



The Newsletter of the Reformed Dutch Church of Claverack
A Reformed Church in America Congregation

The Fisherman

April 2019
PASTOR'S CORNER

2019 CONSISTORY

Elders

Bill Better
Cheryl Halleran
Andrea Mastrianni
Nate Winch

Deacons

Wendy Cook
John Dunham
Susan Ihlenburg
Melissa Skoda
Olivia VanAlphen
Bob Weinman

Missionaries

RCA-Partner in Mission (PIM)

Staff

Rev. Linda Miles, Pastor
Andrea Mastrianni
Director of Music
Lloyd Lawrence

Director of Bell Choir
Julianne Fletcher
Administrative Assistant
Alyssa Ellithorpe
Custodian

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of Claverack
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Spring Cleaning Prayer

Create in me a clean heart, O God, open and receptive, so that I may embrace the many ways you choose to visit my life.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, wash away my resistance to working through difficult relationships and clear out the refuse of old battles.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, purified through the daily disruptions and the life encounters that take me beyond my grasping control and ego-centeredness.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, freed from the clutter of cultural enticements, so that I can enjoy the beauty of life's simple things and relish the gifts I easily take for granted.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, bathed from harsh thoughts, shame and perfectionistic tendencies. De-clutter my heart from judgement and negativity.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, dust off the unmindful activity that constantly collects there and brush me free of frantic busyness, so that I will have time to dwell with you in the listening space of solitude and silence.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, rinsed of the residue of false messages about my identity, enabling my inner goodness and light to shine through all that I am and do.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, cleansed of anxiety and lack of trust, restoring in me an inner faith in your abiding presence and unconditional love.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, washed with your mercy and strengthened by your love, helping me to move beyond whatever keeps me from union with you and following in your compassionate footstep. Amen. (Adapted from Joyce Rupp)

Keep Up to Date with New Opportunities & Happenings!!

SCHEDULE FOR LENT

Palm Sunday, April 14, 9:30 am Sanctuary
Maundy Thursday, April 18, 7:00 pm Tenebrae Service, Communion
Easter Sunday, April 21, 9:30 am Sanctuary.

Child care for youngsters under age 3 is available in the nursery during the service.

OTHER EVENTS

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Sunday, March 31 | Columbia-Greene Domestic Violence Program Rebecca Alamillo, Speaker, 12:00-2:00 pm CEB Library |
| Sunday, April 28 | Holocaust Memorial Ecumenical Service, 7:00 pm at Congregation Anshe Emeth 240 Joslen Blvd., Hudson |

Just a reminder that the First Sunday of Each Month is the collection for Local Food Pantries. The Consistory encourages the church family to support the local food pantries with a money donation which will enable the pantries to purchase food at a much lower discounted price than the general public can pay for food items. Also, nonperishable foods will continue to be collected and taken to our local pantries every month.

Missions Early Spring 2019 Update

Food Pantries

With a boost from February's ***Souper Bowl of Caring*** appeal, over \$740 has been collected through mid-March for our "partner" food pantries (Mellenville-Philmont, Ghent and the Hudson Salvation Army). Thank you for your generous gifts of money and groceries — our food pantries tell us they are very thankful for our support.

Our Lenten Appeal — Mercy Ships

Once again, the Missions committee has designated ***Mercy Ships*** as our Lenten Mission appeal for 2019. Mercy Ships is a Christian-based organization that uses hospital ships to bring needed medical care to the peoples of Africa — including life-changing (and life-saving) treatments and surgeries. The more you know about Mercy Ships, the more you realize how worthwhile and meaningful their mission is. (To learn more, visit www.mercyships.org.) Stay tuned as we roll out this year's Mercy Ships appeal over the coming weeks.

CROP Walk 2019

Mark your calendar — this year's Northern Columbia County ***CROP Walk*** will take place on Sunday, May 5th, starting at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Kinderhook. More on the ***CROP Walk*** to come following Easter.



