

# MRC Newsletter

Middleburgh Reformed Church PO Box 121 Middleburgh, NY 12122



## ANNUAL MEETING

The April Newsletter is a report to you from our ANNUAL MEETING

Several members of the congregation attended the Annual Meeting, held after service on Sunday March 18. This meeting held particular interest this year, as reports from all committees were offered on the year's progress, and also the progress on the facility and grounds since the aftermath of Hurricane

Irene. A new budget was presented and approved for the coming year, and new members of consistory were elected. All enjoyed a wonderful buffet luncheon arranged by the Fellowship Committee. Special thanks to all the volunteer cooks and bakers!

(Committee Reports available inside. )

### New Consistory Faces

So many willing and helping hands give to the everyday working of our church – thank you!

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### Pastor's Pen

"...how we are planting... anticipating God's Kingdom come in this place."

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### Budget 2012

The proposed budget was reviewed, discussed and approved on March 18.

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# FAITHFUL SERVANTS

We thank Deacon Joan Youmans and Elder Mary Lou Ryan as their terms expire. Although they are relieved from attending monthly meetings, their service in the church continues. They now join other past deacons and elders as members of the Great Consistory. According to the *Book of Church Order*, that body may be called on to serve as an advisory voice in matters of special importance relating to the welfare of the church.

Stepping into the role of deacon will be Leslie Hooper. Sarah Bramer will serve as an elder. This may be the first time in the church's history when an aunt and niece have served together on the Consistory, but that is not what makes these women exceptionally suited for their roles as church leaders. Their giftedness in music, creativity, and organization combined with a strong work ethic and

concern for others blesses our church in countless ways. Each of these women demonstrates her love for the Lord in her family, church, and community life.

There are others besides those who serve on the Consistory who play valuable roles in the workings of the church. Sarah Bramer has served as clerk, and we thank her for outstanding performance in that role. We are grateful to Donna Greenawald who will now serve as a clerk.

Other "unsung heroes" who serve us with their many hours of behind-the-scenes work are Lewis Youmans and Michele Becker who serve in the roles of financial secretary and treasurer. Thank you all for your devotion to Middleburgh Reformed Church. We ask for God's blessings on all of His faithful servants.

## Fellowship Hall Lara Kelley

It has been hard for me to think of something to say from the Fellowship Hall Committee. I feel like you can just look around and see what we have done.

One of the biggest changes we've made is keeping the library unlocked so that it can be used on a regular basis for meetings. We hope to have a locked cabinet with a glass front, for some of the more valuable and historical documents to be displayed. We also see the classroom as being a more casual meeting space. Someday we hope to have couches and maybe a coffee table in the room. That would make it ideal for Youth Group or a Bible Study.

### (Fellowship Hall continued)

Window treatments and blinds are also on our wish list to give the rooms a homier feel, and to help with the noise in the Fellowship Hall.

The workroom is going to be so much more functional as we've got the cabinets installed, with countertop on the way, ready for organizing.

We were blessed to have so many people from so many places come together and get the painting done in ONE DAY! The nursery is another area where we've experienced the overwhelming generosity of others. It's a wonderful space full of lots of fun, quality toys.

It's also important to note that the popcorn machine was one of the things that was on our "shoot-for-the-moon" wish list and now we have one! Family Movie Night anyone? SO many things to look forward to! God is good!



# YOUTH EDUCATION REPORT

Kim Smith

Our Sunday School currently has 12 students enrolled. We have classes for preschool age through 6th grade. We began using a new curriculum called “Living Inside Out” in February. The students appear to be engaged in all aspects of the program. We begin each morning with a large group session with songs and bible study then break out into 3 smaller classes; preschool through kindergarten, 1st through 3rd and 4th through 6th. I’m happy to report that this curriculum is very easy on the people who volunteer to teach!

Our last youth group meeting was in June

2011. We had planned to resume our meetings in September. Unfortunately, we are having trouble finding time to meet with the youth at this time. If anyone would like to take on this ministry, we are very willing to surrender it!

Also, we are always looking for people willing to act as substitute Sunday School teachers.

**Memory Verse – Ephesians 6:10**

*“Be strong in the Lord, and in His mighty power.”*

## THE PASTOR'S PEN

*Dear Friends in Christ,*

I enjoy shopping for trees from the Soil and Water order every year. As we think about ordering trees for our yard, questions need to be answered: what do we want it to look like, what are the trees for, how many? We plant the seedlings expecting them to grow but some do better than others. Planting seedlings struck me as an apt analogy for where we are at as a church. We have been given a past 7 months to ask all these questions about our life together: what do we want to do with this or that? What are we expecting to need? How do we want our ministry to look like? What is the need? What are the conditions we are we planting in? It excites me that we are asking questions. One attitude that I haven't heard is indifference. When I worked as a carpenter, guys would ask: *how does this look?* To which someone would always reply: *It'll look great from my house.* Some people in the community are there right now. They are asking *what difference does it make?* And they are correct from their frame of reference. It doesn't make any difference without hope. And, as we know, our only hope is the Lord.

