

The Fisherman

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

October 2021

2021 Consistory

Elders

Bill Better
Donna Lynk Campion
Jane Case
Jim Mackerer
Nate Winch

Deacons

John Dunham
Kim Plass
Amy Race
Melissa Skoda
Bob Weinman

Missionaries

Rev. and Mrs. Brad Kautz,
Jicarilla Apache Nation
RCA—Partner in Mission (PIM)

Staff

Pastor

Andrea Mastrianni
Director of Music

Lloyd Lawrence
Director of Bell Choir

Helen Hamel
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News About General Synod 2021

General Synod will be held this year on October 14–19, 2021, in Tucson, Arizona. This is an annual assembly of officers and voting delegates who meet once per year to discuss and vote on programs and policies that shape the direction of the RCA denomination as a whole. Last year General Synod was canceled due to pandemic-related health concerns and all old and new business was referred to the 2021 General Synod. General Synod 2021 will be presided over by EJ de Waard, President, Phil Assink, vice president, and RCA general secretary Eddy Alemán. The 2021 Classis of Columbia Greene voting delegates are Reverend Chuck Wiesner, Reverend Savitri Marks (as an elder) and Bret Smith (elder). We ask for prayers for these local delegates as well as all those persons involved in 2021 General Synod as they gather together to discern God's will for our RCA denomination.



As some of you may already know, the RCA is a denomination that has a *presbyterian* (representative) form of church government. New motions for changes or additions on denominational policy and/or polity (called Overtures) are introduced once a year at General Synod. If the majority of delegates vote to entertain the overture, it will be referred back to committees, Regional Synods, Classes, and individual congregations across the United States and Canada for study and discussion for a minimum of one year and sometimes for longer periods, and then at a designated future General Synod Assembly representative Minister and Elder delegates from each Regional Synod and the member Classes will have an opportunity to vote according to each delegate's Holy Spirit-led belief of what the will of Christ is.

Over the long history of the RCA, a number of contentious issues have challenged our denomination as they have many other denominations. For example, a past debated issue in the RCA centered around the issue of whether a man could be ordained into a church office if he was a member of the Fraternal Order of the Masons. More recently, the question of whether the RCA would permit women being ordained into the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament has been a highly divisive issue that dominated many General Synods in the 1970s and 1980s. So, what is the focal point of this year's General Synod?

This year the primary "business" before the General Synod is related to whether the RCA as a denomination should or should not take a unified stance that would then be formalized as RCA policy on the issue of whether RCA Ministers of Word and Sacrament can choose to preside

over same sex marriages as well as whether individuals who do **not** identify as having a heterosexual orientation can be ordained into the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament, the office of Elder, and/or the Office of Deacon.

It is important to note that these issues did not spring up overnight and there has been a long-standing theological debate in our denomination related to what is God's will related to the practice of homosexuality in the RCA. Many other denominations that are in full communion with the RCA, such as Presbyterian Church USA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, have already spiritually debated these topics and their denominations as a whole have already adopted an official position. Now, the RCA is looking to find consensus (or not) on the issue of whether same-sex relationships are sinful and/or whether a person's sexual orientation should affect whether an individual is spiritually fit to be ordained into an RCA office of minister, elder or deacon. These issues were formally raised at the 2018 General Synod, with then President Don Poest recommending that there be a period of prayer, study, and reflection on these topics and that a representative vote on these issues occur at the 2020 General Synod. President Reverend Poest also outlined how various RCA leaders and appointed committees would help organize and facilitate prayer and dialogue at all levels of



the RCA during the intervening time to develop a set of three or four options for delegates to consider and vote upon. Eventually, all this preparatory discussion and dialogue was distilled into what is called the *2020 Vision Report*. To read the whole report you can find it in *pdf* form on the Reformed Church of America website or you can read a paper copy of the report in the church office.

In brief, the Vision 2020 team ultimately came up with three options for voting delegates to consider at General Synod 2021:

Together, Yet Changed (Recommendation 1—Restructuring)

In this scenario, RCA congregations that choose to stay in the RCA denomination agree to disagree on the topic of homosexuality and

*same sex marriage and will defer each church's decision-making to the individual Consistory leadership. So that contention around this issue does not interfere with other RCA church matters, the denominational structure would change from the current practice of organizing member congregations into a Classis **based on geographical proximity** to, instead, organizing churches into a particular Classis **based on "Affinity"** – shared spiritual values and beliefs related to various social and cultural topics such as Same Sex marriage and/or a woman being ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament.*

Preserving Our Shared History (Recommendation 2—A New Mission Agency)

In this scenario, the current RCA Mission fund would formally separate from the RCA denomination to become an independent nonprofit Mission entity. This would enable congregations who choose to stay in the RCA, and congregations who choose to leave the RCA, to still choose to financially support the newly formed independent Global Mission agency that would still provide funds to our current RCA missionaries.