Please note hours for the CHURCH OFFICE: Tues thru Thurs 9 am to 2 pm

To contact **Pastor Linda Miles**, please call 1-845-430-3348, or

To make an appointment, email lindajosiemiles@gmail.com

Church Office: 518-851-3811; email rdcc88@yahoo.com

Website: <http://claverackreformedchurch.org/>

CHURCH 911 # is 88 NY 9H PARSONAGE 911 # is 72 NY 9H

COFFEE HOUR Please join us in the CEB Fellowship Hall following the Sunday morning service. There is a sign-up sheet on the easel in the Fellowship Hall if you want to participate by making coffee and providing simple snacks.



Elder Nate Winch, the chair of our Web Page and Technology Committee, is looking for tech savvy parishioners to be on a **tech team**, which will be part of the greater website, etc. committee. We need a couple of folks who can assist with taking appropriate photos or videos, posting them to Instagram and/or submitting them for web consideration and having the ability to create a church appropriate message with the photo. The goal is to have Instagram photos/videos that are also accessible through a link on our new website. We want to have at least one posting per week (Sunday of course), but the Church will greatly benefit from a greater frequency. Thank you.



Thank you so much for the **MANY** birthday wishes and cards. They were such a surprise and so appreciated.

Hattie Hotaling and Phyllis Mayo



A number of worshippers have recently asked me questions about the RCA as a denomination; about how our denomination is governed; and what is happening in the Classis of Columbia-Greene. Some of us (yours truly included) did not grow up in an RCA church, so the governance structure of the RCA may be unfamiliar. I thought it might be helpful to respond to these questions in our newsletter, so this information could be shared more widely with all of you.

The **Reformed Church in America (RCA)** is a [mainline Reformed Protestant denomination](#) in Canada and the United States. In 1628 [Jonas Michaelius](#) organized the first Dutch Reformed congregation in [New Amsterdam](#) (currently named [New York City](#)). The first church's original name was Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, now referred to as the [Marble Collegiate Church](#). As a North American denomination, we are 390 years old!

The RCA has a [presbyterian form of polity](#) (governance) where authority is divided among four **representative** bodies: [consistories](#), [classes](#), regional [synods](#), and the [General Synod](#). Each of these bodies has a role in church governance, with the Consistory having local authority over most matters related to the individual congregation and the pastor. Some people refer to this type of governance as *Bottom-Up*, meaning that changes to the RCA's denominational constitution and bylaws cannot be made by leaders at the top of the leadership pyramid. Rather, Minister and Elder delegates from each of the classes gather once year in a general assembly called the General Synod to cast their votes for proposed amendments and overtures.

Below are definitions of these four governing bodies as defined on the RCA website, followed by additional comments by me (in italics).

Consistory: Each church has a consistory/board that includes the church's minister/s and a handful of church members (deacons and elders) who have been elected by all the other members. The consistory helps keep the church's mission on track.

I like to think of the Consistory as a group of elected congregational members who have accepted the task of ensuring that our church is faithfully carrying out the Lord's mission and that as a congregation we are adhering to the practices and policies set forth by our local church and by the RCA. Our church's Consistory is typically made up of six elected elders and six elected deacons. Rev. Linda Miles serves as President of the Consistory; our Vice President of Consistory is Elder William Better, who was elected to this position by the Consistory members.

Classis: Churches located near each other send representatives to meet together as a "classis." (Members of what is called an "affinity" classis share a common ethnicity, race, ministry focus, etc., and their churches are not necessarily located near each other.) Each classis supervises the churches and ministers in its bounds. In the RCA, there are 45 classes that are distributed throughout the United States and Canada.

*Did you know that one of the definitions of Classis is a "fleet of Roman ships"? I often have that image in mind when our delegates from local RCA churches assemble together at Classis meetings. Our church is one of 19 congregations that comprise the **Classis of Columbia-Greene**. Our current President is Elder Beth von den Dresch and our Clerk is Rev. Paige Convis. As a body, Classis meets three times per year. At our Classis meeting this past March, our Classis identified declining church membership and the fact that many of our churches do not have an installed*

pastor as two of our most significant challenges. As a fellowship of neighboring churches, we renewed our commitment to spend the next year meeting on a regular basis to engage in prayer, fellowship, and planning in the hope of developing effective ways to address these concerns.