Lord.

So I return to the tree questions: what are we planting for? What type of context are we planting in? Do we plant for quick growth? Do we plant for quick growth? Do we plant for stable and healthy growth? Do we plant at all?

An often misappropriated Tolkien poem in Lord of the Rings says:

*All that is gold does not glitter,*

*Not all those who wander are lost;*

*The old that is strong does not wither,*

*Deep roots are not reached by the frost.*

*From the ashes a fire shall be woken,*

*A light from the shadows shall spring;*

*Renewed shall be blade that was broken,*

*The crownless again shall be king.*

*Not all those who wander are lost* is a popular bumper sticker. When I see that I can't help but think: but some are. So, I am going to misapply this too: "The old that is strong does not wither/ Deep roots are not reached by the frost". Some

old is not strong. But old and strong, this is not easily uprooted. These past months have tested our strength and hope. It has tested what is just old and we've seen what is not easily uprooted.

Personally, this has been a challenge and taxing. I am sorry where I have failed you and said the wrong thing. I will not give up my task to witness to the Gospel in all aspects of our life together. And yet, I am human- some of you have seen that all too well. We all know that people talk about how the pastor is wrong- but we can't *tell him*. That's fine. (I am speaking of those *other* churches, of course.) Thank you for practicing grace.

The Gospel in this is that we are God's people together- a body made up of many parts, being knit together in love, so that we all can be released to do works of service, so that we all may be built up until we all know Christ fully. I am looking forward to how we are planting week in and week out, anticipating God's Kingdom come in this place.

*In Christ,*

*Pastor Jeff*



## FOOD PANTRY REPORT

**Russ Ryan**

The Middleburgh Ecumenical Food Pantry is housed in our church and staffed by volunteers from the local churches and civic organizations. In addition people from these churches and civic organizations donate food supplies and money to help keep the food pantry stocked.

This past year has been quite unique in the history of the food pantry. From April 2011 thru August 2011 the food pantry operated normally serving 318 people who reside in the Middleburgh School District. As we all know Hurricane Irene destroyed most everything in her path including our church facilities which included the food pantry. Thus the food pantry was closed from September 2011 through January 2012.

The recovery process was amazing. Our church took the responsibility of repairing the physical plant. Volunteers cleaned and re-installed the shelves. Monetary donations from individuals and groups, plus grants from the RCA and the Regional Food Bank allowed us to re-stock the shelves. The food pantry re-opened February 15<sup>th</sup>, and since that time over 54 people have been served from the food pantry through March 17.

The food pantry is open Wednesdays, 4 -6, and Saturdays, 9 -11. The food pantry is in constant need of restocking so any donations of non-perishable food supplies are appreciated. Volunteers are still needed to fill in Saturday times. The volunteers from the food pantry are very grateful to the Reformed Church for sharing space for our mission to serve our community.

## SANCTUARY REPORT

**Jim Snyder**

The Sanctuary Committee began meeting in November to address the needs of our Sanctuary in the recovery process. The committee is led by Joan Youmans, chairperson, and Jim Spencer, meeting moderator. Jim Snyder is the liaison of the committee communicating directly with contractors and engineers. Dimensions North Ltd, of Catskill has been hired as the lead contractor for this work. Structural engineers have assessed damage and areas of need and concern in the sanctuary, and those areas have been reviewed with the committee. Currently, work is focused on getting ready to lay a new floor for the sanctuary, with emphasis on the basement area for concrete work and setting steel support beams. The committee has forwarded a recommendation to consistory for a timber framed, tung and groove floor of Douglas Fir. After reviewing a number of options for this work, the committee felt this option to be the best in assuring a firm, withstanding floor for the sanctuary. The committee is continuing its work concentrating on a design for the front of the church. Additional areas to be addressed will be the balcony, pews, heating, sound system to name but a few on the list. Certainly, the committee if focused on decisions that will not only be the best for our worship area, but decisions to be fiscally responsible for the congregation. The committee is grateful for the variety of talents and commitments each member brings to the group, and they pray for God's guidance and wisdom to steer their work.



## HISTORICAL CHURCH SERIES

Mary Lou Ryan

If you would like to learn about the history of churches in Middleburgh and their styles of worship, we have a plan for you! The Spiritual Life Committee is organizing a series of tours. The first will be on

May 15 beginning at 7 p.m. at the Huntersland United Methodist Church. Plan to enjoy an evening of fellowship as we investigate the rich Christian history of our community.

# SPIRITUAL LIFE REPORT

Leslie Hooper

These past seven months have again brought us to the conclusion that, “a church is not a building, a church is not a steeple, a church is the people.” While the Spiritual Life Committee has continued with many of its regular responsibilities, there is a new awareness of how much more we can do. Our church family and our many friends in this community and throughout Schoharie County have witnessed not only a devastating flood, but a flood of love and support from many sources. Our last newsletter highlighted our building recovery process and our deep gratitude for all that has been accomplished.

