

MRC NEWS

Middleburgh Reformed Church

P.O. Box 112

Middleburgh, NY 12122



Dates to Mark

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12/1
7 PM | <u>Advent Activity</u>
Carrot Barn |
| 12/10
9:30 AM | <u>Communion</u>
during service |
| 12/24
7 PM | <u>**Christmas Eve</u>
*Methodist Church |
| 12/25
9:30 AM | <u>**Christmas</u>
<u>**TBA</u> – at time of
printing these plans
are tentative and
will be announced |



The Pastor's Pen

We have a favorite litany in our house. It goes something like this:

"Can I have some juice?"

"Sure, just a second..."

"I want some juice."

"Yes, please wait."

Please wait. This refrain is repeated a lot in our home. It does not take long for the girls to become antsy to have their request fulfilled. I used to think it takes years of experience to nurture an aversion to waiting. Yet, in our clinical trials it's been confirmed that it takes just a few months of living and no training to complain about waiting. Even though our girls are full of sweetness and light, sometimes they don't like waiting. Ok, they never like waiting. It shouldn't have surprised me that they furrowed their brows when they heard about the season of Advent.

The word Advent comes from the Latin meaning "arrival" or "coming." The season challenges us to wait. It asks us to intentionally experience waiting. The waiting cuts in three directions: *Past, Future, and Present*. We remember how Israel anticipated the Messiah. Some did it well. Many did not. In either case, the Lord unrolled history to reveal the long awaited son. Today we wait for the future second coming of Christ. (see page 4)

Communicating with You

This abbreviated news update offers you a quick look at dates to mark for our Advent Season. Watch for our regularly scheduled newsletter in January. Please note our worship services continue to be scheduled at 9:30 AM at the Methodist Church. We

thank our Methodist neighbors for their kindness.



A Thankful November

A time for giving!

The month of November offered fellowship in every corner as we worked together toward a shared goal of returning home. Advent is upon us and we look to the season with its expectation, excitement, and reflection.

November 20 was a good statement of that expectation, excitement, reflection all marked by thanks to our God for his presence, guidance, and determination. Several members of our congregation met

after service with Phyllis Palsma, from the Synod, to examine what we hold important, meaningful, hopeful in our worship, our church family, our dwelling. Discussions were marked by many common denominators of priorities as we looked at approaching the recovery of our sanctuary. Common threads of the importance of our church family, the love for one another that we share, our music, our time of fellowship rang throughout each small group that afternoon.

And amidst our desire to be back in the sanctuary, families have enjoyed advent activities looked forward to each year. Thanks to the organization of Sunday School moms, advent wreathes were made this past week and distributed to many homes. The children have manger scenes to watch grow as we near the celebration of our Savior's birth.

May the love and peace of this season fill each of our hearts!

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Several members of our church family gathered at Jack Miller's Tractor showroom on November 6 for an afternoon of service and fun! Thanks to generous donations, we were able to pack 200 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. That means 200 children will be blessed with a box full of gifts including school

supplies, clothing, hygiene items, toys, and candy. More importantly, each simple shoebox gift is the tool that dedicated Christians will be able to use to earn a hearing for the Gospel. In the weeks and months ahead it is our role to keep in prayer all who will be sharing God's message of salvation and those who will be



hearing it. With God's grace, 200 more children and their families will choose to be citizens of God's Kingdom for eternity!

Surrounded by God's Hands

TRULY WE HAVE BEEN
BLESSED WITH MANY
HANDS FROM MANY
PLACES COMING TO OUR
RECOVERY



More than three months have passed since Hurricane Irene and her aftermath touched our lives in ways we could not have imagined. During this period, we have experienced a host of emotions including shock, fear, anger, and frustration. As days turned into weeks and weeks into months, we have been blessed by an outpouring of love that has pulled us from the depths of our despair. God's love, expressed through the generosity of people from across the country, causes us to feel gratitude and hope during our time of recovery.

