

New Beginnings

The First Reformed
Church of Nyack

Lenten Edition
March 15, 2013

Pastoral Reflections—A New Season

Heraclitus famously stated, “No man ever steps in the same river twice.” In *Ecclesiastes*, we read, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens (3:1).”

Change is not only inevitable, but perpetual, a constant friend. This is a new season for our church – and for me. As the life and mission of The First Reformed Church of Nyack continues to move forward, the start of a new pastorate is always a significant and exciting milestone in its history.

From the very beginning of the pastoral search process, I could sense the energy of the people ready for a new season. Like a veteran ship captain, Rev. Bill Doster had masterfully guided the congregation during the interim process. Also, to proceed after Rev. Thomas Danney, who faithfully served for 22 years with this congregation, is certainly a tough act to follow. Rev. Doster and Rev. Danney are dear colleagues, and I am grateful for their support.

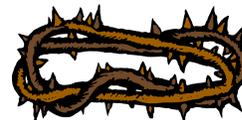
I wish to thank the pastoral search committee for their initial affirmations. And to the consistory for their commitment to make First Reformed my church home. The consistory continues to provide me with sage advice. And, of course, “Thank You,” to the congregation for your hospitality, warm embrace, and, for voting “yea” on my acceptance.

A word of appreciation also to my mentor, colleague and friend, Dr. Robert Williams, Pastor of the United Church of Spring Valley. I’ve lost count at the number of times I’ve thanked him for the deposits he’s made in my life – personally, spiritually, and pastorally. And to the United Church Consistory. Without them taking me under care, and without their support for my pastoral formation, none of this would have occurred.

Also, this is the season of Lent, a time when we more intentionally reflect on our sinfulness, but, I hope, when we even more reflect on our forgiveness. Life is difficult enough. Never forget the love God has for you. As Christians, we carry our own crosses and join Christ on the way to Golgatha. Our hope is in the resurrection, but let us not too quickly neglect to examine our conscience and weaknesses. What do we need to change in our lives? From what do I need to repent?

Ecclesiastes also states that there is “a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.” This sounds like Lent to me. This sounds like church to me. Let us weep and laugh and mourn and dance together. I pray a blessed Lent for all of us.

Dr. Fernando Arzola Jr.



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Sunday School Observes Lent—Bonnie Williams

Beginning with Mardi Gras and donuts and kings crown necklaces the Sunday School students prepared for Lent. Over the next 40 days the students will be looking at their Lenten calendars which contain something special to do each day. Those that are using the calendar have read Psalm 91:1-2 and discussed prayer with their parents. They also read Psalm 46:10 and thought about being still and knowing God. They prayed for Pastor Arzola as he joined our church and next week will count the number of pillows at home and pray for all those who do not have a home.



Students who have checked off most of the activities will receive a little hard hat keychain representing our adventure in spelunking through the Bible. If students have not yet begun the activity they can back track and do the activities now.



We continue to study the Bible verses in the lectionary each week so that parents and students can share their Bible experiences. On transfiguration Sunday we shared our mountaintop experiences, and last week we thought about Jesus loving us like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

We are looking forward to Journey to Jerusalem on March 10th when we will share the journey with the adult congregation. Steve and Gini Borton, our talented professional actors, will again lead the experience. **On Easter** we will worship with the adult congregation and have **an Easter Egg Hunt on the front lawn**. Don't forget to bring a hard-boiled egg on the **Sunday after Easter for egg bopping** (Christ is Risen, Risen Indeed) and bagels.



Annual Souper Bowl of Caring— a Delicious Success

Our annual Souper Bowl of Caring was held on Super Bowl Sunday, February 3 and it was a delicious and happy event for all. The congregation cooked up many varied and delicious soups, from chili, bean and vegetable varieties to a more exotic spicy Bahamian chicken soup, as well as salad and dessert, of course! The event also provided exercise as we kept going back for more! We enjoyed great conversation and wonderful food. Most importantly, we all brought canned and boxed food for People to People. Food contributions were wrapped in bills and we were able to contribute 74 pounds of food worth about \$185 as well as \$60 to be used by People to People to purchase food needed by the community. We are thankful to have been blessed with a time of sharing and caring, and appreciate all who participated.

—Carol Russell



Soup Angels celebrates 6 years of feeding our community

Soup Angels is celebrating our sixth anniversary in the month of March. From the 3 people who came to our first meal we now serve more than 200 portions of food a week. Recently we added take home bags of fresh fruit and snacks on Monday to complement the take home lunches we offer on Wednesdays. We have more than 300 active volunteers who assist with serving the meals (16 teams), cooking, shopping, getting donations and doing special projects. Two of our founders remain affiliated with Soup Angels, Katie Berry and Kathie Rife. We ask for your blessings as we embark upon our 7th year and continue our mission of offering "healthy, freshly prepared meals to anyone who needs a meal in the Nyack area, no questions asked".

A Note From Our Worship Director



We are off to a wonderful start with our new Pastor Fred. I couldn't be more pleased with his enthusiasm for the importance of sacred music. At his behest, we will learn new hymns in a different way, make a special place for guest artists (Barbara Allen, world renowned harpist joined us Mar. 3), and continue to revitalize our choir. I am truly excited about not only our Sacred music, but the new direction our church is going. Make a Joyful Noise!

—Ol' Jim

**The First Reformed Church
of Nyack**



P.O. Box 565
Nyack, NY 10960
Phone: 845-358-5518
Fax: 845-358-7343
Email:
frchurch@optonline.net

Dr. Fernando Arzola Jr., Pastor

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

Easter Lilies to honor and remember our loved ones



Every Easter season we have fragrant Easter lilies decorating our sanctuary in memory or honor of our loved ones. If you haven't place your memorial request, you may still do so until Monday, March 25th. The suggested donation is \$20 per plant. You can call the church office (845-358-5518) or email your request to frchurch@optonline.net and mail in your donation. Please be sure to include who the flowers are in memory or honor of as well as your name.



Calendar of Upcoming Events: Don't Miss Out!

- Wednesday, March 13, 6:30-7:30pm:** *Reflecting on the Lenten Journey: A Lenten Bible Study* focuses on the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector from Luke 18:9-14. The Bible study meets in the choir room above the Pitkin Room.
- Sunday, March 17, 9:30am:** St. Patrick's Day Breakfast. See Carolyn Travers, Jean Rensink, or Al Cann to sign up to bring something.
- Wednesday, March 20, 6:30-7:30pm:** *Reflecting on the Lenten Journey: A Lenten Bible Study* focuses on the Last Judgment from Matthew 25:31-46. The Bible study meets in the choir room above the Pitkin Room.
- Sunday, March 24, 10:30am:** Palm Sunday worship service.
- Monday, March 25:** Easter Memorial Flowers order form due in church office.
- Thursday, March 28, 7pm:** Maundy Thursday service in Lounge.
- Friday, March 29, 7:30pm:** Good Friday service at United Church of Spring Valley, 11 East Church Street, Spring Valley, NY 10977. Check out their website for more info: www.unitedchurchofspringvalley.org.
- Sunday, March 31, 7am:** Easter Sunrise Service. Location to be determined. Contact the church office for more info.
- Sunday, March 31, 10:30am:** Easter Sunday worship service and annual Easter egg hunt for the children.
- Sunday, April 7:** Annual Egg bopping contest and refreshments following the worship service.
- Saturday, April 13:** Save the date for the church spring cleaning day
- Sunday, April 21:** Luncheon following the worship service to celebrate our 175th anniversary