



First Reformed Church of Nyack

Nyack's Hometown Church
Celebrating 187 years of
service

Summer 2023

Pastoral Reflections

A mockingbird was screeching at me and darting through the branches above my head, defending her unseen nest, as I sank my spade in the turf. I was lifting a square of sod and digging a little grave for Dubby, a dove who lived in an improvised aviary in the parsonage for twenty years.

Dubby came to be a companion for Birdyboy, a rehabbed but damaged homing pigeon who showed up in the churchyard, lost and sick, on September 11, 2001. From the moment the ring-necked dove was set next to the rock dove, the two of them bobbed and cooed and bonded. Almost immediately they both began laying eggs, revealing Birdyboy's gender and showing their complete contentment. When Birdy fell ill and expired exactly fourteen years after her arrival, I thought Dubby would probably not live more than a year or two.

But she lived 7 1/2 years, and seemed content with her daily life of feeding, flying, perching, preening. She sang every morning, and if I sang while washing dishes at the kitchen sink, she would often add her voice. Whenever I would open the door she would fly eagerly to land on my finger, have her breast stroked, and be fed tiny pieces of cheese. No one could possibly know her and not feel that her nature was entirely sweet. Doves are symbols of peace for good reason.

Today is not the first time I've contemplated what is the very real connection that forms between people and their animal friends, although it may be a tad more surprising between mammal and bird—we are so different. What is the vibration-like thing that thrums when we hold them? What happens in us, and perhaps in them, that now brings heaviness to my chest and tightens my throat as I lay her in the ground? What can it be but love?

I think we are all aware that sometimes it's easier to love animals than the people around us. Our "pets" are unconditional in their attachment. They do not talk back, argue, or double-cross. And we can choose to stick with the doves, never dealing with the noisy crows, the aggressive sparrows, the thieving blue jays. Our "pets" do not bring egos into our relationships that impinge on our own egotism.

And yet, underneath our rough exteriors and bad attitudes, all the ways we humans annoy and bother one another, there is also in us a sweet and simple spirit waiting to be discovered. That is why in times of trial, in the battlefield foxhole, the cancer ward, the tornado shelter, people's guards drop away and they experience, to their surprise, inexplicable depths of love and compassion for each other.

This is a beautiful and challenging part of being Church together. We gather as very different persons who might not choose each other as friends out in the world, but in this fellowship try to let go of our differences and our friction, and see each other as simple spirits, children of God, made in God's image. We discover and uncover love in each other. Personally, I don't find it easy to do, but by God's grace it happens.

So I thank God today for Dubby, for her sweet spirit and her simple love. She taught me.

~Pastor John



First Reformed Church of Nyack

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(Treasurer)
Katherine Rife
Carolyn Travers
Arlene Keiser (Clerk)

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Sunday School



For the past few months the youngsters have been using several different Vacation Bible School materials. This month the focus was on "God's Wonder Lab," In this picture of Brenden and Alexander they are working to have a paperclip float on the top of water. The various experiments illustrate the wonder of God's creation and then take a closer look at the miracles of Jesus.

We also are preparing at home and in Sunday School for Father's/Children's Day on June 18th . A small play and also songs played by Jim Rensink are the focus of the practicing.

Throughout May, Janice Young has been doing a wonderful job filling in for me as my husband, Harmon, recovers from a fall. The greeting card signed by almost everyone in church has been a real source of comfort . Thank you everyone!

~Bonnie Williams



Palm Sunday, Easter and Egg Bopping fun! Bopping winners are Don and Brendan. Congratulations!!





Music

How I love this time of year...starting with Easter- a time of hope and renewal, then the tempestuous weather of spring. Today is a DANDY. I'm sitting in MY chair (don't we all have one?!?), where I can look to my right into the living room, where my best friends Ginger (our single remaining Husky) and Steinway are resting comfortably next to each other. Looking left, I can see through the dining room, over the deck, then the pool, and just beyond, Walton Lake. Talk about a BLESSED guy! Of course the pool (those of you that have been up here will remember the only thing bigger is my ego) is A LOT of work!

Easter was a JOY- the sunrise service is as good as it gets! So bright this year, we had to change angles to be able to look at each other. The church service was especially inspired this year by Pastor John, and guest artists Sachi Ikuma (harp), and her mom, Sharon Yamada of the Phil. Sachi, only 17, recently graduated Juilliard, and played Panis Angelicus and the Bach/Gounod Ave Maria with all the beauty and musicianship her mom did on the violin. How I love the way these artists are welcomed into our church by the congregants! You always receive them with such love and warmth! It's so rare that they don't comment on how much a part of our church you make them feel— a million thanks.

Soon the summer months, where we share our services with pals from Piermont. Can't wait!

~Jim Rensink



Beautiful music during our worship service: Special thanks to Sharon Yamada and Sachi Ikuma for coming and sharing their incredible talents, and to Arlene, Skip, and Jill (and Pastor, of course) for lending theirs!



Calendar

June 18— Father's Day , Children's Day & Honor Graduates

June 25— Pot Luck Luncheon -Bring a dish to share. Talk to or email Carolyn Travers camtravers@att.net

July 9—Nyack Street Fair

July: We meet at Piermont Reformed Church. No coffee hour detail.

August: We're back at FRC, including Labor Day weekend. Contact Carolyn if you can help with coffee hour.



Community News



Happy Mother's Day/Ladies Day to all the women in our church.



Bruce Cameron (US Army, Korean War) as Grand Marshall of the Nyack Memorial Day parade on 5/29. Bruce will be 92 years young on June 7.



CONGRATULATIONS

Caileigh Travers (US Navy) is engaged to Steve Springer (US Marine Corps).