

MRC NEWS

Middleburgh Reformed Church

A SEASON OF JOY

As we look to celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus, let us join hands of joy in our Sanctuary, December 2, 2012. From all of us at the Middleburgh Reformed Church, we wish you a very
MERRY CHRISTMAS!



DECEMBER 2 A RETURN TO THE SANCTUARY

The Sanctuary Committee met on Tuesday November 20, to continue finishing work on the Sanctuary, which tentatively will reopen to worshippers on December 2. Work is quickly finishing for a return to this area, after being closed since the August 2011 effects of Hurricane Irene. The committee was updated on completions of lighting, heating and a new sound system. The committee continues its search for pews with some leads on pews that will both be comfortable for worshippers and also compliment the interior. Until then, we will temporarily use chairs. Other furniture needs being addressed include pieces for the front presentation area. The **communion table**, the main focal point of the sanctuary, reminding us of our communion with Christ in the sanctuary, will be a keepsake for the congregation, as it is being constructed from the original chestnut flooring of our 1786 building. Its style will be reminiscent of this 1786 time period. And the last area for our attention – the balcony, soon to be open. We are thankful to God for guidance and encouragement during this process, and to all for gifts of time and resources supporting completion of our worship area.

Joan Youmans, Chairperson

Dates to Mark

- 12/2 **Advent** Begins; Advent activity after worship
- 12/9 Worship with **Communion**
- 12/14 Christmas Carol **Puppet Show** - 7 PM
- 12/16 Worship with **Sunday School Skit**
- 12/24 **Christmas Eve Service** - 7PM

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Jan. 19-20 **Youth for Christ Excel Conference**



ADVENT – from the Latin meaning coming  
*“a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas”*

# Another Bountiful Shoe Box Season at MRC

How many projects can successfully engage 2-year-olds through 95-year-olds? Not many, but **Operation Christmas Child** does just that at Middleburgh Reformed Church! Our whole congregation is involved in year 'round activities that culminate in shoe box gifts that will be distributed with a message of hope to children in need in over 100 countries.

This fall we participated in a number of OCC events. On Halloween afternoon, members of the youth group met to bag candy, bag hair accessories, make beaded bracelets, and make friendship bracelets. On Nov. 2, several of the "older set" gathered to assemble GO boxes and pre-pack school supplies and toiletries. Following worship on Nov. 4, the church family enjoyed lunch together followed by a packing party. We packed 250 shoe boxes, the most we have ever done at our packing party! The following Sunday was dedication Sunday when Pastor Jeff led us in a blessing over the boxes. We hosted a shoe box drop-off site during national collection week.

Thank you to everyone who has supported OCC in 2012. We look forward to your continued participation in this outreach to the world's hurting children. We ask for your prayers as we go into 2013. OCC will be celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as the one hundred millionth shoe box gift will be placed in a child's hands!

**Mary Lou Ryan**



*Nullam ac ipsum gravida*  
**A gift opens doors; it gives access to the great. Proverbs 18:16**

**GET READY and SAVE**  
toilet paper tubes  
Christmas cards with religious pics  
and  
shop sales for gifts



If you wish to contribute monetarily, or volunteer at the pantry please contact **Stan Roesler** or **Russ Ryan** for information.

Thank you to the Reformed Church for supplying a place for this needed mission.

## FOOD PANTRY Continues to Serve

The **Middleburgh Ecumenical Food Pantry** housed in our Fellowship Hall continues to serve people in Middleburgh who are in need. The month of September saw us help 21 households for a total of 89 people. The month of October saw 20 households for a total of 60 people.

Your support through food supplies, money and volunteer work at the pantry is greatly appreciated. We are able to keep the food pantry open every Wednesday from 4 to 6, and every Saturday from 9 to 11. Our clients are walk in and the volunteers supply them with food according to the number of people in the household.

Non perishable food items are always accepted. You may leave them by the door to the pantry. All help is appreciated.

## Musings About Christian Stewardship and Young People

*"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."*

— Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)

Recently, while searching for a definition of stewardship that young folks might relate to, I came across the following from the National Council of Churches United Stewardship Council:

*"Christian stewardship is the practice of systematic and proportionate giving of time, abilities, and material possessions, based upon the conviction that these are trusts from God to be used in his service for the benefit of all mankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love."*

This concise definition sums up Christian stewardship rather well, but it might take a bit of unpacking for it to be really useful and relevant for young people...

For further guidance, I turned to Robert Fulghum, the author of *"All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten"*. In his book, Fulghum reveals that "Most of what I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandpile at Sunday school." Fulghum then lists fourteen things he learned in kindergarten, the first one being: "Share everything."

A bit of browsing on the Internet, and I also discovered that with children, *"Generosity boils down to sharing."* These observations about sharing brought to mind the little cardboard



"Mite" boxes from the church of my childhood. Once a year, each Sunday school child was given a Mite box. The expectation was that we would make a cheerful sacrifice by filling them up with pennies. (This was in the days when a nickel would buy a Hershey bar!) Several weeks later, the Mite boxes would be collected in a special offering, and the money contributed would be given to a worthy cause.

