

MRC News

JUNE 2017

Writing a note about looking back is always difficult. So much of our energy is directed toward planning and looking ahead and we don't take enough time to remember. God also calls us to remember each Sabbath, to stop and recognize again who is in charge. Songwriters in the Psalms often follow up their troubles by retelling God's faithfulness (e.g. Psalm 143). When Jesus gave us the bread and the cup to help us remember he looked ahead to the Cross. We look back to his death as the defining moment for our success in life, and we are relieved of the burden of thinking it's all up to us. We remember so we can look ahead. It's not with a steely optimism, but with realism and hope. Realism in that we can say what is true. Hope in that the wrongs are made right in Christ. So we fix our minds on 'things above' as the true story of life (Colossians 3).

This past year has been significant in a couple ways. A year ago we were looking forward to the beginning of my three-month sabbatical. As a church, we did more than survive- we learned and thrived. In the past year we've prayed with the sick, mourned the passing of friends, shared generously with each other and others, and welcomed new friends. As a way to celebrate and mark the year, we are gathering Sunday, June 11th at the Timothy Murphy Park 11 am- 2pm. We plan on eating and playing, and giving thanks for God's goodness.

We are also looking ahead in our lives together as we continue to learn about how God has made us and where God is leading. The Ridder Team recently completed their last retreat. For the last five years Mary Lou Ryan, Sarah Bramer and Joel Bramer have put a lot of time and effort into learning about congregational change. Their work isn't done, but we owe them a great deal of thanks. If you have a moment, ask them what they are learning.

Two fundamental convictions have come out of Ridder: (1) it's a process not a project or program. This is not about knowing more or doing more- it's about who we are individually and as a group. And (2) who we are is determined by our own personal journey. So, if we want the people we are a part of to be different (church, family, group, etc), we ourselves have to be different. It's not 'their' problem to fix, but it's my challenge to wonder about. So, we'll be wondering together. What does wholeness look like for us, the church, the community and so on? We'll be hosting some different sessions this Summer and Fall. Consider coming and discovering how you are being called into wholeness in Christ.

Thank you for your partnership, prayers and friendship,

In Christ, Pastor Jeff

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Youth Education	2
Fellowship	2
Church Archives	3
Invested Funds	3
Property	4
OCC	5
Benevolence Fund	5
Food Pantry	6
Summer Fundraiser	6
Organ Repair	7

Youth Education *by Sarah Bramer*

As Sunday morning Youth Education winds down for the summer, we'd like to share more about what our students experienced this "school year".

Our youngest students, in pre-K–1st grade were invited to *Imagine*. They imagined what it meant to be a part of God's family, what it would be like to follow God's directions and finally, what it was like when people first met Jesus. This group was led by Sarah Bramer.

The 2nd and 3rd graders were encouraged to *Wonder*. They wondered about God's amazing plan for us, His daring mission, and about the amazing power of Jesus. Lara Kelley led the kids in

this group.

Joel Bramer and the 3rd–4th graders took time to *Marvel*. They marveled at God's love and mercy.

The 6th–8th graders started to *Dive* a little deeper. Led by Kim Smith, they talked about topics like justice and stewardship. They also began to look at their spiritual gifts (just as we were encouraged to do a year ago).

Jeff and the older youth held weekly discussions on topics that they are facing in their everyday lives. One such discussion was based on science vs. faith and what to do when what they are taught in school contradicts what we learn from the Bible.

The new curriculum is still challenging at times, but we work to make it real and accessible to our students.

With the help of Devral Watson, we completed more "no-sew" blankets for Project Linus this year. The children's weekly offerings totaled more than \$300 this year and we will be helping them decide how they can put it to good use for God's glory.

Heartfelt thanks to Pastor Jeff, Kim, Joel and Lara for all their efforts.

Please continue to pray for our students and their families, that summer will be full of family time and fun and that they will see God at work around them.



Fellowship at MRC *by Mary Lou Ryan*

The Fellowship Committee has been very active in the first half of 2017! In January the committee coordinated a brunch for the Annual Meeting. On February 1 and April 5, MRC hosted NET (Neighbors Eating Together) dinners. The Valentines lunch you read about in the last newsletter was actually a celebration in honor of Pastor Jeff. We held our second annual appreciation dinner in March. This year's guests were the Middleburgh Town and Village employees and officials.* On April 30 and May 1, we had the honor of hosting the assembly of Regional Synod of Albany. We look forward to a day of worship, fellowship, food, and inspiration as we gather at the Timothy Murphy Park on June 11.