For our church, Rev. Miles is our Minister delegate to Classis; Snookie Patterson is our Elder delegate; and I am the alternate Elder delegate. I also serve as the Chair of one of the Commissions, so I serve on the Classis Executive Committee.

Regional Synod: All the classes (plural of classis, pronounced “class-eez”) in one region make up a “regional synod.” There are seven regional synods in the United States and one in Canada. Each oversees the classes in its area and helps them share the good news of *Jesus Christ*.

*The Classis of Columbia-Greene is one of 6 classes that comprise the **Albany Synod**. Within its geographical borders, Albany Synod encompasses 98 Reformed churches. Its office is located in Schenectady, NY. Rev. Abby Norton-Levering is Albany Synod Ministries Coordinator and Rev. Bob Hoffman is Albany Synod Administrator. The Synod offers many support services to us such as conflict mediation, faith walking programs, grant money to fund new church initiatives, and spiritual and church administration mentoring (and many other services).*

General Synod: Each year, minister and elder delegates from each classis and regional synod meet as the General Synod. They make decisions that shape denominational programs and policies. This year General Synod will be meeting at Hope College in Holland, MI from June 6-11, 2019.

In recent years, the RCA denomination has been challenged by a number of potentially divisive issues, such as whether to permit the ordaining of women as Ministers of Word and Sacrament; adopting the Belhar Confession; and the most recent debate over what position God is calling our denomination to take regarding homosexuality and same-sex marriage. Given that RCA membership spans many different geographical areas and is representative of people coming from many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, finding consensus about what we discern God calling us to do as a denomination related to these “grey” issues has been very challenging.

Request for prayer: *As General Synod approaches, I ask that you pray for all of those delegates who are participating to seek, discern, and submit to God's will when making decisions; to pray for the leaders, organizers, and delegates to foster an environment where differing beliefs and perspectives can be shared and heard in a manner that is mutually respectful; and for all of those who are involved, directly and indirectly, to find ways to collectively live out God's commandment to love God with all our heart, and soul, and might and his second commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves.*

~ Nancy Hoag Rasweiler

CAN YOU FIND 16 BOOKS OF THE BIBLE?

CIRCLE 16 BOOKS OF THE BIBLE AS THEY
APPEAR IN THE PARAGRAPH BELOW.
(WATCH OUT, THIS COULD BE TRICKY.)

I ONCE MADE A REMARK ABOUT THE HIDDEN
BOOKS OF THE BIBLE. IT WAS A LULU. KEPT
PEOPLE LOOKING SO HARD FOR FACTS AND
FOR OTHERS IT WAS A REVELATION. SOME
WERE IN A JAM ESPECIALLY SINCE THE NAME
OF THE BOOKS WERE NOT CAPITALIZED. BUT
TRUTH FINALLY STRUCK HOME TO NUMBERS
OF READERS. TO OTHERS IT WAS A REAL JOB.
WE WANT IT TO BE A MOST FASCINATING FEW
MOMENTS FOR YOU. YES, THERE WILL BE SOME
REALLY EASY ONES TO SPOT. OTHERS MAY
REQUIRE JUDGES TO HELP THEM. I WILL
QUICKLY ADMIT IT USUALLY TAKES A MINISTER
TO FIND ONE OF THEM AND THERE WILL BE
LOUD LAMENTATIONS WHEN IT IS FOUND. A
LITTLE LADY SAYS SHE BREWS A CUP OF TEA
SO SHE CAN CONCENTRATE BETTER. SEE
HOW WELL YOU CAN COMPETE. RELAX NOW
FOR THERE REALLY ARE SIXTEEN NAMES OF
BOOKS IN THE BIBLE IN THIS STORY.

ONE PREACHER FOUND 15 BOOKS IN 20 MIN
BUT IT TOOK HIM 3 WEEKS TO FIND THE
SIXTEENTH ONE!

(Solution will appear in the next edition of THE FISHERMAN.)