



First Reformed Church of Nyack

Nyack's Hometown Church
Celebrating 175 years of
service

June 2013

Pastoral Reflections

As most of you know, I struggled with Bronchitis these past few months. What a drag!

I learned to appreciate my breathing even more. At times it was labored. And between the coughing fits, nasal congestion, and the sensation of my trachea closing, there were moments that were – to be honest – frightening. Two trips to the ER, chest-X-rays, CT scan, antibiotics, steroids, inhalers, and many naps later, I'm feeling better.

This has made me deeply empathize with those who struggle with respiratory illness. And I can't deny that the anxiety of experiencing not being able to breathe well lingers a bit. What if this happens again?

There were moments when I was told that everything that could be done was done. I just needed to "wait it out."

Enter God.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. (2 Corinthians 4:16)

Initially, I prayed for healing. Eventually, I prayed for peace. Ultimately, I placed my trust in God.

My body is wasting away. All our bodies are. And while we should certainly take care of our physical well-being, let us not neglect our spiritual health as well.

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. (2 Corinthians 4:17)

I wouldn't necessarily say not being able to breathe is a, "light and momentary trouble," but what did I learn about myself during this time?

I learned that I'm not as young as I used to be. (No kidding Fred?) That I must embrace my middle-agedness and take better care of myself. (Really Fred?) But most importantly, that my journey is more than half over, and that I should more intentionally and more consciously focus on the things of God.

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:18)

My breathing is a gift from God, on loan. It was given to me at birth and it will be returned at death. So right now, I give thanks for the moment.

This is my invitation to you a well. Be conscious of your breathing. Give thanks for this moment. Give thanks for life.

—Pastor Fred





Adult Spirituality



By Deacon Skip Russell

Today is Memorial Day. It was a day filled with God's love as we honored those who served and sacrificed their lives for our freedom. It was a beautiful day to march or cheer from the sidewalks. The ceremony at Memorial Park was well attended. The American Spirit is Alive.

Pastor Fred passed around a survey some weeks ago to see where our interests lie in going forward. Many people said they are interested in before or after church Adult Sunday School and Bible Study. We need a few team leaders to get this going. Our Wednesday Bible Study Group continues to study the Book of Mark. The Women's Bible Study, led by Bonnie Williams, is looking closely at Ephesians

chapter one. It has brought about many discussions as to how we live and share in our faith. All Good Stuff.

Fred's message this past Sunday suggested that less can be more in our relationship with God. Don't over burden yourself so that you don't have time to be with Him in spirit and prayer. I am going to support and reinforce that on June 2nd when I bear witness to how finding time for prayer has helped to bring me to where I am now in my faith.

This past Sunday Fred, Jill and their family got their first look at their new home, the Manse. Everyone was excited as they walked floor to floor thinking about paint colors and furniture arrangement. We took a moment to ask God's blessings for this home. Paul and his crew will be arranging all the details in sprucing up the house and yard. So much to look forward to.

SOUP ANGELS NEWS

In the month of June, Soup Angels will be participating in a screening of "A Place at the Table" at the Nyack Center on June 12 at 8pm. The film, sponsored by Rivertown Film, examines the fact that there are 50 million Americans, one in every four children, who do not know where their next meal is coming from. *Variety* magazine says that the documentary, written and directed by Kristi Jacobson and Lori Silverbush "shows us how hunger poses serious economic, social and cultural implications for our nation, and that it could be solved once and for all if the American public decides —as they have in the past —that making healthy food available and affordable is in the best interest of us all."

There will be a Q and A session with the directors, moderated by Food writer Liz Johnson from *The Journal News* as well as brief descriptions by local food organizations of how they are addressing needs in our community. "This film offers an opportunity to both examine the growing food crisis in this country and to galvanize support for the essential work of invaluable organizations such as Soup Angels," say the Rivertown organizers.





SUNDAY SCHOOL

SAVE THE DATE! JUNE 9TH CHILDREN'S DAY AND PICNIC

Have you noticed Jim Rensink sneaking out of the worship service for a little while and then slipping back when it is time to play the hymn? Have you seen young people practicing being Bible characters during coffee hour? Don't be alarmed! During the month of May the Sunday School students have been busy getting ready for **Children's Day on June 9th**. Jim Rensink has been doing double duty by coming back to the classroom in order to help the students practice singing during Sunday School. On June 9th the young people will lead the service.