In addition to the events listed above, the fellowship committee was honored to serve three families by hosting a luncheon following the funeral of their loved one. Members of the committee consider this service to families a ministry of comfort. We are blessed with a well-equipped facility and a supportive church family which make the luncheons possible.

Thank you for the contribution of your time, resources, delicious food, and **participation** in the fellowship activities of MRC!

* You can find a newspaper article written by one of our guests and notes of thanks on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall.

News from the History-Genealogy Room *by Marian Lynes-Bouck*

A recent article in the Schenectady Gazette caught my attention, as the headline read. “Niskayuna Reformed Church to showcase history”. An illustration featured a 1791 document discovered by the Church History and Archives committee of that church when cleaning out the parish. They avow the formation of their parish as 1750s. Our Middleburgh church is known to have appealed to neighboring church for aid in the building of the 1786 church after the devastating 1780 raid on the valley by Johnson & Brant. Was the Niskayuna church one of them? Our early Consistory minutes might give us that information!

Our archives have been revisited and labeled to make it easy for a new committee and chairman to discover the tremendous collection of historic papers. We have many hand-written papers, some in Dutch, which show the first pastor was called to our church in 1731!

Our collection remains in archival boxes and (in most cases) on carts with the plan for a quick transfer to the attic in case of flood warnings. With the amount of mitigation in the Schoharie Creek and its tributaries, it seems a most unlikely scenario. But we know firsthand that the possibility remains. I will be happy to help in a transition to a new chairman or group of persons who wish to take over the archives. It's a great job! Gathering today's news and activities makes tomorrow's history!



Stewarding Today and Tomorrow: Invested Funds *by Pastor Jeff*

Our congregation has been given many good things to steward. Part of our story in the last two decades has been funds set aside for specific uses. The invested funds are just one way that we have the chance to invest in God's Kingdom, both today and in the future. Like any *thing*, they can be a false sense of security and distraction. However, we have been blessed by these invested

funds, as they have provided for many unexpected expenses. After the recent flood, it allowed for us to clean up and recover the use of our property. Last year they paid for much needed steeple repairs and maintenance. They also helped in paying for the organ repairs (see related story). During leaner seasons (like the summer months) they help cover the gap in giving. Funds include the Billy Brown Fund that was

Billy Brown Fund	\$32,070
Flood Insurance Fund	\$43,448
Memorial Fund	\$29,637
Organ Fund	\$16,614
Food Pantry	\$16,862
Undesignated	\$121,984
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$260,618</i>

established in memory of Billy Brown to support sending children to camp. The Flood Insurance fund was set up a few years ago to aid in cleanup after future flooding of the property. The Memorial Fund is made up of gifts in memory of folks, including the recent annual Remembrance Tree (see in the back of the sanctuary for the names). Recently, the Doerge Memorial fund was created in memory of Henry for his passion of supporting our local church (not included in the table).

Fennimore Asset Management generously manages the investments for us. If you are interested in knowing more or would like to contribute to a particular fund, feel free to contact Pastor Jeff, the Finance Committee, or a Deacon.

Property Committee *by Leslie Hooper*

The January 2017 newsletter property committee report started with the news that in spring 2016, we had to take down a big tree on the front lawn. Well... on May 18, 2017 the wind took down a bigger tree on the back lawn. Thankfully no one was hurt and there was only minor damage to the storage shed. The other big trees on the property will need to be inspected for potential problems.

We are blessed to have a beautiful facility on a very pretty piece of property, both of which require attention on a regular basis. A plan was proposed to have volunteers

"adopt" some rooms to clean and do yard work on their own schedule rather than on designated work days. These efforts have been helpful. Our Property Caretaker, Doug Kingsbury, did sidewalk snow removal, stripped and waxed all the tile floors and cleared much of the fallen tree in addition to general cleaning and maintenance. Keeping our building and grounds in good condition is a shared responsibility.

Projects to be addressed by the Property committee in the near future include; repair to the church sign, painting the exterior wood trim on the fellowship hall, work on the

storage shed, replacing some shingles on the sanctuary roof and installing shelving in classroom # 1. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to share their time and talents on any of these projects. Anyone who would like to get involved with property issues, is invited to join the Property Committee.

Thank you to Doug and to everyone who is helping with property maintenance.

*Recently, Middleburgh resident and avid photographer, Bob Roney, captured this aerial photo of our property using his drone camera.



Operation Christmas Child *by Mary Lou Ryan*

As I write, Brody Smith is finishing his freshman year of college. You might be thinking, "What does that have to do with OCC?" When Brody was in kindergarten, his mom discovered the outreach while searching for a service project for the Sunday school students.

