

New Beginnings

The First Reformed
Church of Nyack

Advent Edition
November 30, 2012

Food for Thought

"'Tis the Season." This was not always so. When our nation was in its infancy, Christmas (if celebrated at all) dutifully waited the playing out of the drama of the four Sundays in Advent, not with colored lights but with somber penance--at least in the Roman and Anglican traditions.

Around the fourth century, we started celebrating many annual feasts and fast days unknown in the early Church. Advent and Christmas were not emphasized during the first three centuries, as hard as that might be for us to believe!

We assume that what we do today is what the Church has done from the beginning. Actually the Reformation included, among other reforms, the trimming of the Roman festival calendar. When Cromwell and the Puritans gained control of the English Parliament, they reclaimed Sunday as the one essential, sufficient celebration of the Church.

If, with the help of a Ghost of Christmas Past, we could return to the Massachusetts Bay Colony and listen to a ruling of the General Court of the Colony, we might hear,

"Whosoever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas or the like, either by forbearing labor, feasting, or any other way, as a festival, shall be fined five shillings."

Great preachers in the Reformed tradition were determined to preach through the Gospels in an orderly way, six or so verses at a time, so that the structure of Scripture rather than festival themes dictated the content of worship.

Last Tuesday morning, clutching the shroud of the Ghost of Christmas Past, I visited the Massachusetts Bay Colony, holding in my sweaty palm a beautiful Christmas tree bulb and a nice Christmas present for Governor Bradford. Would you believe that I was fined five shillings and told to get out of his time and space?

In the Spirit of Advent Present,

Pastor Bill

Christmas Poinsettias



Every year for Christmas we decorate our sanctuary with beautiful poinsettias given in honor or memory of our loved ones.

Be on the look out for a form insert in the bulletin in the upcoming weeks. You can place your order by completing the form and dropping it in the offering plate on Sunday, mailing it to the church office, or emailing the information to frchurch@optonline.net by the December 19th deadline.

The suggested donation is \$20 per plant.



FRC Contributes to Operation Christmas Child's Milestone

by Terri Wanamaker

This year, Operation Christmas Child will achieve a very historic milestone of distributing 100 million shoeboxes since 1993! That said, our generous church did our part, with a total of 40 Christmas boxes lovingly packed with all types of goodies and donations of almost \$250 as well!

These boxes are handed out through churches and other Christian organizations with the hope of getting children as much involved as possible and inviting them to trust Christ as their Savior. They also learn about God's Word and are then able to share it with their friends and families.

In past years, if you provided your name and address with your packed shoebox, you began to receive the Prayer Point, a quarterly newsletter, as well as requests for donations throughout the year and gift catalogs as part of the Samaritan's Purse ministry. As I read each of the stories in the Prayer Point, I look at the pictures of these children receiving what is probably their only gift this Christmas. I envision them opening their box, and taking out a soft Beanie Baby or some pretty Magic Markers, warm fuzzy socks, a much needed calculator with extra batteries, and even very basic toiletries such as a new toothbrush and a bar of sweet smelling soap. They clutch their boxes in their hands, just as God is always holding them in the palm of His hands. Have the children learned that yet? What an exciting and comforting thing it is to learn that! It reminds me of a song that for some reason, kept repeating on my iPod one morning during my walk with Sandie. The particular song that

came on is sung by the Christian rock group *Tenth Avenue North* and is called "By Your Side:"

"...cause I'll be by your side, wherever you've fallen, dead of night, whenever you're calling; please don't fight these hands that are holding you...My hands are holding you..."

To make a long story short, (really? me?) this song kept repeating over and over again, pretty much freaking me out, to the point that I made an appointment at the Genius Bar at the Apple store. Mr. Genius showed me the tiny little icon on my iPhone that had arrows going in a circle and that apparently was why the song kept repeating. Obviously I did not know that. I really did think it was a message from God because it played over twenty times in a row. The words to the song came to me as I was looking at the pictures of the children in the Prayer Point magazine. I know *His* hands are holding *them* as they hold *their* boxes; so despite their many hardships, whether they are facing religious persecution, illness, fleeing their homes, or any other troubles in their day-to-day lives, He's by their side!



Confirmation Class Commences



Elise Graham and Caleigh Travers have begun Confirmation classes with Pastor Bill (and his handy weekly assistant). Classes end in the Spring and the girls will be able to join the FRC family officially! They are also still planning to paint the Youth Room with the help of Paul Wanamaker.



Building Committee Update

Here are a few of the things that have been done in the Church in the last year or so and some plans for the near future:

- New locks have been installed throughout the Church for everyone's safety and for added security of the building. A new lock and panic bar was installed on the Church St. exterior door. Locks were installed on all the kitchen cabinets to secure our supplies. Locks were also installed on the basement doors, choir room and youth room.
- A/C units were installed in the youth room and Sunday School classroom. These units help to cool the Pitkin Hall as well as these individual rooms.
- New light bulbs were installed in the Sanctuary. We are working on the lighting in the Pitkin Hall and hope to install new lights soon.
- We are working on having the fire alarm system upgraded in the near future.
- The stained glass window in the front of the church will be repaired in the near future.

- We are getting an estimate to repair/replace the exterior door to the Lovatt Chapel.
 - The seat cushions in the Sanctuary will soon be replaced! Thanks to all who gave financially in order that they could be replaced!
 - We are hoping to have the kitchen and Pitkin Hall painted in the next few months.
 - Continuing maintenance for the Clinic which uses our classroom building (Voorhees Hall) to provide important services for many in our community.
 - Assisting Kathie and her Soup Angels as they provide meals for those in need every Monday and Wednesday at the Church (even during Sandy!).
- These are just some of the things that are going on in your Church.