Our gratitude is another aspect of stewardship. Lewis Smedes, a theologian and author, emphasizes the importance of teaching children to be grateful for God's many gifts in his *Days of Grace Through the Year*, saying:

*"I do not understand how people can be thankful for a gift if they have no person to thank for giving it to them. We teach our children to say thank-you to their grandmother for her birthday gift; why should we not teach them to say thank-you to God for the gift of their birth? Why should we not teach them that every new dawn of every new morning, every drop of rain, every budding tulip, every blade of grass – all of them are gifts with a Person attached."*

**Stan Roesler, Chairman Stewardship**



## The Return of the HAM SUPPER

Like a “well oiled machine”, the members and friends of the Middleburgh Reformed Church put on another successful Ham Supper on Saturday, Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>. In the aftermath of the “Flood of Hurricane Irene”, we decided to forego a supper in 2011 and concentrate our efforts on helping our friends and neighbors with the personal recovery of their homes and businesses.

The decision to continue with **the Ham Supper** for this year was an easy one for us. It has become an important part of our church life. We knew that there would be some extra expenses added to this year’s supper budget, as we needed to replace some items lost in the flood, but with faith we went ahead. We gratefully accepted the gift of some used tables from the Schoharie Presbyterian Church and we borrowed more from our own church members. We borrowed coffee pots and large trays from local Fire Departments and had a very successful “Kitchen Shower” to replace baskets, silverware, hot drink carafes and a rolling kitchen cart. I want to thank everyone who purchased or helped to obtain those items for us.

So, with a new table floor plan for our Fellowship Hall and many new friends to help, we served 565 dinners in 3 hours. With over 70 workers, who cooked, cleaned, sliced, scooped, served and washed, we were a happy crew as we went about our tasks. Many of our guests remarked at how they missed the supper last year and they were so glad that we were continuing the annual event. Our sanctuary was all lit up and, while still a work in progress, many guests were impressed with what they saw. Our efforts, first to rebuild and now to refinish our place of worship, did not go unnoticed. We should all be very proud of what we have done there, so far.

As this year’s Ham Supper Chairman, I would like to thank all those who donated food items for the supper. Thank you to Barber’s Farm for the squash and potatoes. Thank you to the potato bakers for supplying the butter and sour cream, and to the pie bakers for all those delicious pies!

you to all the committee Chairpersons who helped to get the workers organized and ready to bake or work. And to all those who showed up on Saturday with warm smiles and willing hands, a simple ‘thank you’ is never enough. We called. You came. That is what being a church family is all about. From set-up to cleanup, your time was much appreciated

And lastly, a warm thank you to our wonderful friends in the community who continue to support our Annual Ham Supper. We are all truly blessed to be living in an area where people come first and neighbors help neighbors.

Susan Pendergast, Ham Supper Chairperson



## FINANCE Committee

At the request of Consistory, a **Finance Committee** has been formed to assist the Deacons with the financial operations of the church. The committee includes the following members of the congregation

- Shawn Smith, Chair
- Karen Miller, Secretary
- Susan Pendergast
- Mary Lou Ryan
- Jim Spencer

The Committee met twice last month to begin work on budget reform, financial reporting guidelines, and investment portfolio review. Members of the Finance Committee also met with the Treasurer and Financial Secretary to gain a better understanding of their duties within the Church. The Committee will continue to gather financial information and will provide Consistory with clear, concise reports as to the status and progress of the Church’s finances, including income, expenses, and investments.

Shawn Smith, Chairman

## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

**Sunday School** resumed on September 9th. We were very excited to get back to "work" and we jumped right into a unit on The Art of Prayer. We then spent 4 weeks talking about service and the different ways we can be of service to God and others. During these weeks, we made special gifts for Operation Christmas Child boxes, prepared a skit and song for participation in worship and made the centerpieces for the Ham Supper. Now, we are ready to begin a unit called Snow Day where the kids will explore the events leading up to Jesus' birth and the beginning of his ministry.

We have as many as 15 regular attendees in Sunday School. We begin at 9:45 by using our DVDs to help us sing our awesome worship songs and we take our offering. After our worship, the lesson for the day is introduced and there is a large group activity. Then the kids split into two small groups, led by Kim Smith and Lara Kelley, to explore the lessons farther. Kim, Lara and I are really enjoying our Sunday mornings! The kids come with such great energy and a love of the Lord that is contagious.

Mark December 16th on your calendars...that's when the Sunday School kids will be participating in worship again with a Christmas message.

Thank you for supporting our Sunday School with your prayers and if you wish to be more involved please contact either Kim or myself. Your help is always appreciated.

**Sarah Bramer, Education Chairperson**



## FAMILY EVENT

A very special event we are all very excited about welcoming to our church and community has been a part of church history since the 1500s. Often times, especially during the Christmas season, small village churches would host traveling puppet shows so that the community might enjoy some entertainment. We have the amazing opportunity to partner with the Middleburgh Library and host the **Puppet People** who will be doing the show **A Christmas Carol**, the well-loved story by Charles Dickens. This event is free to the public and is scheduled for Friday December 14th at 7:00pm. The show will be presented in our Fellowship Hall. There will be cookies and hot cocoa afterward provided by our church family. This show is going to be fantastic! Bring friends and family and do not miss it!