They will be reading the scripture lessons, presenting two skits, singing, and playing instruments. The Children's Day service will be a joint worship program shared by The First Reformed and The First Haitian Churches and will culminate in a picnic. Come share the joy and contact Terri Wanamaker about what you will be bringing to the picnic.

Also watch for news about the upcoming Vacation Bible School week!



We congratulate 4 outstanding young women graduating from 8th Grade:

Destiny Bossa

Elyse Graham

Caileigh Travers

Kristen White





Welcome to our New Church Members Received Sunday, May 19, 2013

BARBARA RICKETTS

Where do you live? Upper Nyack, New York.

What's your line of work? Higher Education Teacher

Where are you from? Jamaica, West Indies.

How did you discover First Reformed Church? My daughter and I were out one Sunday morning and walked into First Reformed. Carol Russell and her husband, Skip Russell, were preparing for the 10:30 am service and they greeted us with open arms and invited us to stay.

What is it about First Reformed Church that you like? In addition to their dedication to Christian education for people of all ages, I like the collective style of worship and devotion through prayers, hymns and listening to the messages from the Bible.

In what area of ministry might volunteer? Music, Women and Youth Ministries.

How is God made real to you? God is love. He is made real to me through his love and guidance. I have witnessed miracles, things that can never be just luck. The greatest proof of all is that God answers my prayers and guides me to a path of righteousness.

What is something unique about you that people may not know? I have climbed the Great Wall of China.

What are some of your hobbies? Sightseeing, traveling, singing, dancing, listening to music and socializing with friends.

What's your favorite scripture passage? Proverbs 3:5-6



JILL M. JOHNSON

Where do you live? Nyack

What's your line of work? Administrative Assistant at Nyack College

Where are you from? Levittown, Long Island

How did you discover First Reformed Church? During my husband's pastoral search interview process.

What is it about First Reformed Church that you like? The great feeling of community at the church.

In what area of ministry might volunteer? Hospitality.

How is God made real to you? Through prayer and through the worship with the church community.

What is something unique about you that people may not know? I have two adult children.

What are some of your hobbies? Reading and cooking.

What's your favorite scripture passage? Luke 1:39-45, 56

KRISTEN WHITE

Where do you live? Upper Nyack, New York.

Where do you go to school? I'm an 8th grader at Nyack Middle School.

Where are you from? I am of Jamaican descent, born and raised in South Florida.

How did you discover First Reformed Church? My mom and I discovered First Reformed Church when we were out one Sunday looking for a church to attend. We saw First Reformed Church and walked inside. Skip and Carol Russell invited us to stay for the Sunday service.

What is it about First Reformed Church that you like? The hospitality and warmth of the church members.

In what area of ministry might volunteer? Music and Youth Ministries.

How is God made real to you? God is made real to me through his constant presence in my life, especially when I need guidance.

What is something unique about you that people may not know? I speak Mandarin Chinese.

What are some of your hobbies? Traveling, Reading, Writing, Singing and Dancing.

What is your favorite scripture passage? Philippians 4:13



rca today

SELECTED ARTICLES

QUESTIONS OF FAITH

How can I encourage a friend who has left the faith?

My best advice is to stay in relationship with your friend, and do not bring up issues of faith unless and until he or she does. For the time being, take your cues from your friend. Engage him or her in conversation about all the things in life and in the world that you love or that concern you – organic gardening, the books you are reading, yoga, hiking, his children, her work, music, the concert you attended, school, the NFL, or whatever it is! In other words, pursue a friendship that does not necessarily have a certain end in mind.

One of my favorite sayings is that “people are not problems to be solved, but mysteries to be encountered.” People are not projects, and you have to trust that God's Spirit has been and will continue to work in their lives before and after you. People also can sniff out if you are in relationship with them because you want or expect a certain outcome (in your case, that they will come back to the faith.) So just be their friend.

All this does not preclude also praying for your friend. Guard, however, from praying for your friend's faith to come back in a certain way. Pray instead that God's Spirit would comfort, lead, guard, and guide her. Be open to the fact that the journey he is on may not go the way that you want or expect, but that God's love and care for your friend is greater than yours.

Sophie Mathonnet-VanderWell is co-pastor of Second Reformed Church in Pella, Iowa.

