

Let's name our newsletter!

The First Reformed Church

Kathie Rife, General Editor

November 21, 2011

Thanksgiving Food For Thought

My "stream of consciousness" turns to reflections about thanksgiving—some feelings, images, thoughts.

The change of seasons— this puts me in touch with many moods, both light and dark, exuberant and pensive.

Thank God for them all. On bright color-filled days I see more of the world about me; on rain-soaked nights, I'm pulled inward to reflect on deep realities. The seasons offer perspective on balance and movement.

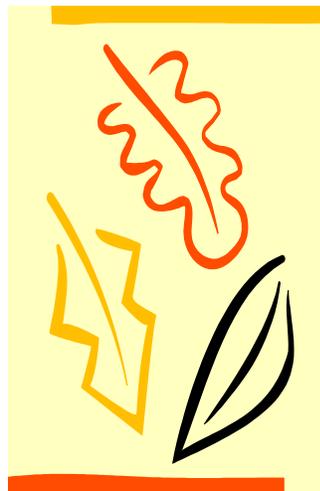
A cup of coffee with friends—we're not meant to live alone. There is a taste and aroma and a refreshment that comes upon friendships.

Preparing for worship—that words written so long ago should begin to come alive and challenge, comfort, probe, test, thrill, enlighten, nourish, relax: this is a miracle that occurs anew each week!

What are some common, day-by-day events for which you give thanks in your journey? And what are some of the big ones?

Thankfully,

Pastor Bill



Consistory Notes--

Members of the consistory have found that spending the summer reading *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith* by Diana Bass has begun to transform the way we look at ourselves and how we communicate with one another. Each week we have examined in the worship service various aspects of our faith community, using Ms. Bass' outline in order to re-evaluate our priorities, our shared beliefs and our vision for the future of this church here in Nyack.

We invite all members of the congregation to read this book. There are a few extra copies available so please see a consistory deacon or elder if you would like to borrow a copy. As we delve deeper during the Sunday after church meetings into what changes congregations can make that provide the impetus to flourish in the early 21st century, we find ourselves refreshed by the chance to see ourselves differently and get to know one another better.

As we set out on this journey of discovery we look forward with anticipation to asking questions and seeking, if not answers, then new ways of examining old questions.

—Kathie Rife

Second Helpings for Soup Angels

Soup Angels will soon enter its 6th year of offering healthy, home-cooked (at the church!) meals to anyone who needs a meal, no questions asked, in our Nyack area. We serve Wednesday evenings from 5:30-6:30pm and have been serving 120 portions of food at each meal.

As the strains of our current economy take their toll on working families, the elderly, teens, veterans, the disabled and recent immigrants in our Nyack community, Soup Angels has decided to offer a second meal on Monday nights from 5:30-6:30pm starting in January. Soup Angels welcomes additional volunteers for the 8 new teams who will serve a healthy, hearty sandwich and salad each week to anyone who needs a meal in our community, no questions asked. To volunteer or find out more about Soup Angels, email us at soupangels@gmail.com or find us on the web at www.soupangels.com. Soup Angels thanks First Reformed Church and its congregation for their on-going support. For further information, contact or speak to Kathie Rife.

Reflections on the Season of Advent

As we come to the season of Advent, I will share some Biblical perceptions which may be helpful.

Advent begins the last Sunday of November. We invite you to come and celebrate!

Sometimes symbols that once surprised us grow weak. The light of one lone candle gets smothered by the “December frenzy syndrome.” Add the abuse of power—family problems—poor nations locked in mortal combat: the candle flickers.

Advent—a time to see reality and possibility with new eyes. Hear and believe the prophet Isaiah:

“GOD shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation...”

In Advent, the faithful envision signs of healing.

Thus, at Advent’s advent we light the first candle, proclaiming that God would have peace on earth, in the river towns and villages along the Hudson, in each of us. To envision peace is to see by God’s candlelight. To turn that possibility into reality is to walk by the light of that candle. The darkness will not put it out!

Join the adventure and be blessed!

—Bill Doster



Church Milestones

New Members—Congratulations to Margie and Brian Jennings upon their assuming membership in our congregation Sunday, November 13th. Welcome to our church family, Jennings family! We ask God’s blessings upon them both.