**Lara Kelley**

## COOKBOOK FUNDRAISER UPDATE

Cookbook sales are going very well. We have sold 301 books to date for a total of \$6,020.00, which puts us in the black after expenses. Cookbooks are available at Barbers Farm Stand, The Carrot Barn and at Middleburgh Chiropractic. If you have not gotten your cookbook yet please feel free to stop by at one of these places and pick one up or contact me at 295-8912. **Don't forget Christmas is just around the corner and a cookbook would make a great gift.** Thank you for your support as we continue our recovery.

**Karen Miller**

# PROPERTY Committee

As we reflect on the anniversary of Hurricane Irene's visit to our church property, we have much to be grateful for. Thank you to all who have helped in this journey to recover our beautiful church facilities so we may worship together and serve the community by sharing what we have with others. Pictures of our progress in the sanctuary can be viewed on our church website.

In addition to our rebuilding efforts, there is also a need to replace furniture and other items that were lost in the flood. While we have the basics to hold worship and host some community groups, we are still far from what we had before August 28, 2011. We received a donation of 12 used tables from the Presbyterian Church in Schoharie that were put to use at our Ham Supper. Thanks to recent donations and a matching funds grant from the O'Connor Foundation, we are able to pay for a new sound system. A list of items we still need is being compiled and donations to our continued recovery are greatly appreciated.



## **Congratulations to Doug Kingsbury who was appointed Property Caretaker this past summer.**

Doug has already done a great deal of work on our Church property, including refinishing the tile floors in the fellowship hall. We are very grateful for all the time and talent he brings to this position. A room-by-room punch list is posted on the bulletin board outside the pastor's office and anyone who wishes to help with the work yet to be done can contact Doug at 827- 7791.

While work continues in our sanctuary and half of our foyer is still a construction site, we are getting closer to having all of our spaces useable. Guidelines for using our facilities and building use forms are posted on the bulletin board. Questions about the recovery of our Church property can be directed to Leslie Hooper, Chair of the Property Committee, at 827 -4754.

**Leslie Hooper, Chairperson**



**Ham Supper Memories**



# NET DINNERS

Perhaps you recall that in August 2011, before the event that temporarily set aside some aspects of our church life, we invited members of the community to join us for dinner. We called it **Neighbors Eating Together**, NET for short. Several people gathered together for a meal and fellowship.

Following the flood, churches and community organizations engaged in feeding those who were displaced from their homes and volunteers who helped with the recovery effort. The N in NET became broader in scope than we had first envisioned!

The continuation of community dinners has evolved from a response to an emergency to a response to other needs. NET dinners are a way to serve the hungry and the lonely as well as those who seek Christian fellowship. NET dinners are now held each Thursday beginning at 5:30. The host church schedule is:

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday - Middleburgh United Methodist Church

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday - St. Mark's Lutheran Church

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday - Middleburgh Reformed Church

4<sup>th</sup> Thursday - Our Lady of the Valley Roman Catholic Church

5<sup>th</sup> Thursday - Huntersland United Methodist Church @ Middleburgh UMC

The dinners are free, and you are encouraged to invite others to attend.

You can support NET dinners hosted by our church family by volunteering your service at a dinner, providing part of the meal, making a financial donation, or driving guests. Your attendance and prayers are also critical to the dinners' success.

Mary Lou Ryan

## OUR REMEMBRANCE TREE

Each year during Advent, we place lights on the bushes in front of our church in memory or honor of our loved ones. The names of those being remembered are then placed on a "**Remembrance Tree**" which hangs in our sanctuary for the following year. In past years, donations for each light have gone toward activities for the youth of our church. This year, the money donated will help with expenses for our older youth to attend the Excel Youth Conference and our middle school youth to participate in the Breakout Conference. If you would like to remember a loved one and make a donation for this year's **Remembrance Tree**, please see Leslie Hooper or Ellie Spencer.



Leslie Hooper



## **WEEKLY HAPPENINGS**

**Sunday Worship:** 11 a.m.

**Sunday School and Choir:** 9:45 a.m.

**Youth Group:** Sundays 7-8:30 p.m. (find us on Facebook for updates).

**Play Group:** Thursdays, 10-11:30 a.m.

**Thursday Bible Study:** 3:30-4:30 p.m.

**Consistory Meetings:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month

**The Middleburgh Ecumenical Food Pantry** is open for emergency food needs, for anyone in the school district. **The pantry is open Wednesdays 4 – 6 PM, Saturdays 9 – 11 AM, and by appointment. 827-7121**

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## **CONSISTORY MEMBERS**

### **ELDERS**

Sarah Bramer

Charles Schoonmaker

James Spencer, vice-president

Donna Wynia

### **DEACONS**

Brian DeFeo

Leslie Hooper

Stan Roesler

Karen Miller

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## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**Church Website:** [www.middleburghreformed.org](http://www.middleburghreformed.org)

**Mailing Address:** PO Box 112 Middleburgh, NY 12122

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Past copies available on the website.

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