<https://www.rca.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=9035>

Worship Service Lectionary Readers & Coffee Hour Schedule

Lectionary Readers Schedule

June 2: Terri Wanamaker

June 9: Children lead the service

June 16: Confirmands

June 23: Margie Jennings

June 30: Skip Russell



Coffee Hour Hosts

June 2: The Wanamakers

June 9: Picnic following the service

June 16: Light luncheon

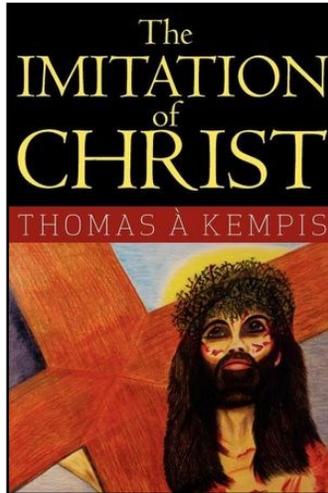
June 23: The Jennings

June 30: The Russells





BOOK OF THE MONTH



“For five hundred years, this gentle book, filled with the spirit of the love of God, has brought understanding and comfort to millions of readers in over fifty languages, and provided them with a source of heart-felt personal prayer. These meditations on the life and teachings of Jesus, written in times even more troubled and dangerous than our own, have become second only to the Bible as a guide and inspiration.”

Christian Classics Ethereal Library

For free pdf copy: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/kempis/imitation.pdf>

Preaching Schedule



June 2013

June 2	Deacon Skip Russell	June 30	Pastor Fred
June 9	Children’s Day—service lead by the children		
June 16	Pastor Fred		
June 23	Pastor Fred		



THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM



The Heidelberg Catechism is a confessional document in the form of 129 questions and answers. It is a simple, concise, and thoughtful summary of the major teachings of Holy Scripture as understood in the Reformed tradition. We will present teachings from the catechism each month as a helpful resource to encourage deeper spiritual reflection and theological thought.

Q. What is your only comfort in life and death?

A. That I am not my own,¹
 but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death,²
 to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.³
 He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood,⁴
 and has set me free from all the power of the devil.⁵
 He also preserves me in such a way⁶
 that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head;⁷
 indeed, all things must work together for my salvation.⁸ Therefore, by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life⁹
 and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him.¹⁰

¹ 1 Cor 6:19, 20.

² Rom 14:7-9.

³ 1 Cor 3:23; Tit 2:14.

⁴ 1 Pet 1:18, 19; 1 Jn 1:7; 2:2.

⁵ Jn 8:34-36; Heb 2:14, 15; 1 Jn 3:8.

⁶ Jn 6:39, 40; 10:27-30; 2 Thess 3:3; 1 Pet 1:5.

⁷ Mt 10:29-31; Lk 21:16-18.

⁸ Rom 8:28.

⁹ Rom 8:15, 16; 2 Cor 1:21, 22; 5:5; Eph 1:13, 14.

¹⁰ Rom 8:14.

Q. What do you need to know in order to live and die in the joy of this comfort?

A. First, how great my sins and misery are;¹
 second, how I am delivered from all my sins and misery;²
 third, how I am to be thankful to God
 for such deliverance.³

¹ Rom 3:9, 10; 1 Jn 1:10.

² Jn 17:3; Acts 4:12; 10:43.

³ Mt 5:16; Rom 6:13; Eph 5:8-10; 1 Pet 2:9, 10.

For more information: www.heidelberg-catechism.com



Nyack's Hometown Church

First Reformed Church of Nyack

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6:00pm–9:00pm Wednesday

12:00am–5:00pm Friday

12:00pm–3:00pm Sunday

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Music Director

James Rensink

Children's Sunday School Coordinator

Bonnie Williams

CONSISTORY

Elders

Jon Biavati (Clerk)

Bruce Biavati

Alan Cann

Chuck Travers (Vice President)

Deacons

Kevin Graham

Katherine Rife

Skip Russell

Paul Wanamaker

*Affiliated with
The Reformed Church in America*



Calendar of Upcoming Events: Don't Miss Out!

Sunday, June 9, 10:30am: Children's Day. Join us for this special service following by a picnic on the front lawn, weather permitting.

Sunday, June 16, 10:30am: Confirmation Sunday. Join us as Cailleigh Travers and Elise Graham are confirmed.

Monday, June 24: July Newsletter submission deadline. You can send your submission to the church office via email: frchurch@optonline.net.

Sunday, September 15: Save the date for Homecoming.

Sunday, October 20: Save the date for our 175th anniversary celebration.

June Birthdays

June 8: Brian Jennings