We are deeply grateful to our friends of the Middleburgh United Methodist Church for opening their doors to us. Just as many residents of the Schoharie Valley are "bunking in" with relatives or friends, so have we found a temporary home for worship services. Gathering with our church family each week

helps to maintain our unity and purpose as a people of God.

Much has been accomplished along the road to recovery for the Middleburgh Reformed Church. We are close to being able to use the fellowship hall. This would not have been possible without the help of many, many volunteers. Some volunteers have been from our own congregation. Others have come from around the state and beyond. Sometimes the work is done by a lone volunteer, and at other times it is by a work bee with six or a workday with dozens. At times our "guest" workers have equaled or outnumbered those from our congregation. We gratefully acknowledge the efforts of all who have given up leisure time, holidays, and weekends to share their skills and fellowship with us.

-Mary Lou Ryan
Consistory



**Thank you Fellowship
Committee. Soon we
will be home!**

Continued from Pastor's Pen

Salvation has come and yet is still coming.

The struggle to wait reveals our discontented hearts. It can be boring and we take up with other things. Distractions offer temporary relief from the anxiety and disappointment that comes with waiting. The temporary becomes regular and then eventually permanent. The seasons can come and go around us and we never deal with what is right in front of us: our own need for God. This is not a new challenge. The Apostle Paul wrote a letter, Thessalonians, to a people who were tired of waiting for Christ to come back. This is the first letter we have and dates to about 54 AD. Jesus had not been in heaven much more than 20 years before and they were already getting lazy about waiting. When people get lazy they get sloppy. And they were doing some sloppy-living. Paul writes to encourage them to keep watch. "So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober." (1 Thess 5:6).

Today, in our community and church we are waiting for things to be normal again. We are waiting for what we were used to. We say that the buildings and traditions and routines are not our life. But we are now thrust into the middle of a great experiment of whether this was true. And this is an even greater mercy. Underneath that yearning the Lord is calling us closer to Him: *please wait*.

Our worship services and life together during this season is different, and it might be a challenge. Let us draw close to what we are really waiting for: God's presence with us.

Here are some suggestions to help you actively wait during this chaotic season:

Pray. We may address the king of the universe with our requests. And he would like to speak to us! Speak the Lord, be silent and ask Him what he wants to say to us.

Read: Scripture- take a passage and read it slowly a couple of times- asking the Holy Spirit to guide you.

Slow down: It's ok to say no if it makes more space for life. Sit in silence for 5 minutes a day, mindful of the Lord's presence.

Ask Questions: What are my longings? What do you want God to do in your life? Your family? In the community? In the world? How has the love of God changed you? What are you doing to prepare for Christ and his coming this season?

Shop Mindfully: be mindful how we shop to fulfill longings to please ourselves and fulfilled false expectations in others. Remember the poor.

We look forward to what God has in store for us this season. Each of you are in my prayers. I especially pray that you'll know how deep and wide the love of God is for you in this time.

In Christ ~ Pastor Jeff

What Along the Road to Recovery Looks Like

Rebuilding our facilities and replacing lost contents will require a great deal of funds. Donations in the amount of \$53,375.20 have been received so far. Many come with loving notes about how MRC impacted the lives of the donors. Some are from people with close ties to our church and community while others come from strangers who have learned of our need. Each carries an implied message of concern for us and for our future in service to Jesus.

The following is a breakdown of the sources of donations:

- *Current members 15%
- *Past members no longer living in the area 10%
- * People not connected to MRC 5%
- *Other Churches - 26%
- *Organizations that use MRC - 3%
- *Memorial gifts - 2%
- *Regional Synod of Albany (donations from RCA churches) 19%
- *Classis of Schoharie - 9%
- *SCCAP grant - 1%
- *Anonymous - 9%

As we continue through the recovery process, may we be ever mindful of the grace that will carry us through. May we be vigilantly aware of the expressions of God's love and provision and be grateful to those who reach out to us. May we face each challenge with **HOPE** for a brighter future!