Forward with Grace (Recommendation 3—Mutually Generous Separation)

In this scenario, churches in the RCA that do not like Option 1 (agree to disagree but remain united as a denomination) will be permitted to graciously leave the RCA and take their church property and financial assets with them under the condition that they join another recognized Protestant denomination; also, the church property and assets will revert back to the RCA if this new church relationship does not work out within the first 5 years after the transfer.



The Vision 2020 team predicts that all three scenarios may occur as a result of this year's General Synod. The impact on the RCA denomination will likely be significant but not catastrophic. It will take place in a gradual fashion and there will be ways for congregations who stay in or leave the RCA to still relate to one another such as supporting our

(continued...)

I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my supplications...

Global Mission ministry (Option 2). Our local church, the Reformed Dutch Church of Claverack, will not be immediately impacted, as our current Consistory leadership believes that we need to take time, and to create multiple opportunities for us as a congregation to study, absorb, and have guided conversation about all of these options in order for us to discern what we believe is Christ's will for our particular congregation.

Classis Elder representative Nancy Hoag Rasweiler will be sharing a brief Scriptural-based Meditation and a follow-up information session on this topic at our Harvest Worship and Brunch on Sunday, October 10th at 9:30 AM in our church's CE building. Please join us for worship and fellowship at this momentous time and keep all our RCA churches in your prayers.

*Nancy Hoag Rasweiler, Elder Representative of RDCC
Vice President of the Classis of Columbia Greene*



Many believe that this year's General Synod will mark the end of the RCA as we know it.

A reading from Psalm 116 :

"I love the Lord, because he has heard
my voice and my supplications.
Because he inclined his ear to me,
therefore I will call on him as long as I live.
The snares of death encompassed me;
the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;
I suffered distress and anguish.
Then I called on the name of the Lord:
'O Lord, I pray, save my life!'
Gracious is the Lord, and righteous;
our God is merciful.
The Lord protects the simple;
when I was brought low, he saved me.
Return, O my soul, to your rest,
for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.
For you have delivered my soul from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling.
I walk before the Lord
in the land of the living.
I kept my faith, even when I said,
'I am greatly afflicted';

I said in my consternation,
'Everyone is a liar.'
What shall I return to the Lord
for all his bounty to me?
I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the Lord,
I will pay my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people.
Precious in the sight of the Lord
is the death of his faithful ones.
O Lord, I am your servant;
I am your servant, the child of your serving girl.
You have loosed my bonds.
I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice
and call on the name of the Lord.
I will pay my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people,
in the courts of the house of the Lord,
in your midst, O Jerusalem.
Praise the Lord!"

Pray through this psalm, focusing on God, but being honest with your hopes and fears.



Worship Schedule

9:30 a.m. Sunday worship service followed by coffee hour immediately following the service.

♦ First Sunday of the month: Worship service with Sacrament of Communion

October 3 Pastor James Alley presiding

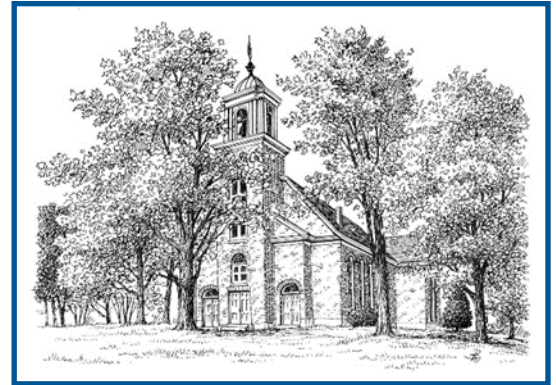
October 10 Harvest Brunch in CEB with brief worship service (*please bring a dish to share*) and Vision 2020 presentation/discussion; congregational vote on amendments to church bylaws

October 17 Pastor James Alley presiding

October 24 Pastor Sara Appleyard-Pekich presiding

October 31 Pastor James Alley presiding

November 7 (Communion) Pastor Sara Appleyard-Pekich presiding; All Saints Sunday



October Lectionary Readings

The Lectionary is a list of scripture readings that are traditionally used for each Sunday of the church year. Many preachers choose from these readings for their sermon texts. They are created in a three-year cycle to cover many important Bible passages.

October 3 (Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost):

Job 1:1-2, 2:1-10, Psalm 26; Genesis 2:18-24; Psalm 8; Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12; Mark 10:2-16

October 10 (Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost):

Job 23:1-9, 16-17; Psalm 22:1-15; Amos 5:6-7, 10-15; Psalm 90:12-17; Hebrews 4:12-16; Mark 10:17-31

October 17 (Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost):

Job 38:1-7, (34-41); Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c; Isaiah 53:4-12; Psalm 91:9-16; Hebrews 5:1-10; Mark 10:35-45

October 24 (Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost):

Job 42:1-6, 10-17; Psalm 34:1-8, (19-22); Jeremiah 31:7-9; Psalm 126; Hebrews 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52

October 31 (Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost):

Ruth 1:1-18; Psalm 146; Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Psalm 119:1-8; Hebrews 9:11-14; Mark 12:28-34

November 7 (Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost):

Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17; Psalm 127; 1 Kings 17:8-16; Psalm 146; Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

Church Family Missions

Missions Fall Update – Operation Christmas Child

Once again, October is Operation Christmas Child month and there are two ways you can support us in our goal of assembling 24(+) gift boxes to send to children worldwide.