Our participation in the life of the church is vital to the continued recovery of our spirits as well. When we spend time together beyond our Sunday worship, we grow in Christian fellowship. We each need to consider the gifts we have been given and how we may use those gifts to serve the church and others. There are many opportunities to share in the life and work of our church here in Middleburgh.

- Catch a ride to Thursday afternoon Bible study which meets at the home of Thelma Serrie
- Come to the next “Eating Out-Eating Together” in support of a local restaurant
- Attend the Middleburgh Historical Churches Series on the calendar for this spring
- Share your thoughts at the evening discussion group that meets in the fall
- Volunteer for Operation Christmas Child or the Ecumenical Food Pantry
- Offer to help with our youth: Sunday School, Day Camp, Youth Group, SITWAY
- Participate in Sunday worship: read Scripture, give a Children’s message, join choir
- Sign up to be part of a church committee: worship, spiritual life, fellowship, property
- Serve on consistory as an elder or a deacon
- Pray

## FELLOWSHIP REPORT

Donna Wynia

The Fellowship Committee helps with food at social church events. These past six months have been busy as the clean up and restoring of the church is a big job that will continue on for some time. Thank you to the kitchen and fellowship hall committees for all their time and efforts. The place looks amazing. When volunteers were needed our committee provided an afternoon meal. We appreciate everyone who worked with us in donating food. Thank you to Ellie Spence who organized these events for us. I would like to thank Donna Greenawald for her talents of decoration and set up, most currently our Annual Congregational Luncheon.

The committee is happy to announce that the coffee hour after church is back! If you would like to sign up to host coffee hour one Sunday, there is a sign up sheet in the Fellowship Hall.

Our budget relies on donations and so we really depend on each other to make these occasions a success. If you would like to join this committee please contact Donna Wynia at 827-8110.



## ANNUAL MEETING BUDGET REPORT AND PROPOSAL

**Stan Roesler**

The following information was presented at the Annual Meeting on March 18, as part of the discussion of the 2012 Budget. The proposed budget for 2012 was approved at this meeting.

### Receipts and Disbursements 2003 - 2011\*

	<u>2003</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	
<u>Receipts:</u>								
Plate Receipts & Pledges	\$108,494	\$100,275	\$99,767	\$85,196	\$85,665	\$85,233	\$93,380	
Other Income	11,411	17,912	7,301	8,589	10,778	8,058	296	**
Property Use	<u>3,510</u>	<u>1,582</u>	<u>1,875</u>	<u>2,400</u>	<u>1,945</u>	<u>3,005</u>	<u>1,731</u>	
Total Receipts	\$123,415	\$119,769	\$108,943	\$96,185	\$98,388	\$96,296	\$95,407	
<u>Disbursements:</u>								
Total Disbursements	<u>121,278</u>	<u>125,532</u>	<u>116,409</u>	<u>90,862</u>	<u>113,124</u>	<u>132,717</u>	<u>118,160</u>	
	-\$2,137	+\$5,763	+\$7,466	-\$5,323	+\$14,736	+\$36,421	+\$22,753	

Source: Annual Treasurer's Reports.

\*Reports for 2004 and 2005 could not be located.

\*\* Reflects loss of income from Ham Supper.

As the figures indicate, as a congregation we have done a truly remarkable job of controlling our operating expenses: over the past nine years our expenses have actually *declined* by almost 3%, while the cost of living *rose* by 22%. However during the same period, our plate receipts and pledges have fallen by almost 14%.

Consequently, except for two years, expenses have exceeded receipts, resulting in periodic withdrawals from our limited savings and investments.

And, needless to say, we are also confronted with the challenge of repairing the substantial damage caused by Hurricane Irene.

However, setting aside for a moment our current budgetary concerns, over time, our giving should be at a level that is sufficient to support the overall mission of the Church – which is to be Jesus' representatives in our community, and beyond.

We are by nature a generous congregation; and moreover, we have been faithful stewards of the financial resources that we have been blessed with. But it is strictly up to each of us individually to prayerfully determine what God wants us to give to sustain the mission of Middleburgh Reformed Church.

The decision to give, and what way we give, is one not to be taken lightly. The prayerful consideration of our giving decisions is critical to our growth as Disciples of Christ.

# BITS AND PIECES

## MOTHER DAUGHTER LUNCHEON

Box Lunch Social with a Twist!

Saturday May 12, 11:30 a.m.– 1:00 p.m.

*Come enjoy a special girl time of Moms and their daughters.*

See Mary Lou Ryan or Donna Greenawald for details.



**OCC Gift for April:** Toy Balls, approx. 2.5 inches



**Choir Director, Russ Ryan** enjoys working with Sunday School students, preparing a special anthem for Palm Sunday. The young singers joined the adult choir putting smiles on the faces of all, and a true Holy Week message in hearts.

## DATES TO MARK

- April 12** Installation of new Consistory members, Sarah Bramer and Leslie Hooper
- May 12** Mother Daughter Luncheon
- May 15** Historic Church Visit 7 pm Huntersland Methodist
- June 10** Sunday School Family Day – End of Year Celebration