Baptism— Elizabeth Christine Lowing was baptized on Sunday, November 13th. The congregation welcomed back Pastor Tom Danney to perform the sacrament. Proud parents are Samantha Lee and Chris

Lowing and grandparents EJ and Duncan Lee. Everyone enjoyed a celebratory gathering after the service.



Operation Christmas Child

Thanks to Terri for organizing the project and providing the following report:

We collected 46 boxes, with a little more than half of that coming from our congregation and half from the Girl Scouts. I will be delivering them over to Grace church by Wednesday. Our congregation is very giving and I know those children will love every little thing we put in the boxes.

—Terri Wanamaker



Sunday School News—Students Recently Experienced Jonah’s “big fish”

This fall Sunday School has been using the *Panda-Mania* curriculum where *God is Wild About You*. You might have seen Skip Russell and his partner in crime, Jim Rensink, using a “Panda Launcher” to send 3 toy pandas carrying Bible verses from Genesis into the congregation for the Children’s Message. The picture here shows Sunday School students coming out of the big fish as we tried to imagine what Jonah felt like when he was swallowed. Through the excitement and games we have read the first chapters of Genesis, the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal, and the book of Jonah. We memorized Bible verses from Psalm 139 that reinforced the messages—God made us—God listens to us—God watches over us. In November we will “go into hiding” as we learn first hand about Jesus’ death and resurrection, pack up Operation Christmas Child boxes and think about the many blessings we receive from God.

—Bonnie Williams



Christmas Pageant News

With the approach of Advent we begin preparation for the Christmas Pageant. As in previous years, we invite children outside our congregation to join us in reliving the account of Jesus’ birth. *Do you know a child who would benefit from being part of our beautiful Pageant? Please let Bonnie Williams or Margie Jennings know if we should include someone you know.* Casting will be announced early in December and the

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE is as follows:

- Saturday, 12/10—1:30-5pm all roles except Cherubs
- Sunday, 12/11—10:30-11:30am Sunday School practice time
- Saturday, 12/17— 1:30-5pm Dress Rehearsal-All Roles
- Sunday, Dec 12/18—10:30-11:30 Sunday School practice time
- Sunday, 12/18—3pm make-up & costume time
- **Sunday, 12/18—5pm Christmas Pageant Performance**

If you haven’t attended the pageant recently, don’t pass up the opportunity to come and bring a guest. It is a wonderful moment in time to keep Christ in Christmas. Come and relive what the shepherds experienced on the hillside outside Bethlehem and see the humble stable and the visit of the magi.

—Bonnie Williams

Pageant Rehearsal dates:

12/10 1:30-5pm
 12/11 10:30-11:30am
 12/17 1:30-5pm
 12/18 10:30-11:30am
 12/18 3pm make-up
 & costume time
**12/18 5pm
 Performance**



The First Reformed Church



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

If you are receiving this newsletter via postal mail and would like to receive it via email, you can email the church office at frchurch@optonline.net or call the office and let us know.

Can You Hear Me Now?

A number of church attendees have pointed out that it is often difficult to hear what is being said in church. The congregation often misses out on hearing what the pastor, readers and children are saying.

Want to help? We have set up a special emergency fund for the purchase or repair of the audio equipment. Please place donations in the plate or mail them to the church. Make checks out to The First Reformed Church and include a note indicating it is for audio equipment.

Calendar of Upcoming Events: Don't Miss Out!

November 22 at 8pm: Nyack's Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at Temple Beth Torah, 330 N. Highland Ave (Rt 9W), Upper Nyack.

November 23, 4-7pm: Soup Angels Thanksgiving Meal

December 2, 7:30pm: ArtsRock will be presenting the NY Philharmonic Brass consisting of the principals of the NY Philharmonic here at the church. For tickets or more info check out www.artsrock.org or by calling 1-866-811-4111.

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

December 7, 7pm: Consistory monthly meeting

December 18, 5pm: The Annual Christmas Pageant

December 22, 6pm: An early evening Christmas cabaret featuring young professionals from our congregation and the area in the Pitkin Room. They will perform popular Christmas/seasonal music and favorite carols. Light refreshments will be served. For information on tickets call the church office (845-358-5518) or Jim Rensink (845-782-6253).

December 24, 8pm: Carol and Candlelight Service