—Chuck, Skip and Paul

Another Thanksgiving Success for Soup Angels



Soup Angels gives thanks that contributions from many "angel" donors allowed us to distribute 1700 meals across Rockland County on November 21. The following were the groups that were provided with full-course turkey dinners and desserts:

HeadStart of Haverstraw, HeadStart of Nyack, Valley Cottage Elementary School family Resource Center, Community Action of Haverstraw, Liberty Elementary Family Resource Center, New Generation Church, Nyack Middle School Resource Center, Upper Nyack Elementary Resource Center, St Joseph's RC Church, ARK for Christ, and the Martin Luther King Center in Spring Valley.

Soup Angels also served 167 people a full-course, sit down dinner in the Pitkin room and sent out another 100 take-out meals as well. The space was decorated with fall murals, rust-colored tablecloths, leaf bouquets, soft music and candles. Guests left with a smile and lingered to sip coffee and chat until the last possible moment. Donations of dishes from ABC Party Rental and tablecloths from Town and Country Caterers completed the setting.

We would also like to thank the congregation of the First Reformed church for your on-going support and willingness to offer us space for supplies and storage. As well, thanks to the congregation for providing a basket full of food items to help re-stock People of People of Rockland County. Supplies are very low due to recent storms and greater community need, and your gift was gratefully received.

—Kathie Rife, Soup Angels Co-founder

Sunday School News Fall 2012—Bonnie Williams



A joint service with the First Haitian Church kicked off the Sunday School Fall program. A children's Bible was presented to many of the young people. The students also sang songs that they had learned in Vacation Bible School over the summer. The morning was capped off with a picnic on the front lawn of the church attended by both First Reformed and First Haitian Churches. It was a happy day of shared worship and celebration.

The Fall program focused on Daniel's Adventures. Skip Russell and Paul Wanamaker took turns playing the role of Daniel and the students learned about Daniel's faithfulness to the one true God in a country

that followed many false gods. The students ate carrots as they thought about Daniel and his friends eating only vegetables in Babylon where the meat had been sacrificed to idols. Hand warmers were held as we thought about Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego being thrown into the fiery furnace. Students heard the roar of lions and watched as Daniel was taken away in chains to be thrown into the lions' den and then everyone celebrated when Daniel ended the night unharmed. The students received Bible Memory Makers as they learned the key Bible verses focused on God's presence in times of change, loneliness and fear.



Christmas Pageant News

Margie Jennings has spearheaded the plans for the upcoming **Christmas Pageant on December 16th at 5:00 p.m.** Many volunteers are needed to help with scenery, costumes, make-up and refreshments. It is a great

time to share in the wonder of Jesus Birth. Take a look at the following schedule to see where you might help.

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE is as follows:

- Saturday, 12/8—1:30-5pm all roles except Cherubs & Choir
- Sunday, 12/9—10:30-11:30am Sunday School practice time
- Monday, 12/10—7pm Scenery set up TENTATIVE DATE—**Volunteers Needed**
- Thursday, 12/13—11am Lights set up TENTATIVE DATE—**Volunteers Needed**
- Saturday, 12/15— 1:30-5pm Dress Rehearsal in costumes-All Roles
- Sunday, Dec 12/16—10:30-11:30 Sunday School brush up rehearsal
- Sunday, 12/18—3pm make-up & costume time
- **Sunday, 12/16—5pm Christmas Pageant Performance**

Make-up Call—Extra Help Needed for Costumes & Make-up

2:30pm Make-up, costume and props committees

3pm Kings, Innkeeper, Joseph, Mary, King Herod

4pm Cherubs, Musicians, Narrators, and Choir

Ushers



Parents: Please send lipstick, lip liner, and eyeliner with young person



**The First Reformed Church
of Nyack**



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Rev. Bill Doster, Interim Pastor
Pastor's study: 201-501-8951

We're on the web!
Check us out at
www.nyackreformed.org

The Pastoral Search Committee Narrows Down Search



We have narrowed our search down to two candidates. The Committee will have heard both candidates preach and interviewed both of them by mid-December. We plan to make our recommendation to the Consistory at that time.

Please continue to keep the Committee, this process, and our future pastor in

your prayers.

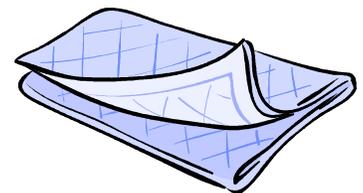
Margie Jennings, MSOL
Chairperson, Pastoral Search Committee



Soup Angels in Need of More Blankets



SOS- Soup Angels is in **need of more new blankets to give out to our guests**. We gave out all that we had during and after the "Sandy" storm. If members of the congregation can assist with this we would be grateful. Soup Angels is not able to give out blankets on a needs basis without having enough for each and every guest (which is not possible). However if it would be possible to have an emergency fund available through the First Reformed Church, Soup Angels would be able to get help to individuals when needed.



Calendar of Upcoming Events: Don't Miss Out!

December 4, 10:30am: Our Communion Worship Service

December 5, 7pm: Consistory monthly meeting

December 8, 1:30-5pm: Pageant Rehearsal (except for Cherubs & Choir)

December 15, 1:30-5pm: Pageant Full Dress Rehearsal

December 16, 5pm: The Annual Christmas Pageant

December 23, 10:30am: Worship Service and Jesus' birthday party in Sunday School

December 24, 8pm: Carol and Candlelight Service