

**“Its not the years in your life that count; it’s the life in your years that counts.” Abe Lincoln**

**“Lord, let my words be as sweet as honey. As someday, I may have to eat them!” Unknown – My favorite I like these (Just ask Anita) “It is what it is.” “Take one day or one step at a time.” Unknown**

**Goodbye came from “God be with You.” So I’ll say Good Bye!**

**Respectfully,  
Joann Fisher-Shepherd of St. John’s**

**Shepherds Ministry 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