1. Pick up a tag with needed gift items, purchase them and bring them to one of our drop-off locations (back of the sanctuary and the CE Building lobby).

2. Make a monetary donation to be used for shipping or purchase of needed items. (Each box needs a \$9 donation to cover processing and shipping.)

♦ All gift items and cash donations are due by **Sunday, October 31**.

Operation Christmas Child's mission is to provide local partners around the world with shoeboxes filled with small toys, hygiene items, and school supplies as a means of reaching out to children in their own communities with the Good News of Jesus Christ. These simple gifts are shipped outside the United States to children affected by war, poverty, natural disaster, famine, and disease; and to children living on Native American reservations in the U.S.



Church Family Business

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING — October 10, 2021

BYLAWS AMENDMENTS September 14, 2021

CONSISTORY APPROVAL given on September 14, 2021

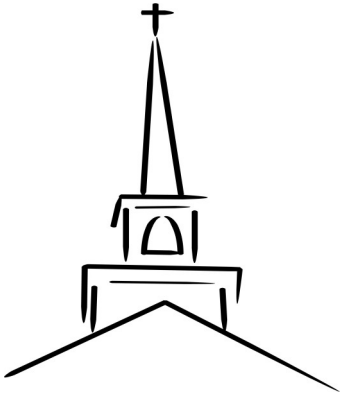
As the opening statement of the Bylaws Amendments states:

‘Upon review, it has been determined that the “updated” church bylaws originating in 2009, and superseding the previous bylaws, are invalid. There is no record, written or otherwise, of their history, drafting, or adoption. As a result, the committee recommends that the church resume governance under the previous bylaws approved in 2006 and also recommends the following revisions to bring those bylaws up to date with subsequent actions:’

In order to move on recommended amendments, there will be a congregational meeting on Sunday, October 10 to vote on approving these. Electronic copies have been emailed to members, and hard copies have been/are available in the back of the sanctuary. This is a responsibility of all members, and proper notice has been given.

(Church Family Business continued...)

Facebook: The-Reformed-Dutch-Church-of-Claverack



Bell Tower and Dome Restoration Project—

The **fundraising campaign** continues...

We have now sent letters to community members and friends of the church... we are so blessed with the contributions we are receiving.

Financial updates will be forthcoming in the weeks ahead.

...speaking of fundraising...

SOUP, BAKE, AND TAG SALE FUNDRAISER

Saturday, October 23, 2021; 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Volunteers needed to:

- Make soup and/or baked items (individually wrapped, please). Soup and bake sale items should be delivered to the church by 10:00 a.m. on the 23rd;
- Serve soup, sell baked items, watch tag sale tables, work at check-out table.

Please contact Carol Doerfer-O'Neill at cdoerfer@juno.com or

518-755-4335 to let her know what you're cooking/baking and to volunteer the day of the event.



...and some more fundraising...

The Church Bazaar— November 20, 2021

...celebrating our 60th anniversary... preparations are in full swing!

- ♦ Set up will begin Sunday, **November 14** (after worship) with setting up tables;
- ♦ The **Good Earth Booth** is seeking extra help the week before the Nov. 20th. Put this on your calendar. Contact Melissa Skoda for details.
- ♦ Baking gingerbread cookies...**October 26**, 9:00 a.m. 'til done!!! Please help! We need workers!
- ♦ Save the date! So many helpers will be needed ...

This is a special celebratory year and we want it to be a fun and friendly event!

Sunday . . . OCTOBER 10TH . . . FLU SHOT CLINIC . . .

(immediately following the brunch. . .)

Please note:

- Wear short sleeves if possible.
- If you have new insurance this year, please bring your new insurance card with you!
- Children 5 and over can receive a shot.

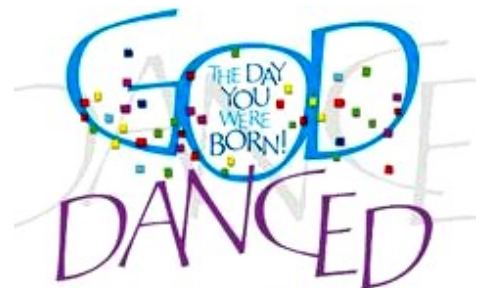


October Birthdays/Anniversaries

October Birthdays

Charles Hallenbeck	10/1
Carolyn Wilber	10/2
Lloyd Lawrence	10/8
Grayson Favorito	10/15
Ruth Manning	10/15
Kim Plass	10/16
William Rasweiler	10/16

Emil Krizar	10/18
Bob Mayo	10/25
Bella Van Schaik	10/30
Karen Winch	10/31



October Anniversaries

Denise and Scott Holzhauer	10/4
Shannon and Rob Schroepel	10/19
Cynthia and Lenny VanAlphen	10/20