Over the years, MRC's involvement with OCC has grown. From packing a few dozen shoeboxes in the early years, we have a goal of three hundred for 2017! Additionally, our church has served as a drop-off site for shoeboxes since 2008. So THANK YOU, Kim, for getting us started with a project that allows us to participate in sharing the transformational love of Jesus with children around the world!

Many gifts have already been purchased for our 2017 packing party. We are cur-

rently collecting hygiene items: soap, washcloths, toothbrushes, and combs. Over the summer months, you are asked to purchase school supplies: pencils, pencil sharpeners, spiral notebooks, and crayons. In the fall, we will determine what gifts are still needed to complete our gift boxes.

There are many ways in which our entire church family may participate in Operation Christmas Child:

- purchase gifts
 - pay the cost of shipping, providing a discipleship booklet, and other costs of shoebox distribution (\$9 per shoebox)
 - volunteer for the drop-off during collection week (Nov. 13-20)
 - **PRAY** for the children who will receive our gifts
- Thank you for supporting OCC!



A Message from Franklin Graham, President of Samaritan's Purse, the parent organization of OCC:

The Saturday before Easter, we visited the town of Qaraqosh [Iraq] where ISIS burned the church, used the altar for target practice, and shot the cross off the ceiling. ... Amazingly, I found an Operation Christmas Child shoebox in the ruins of the church! It was sooty and empty, but it was a reminder that not too long ago, there were happy children in this church. Someone lovingly packed this box and prayed over it, and God used it to show one little boy how much He loves him.

Benevolence Fund *by Mary Lou Ryan*

A portion of our offering supports the Benevolence Fund. \$4000 was designated for the fund in 2017. Added to that amount was \$755 from the Christmas Eve offering. The Benevolence Fund is used to give aid internationally as well as locally and in other parts of our country.

It is easy to send checks to individuals and groups to support projects. However, we are called to do more – *to be on mission with God in our community*. That means we need to be in relationship with our neighbors. Members of consistory are seeking your ideas. How would you use some of the funds to touch others in Middleburgh with God's love? Please share your thoughts with an elder, deacon, or Pastor Jeff.

Food Pantry Report *by Russ Ryan*

The food pantry continues to operate from our church. It is run by volunteers from all the area churches and civic organizations. These same people donate their time, monetary gifts, and food items to the pantry.

The pantry is open Wednesdays, 4 – 6, and Saturdays 9 – 11. Clients may also call and arrange a time if they are unable to come at our regular times. So far from July 2016 (the beginning of our HPNAP Grant) to April 2017 we have served 569 people. These clients are mainly from the Mid-leburgh area, so our work is a local mission.

The food pantry relies on support from the community in the form of monetary, food donations, and, personal time. As of right now the pantry is doing well in all areas. Of course the workers are always in need of more people to help at our regular times. If you would like to sign on or would like more information contact Russ Ryan at 827 -4093.



Meet the new member of the family!
Keaton, son of Margaret and Brandon Wiegert and grandson of Jan Liberti, was baptized on Mother's Day.

Trash and Treasure Sale

Saturday August 19, 2017

9 AM -- 3 PM

**Three ways
You can
Help**

- 1) Start sorting and saving items to donate **see list below****
- 2) Set up on Friday, 8/18 anytime between 8 AM and 8 PM**
- 3) Saturday, 8/19 sale workers arrive 8 AM, clean-up crew at 2 PM**

**** Items to Donate ****

toys	dishes/cookware	jewelry	sports equipment
rugs	drapes/linens	collectibles	holiday decorations
tools	bedding	craft supplies	garden supplies
books	furniture	small appliances	assorted household items

****** Please do not donate: clothing, computers and/or TV monitors ******

Bring donations on Friday, August 18 from 8 AM to 8 PM. Some limited storage space is available. **Starting August 1**, smaller, boxed items can be placed in the small classroom. Advance storage of larger items is not possible because our building is regularly used by several community groups.

If you have questions or suggestions about this event, please call Leslie Hooper (827 4754). On Friday and Saturday (August 18 & 19) call the church kitchen phone (827 5134) during the day.

A special Note:

Dear Members of the Middleburgh Reformed Church,

As many of you may know I recently had a trip to an organ console SPA. My trip started on February 1st when Sid (the local organ guy) came to Middleburgh and cut all the wires between me and the pipes (it didn't hurt). I was then lovingly carried down the stairs by gentlemen of the church. They were very gentle, especially on the turn in the stairwell. I was crated up and left on February 3rd for Chicago.

It was a cold trip in the back of a truck. I even spent two nights in a shipping distribution center. I finally arrived in Chicago on Tuesday, February 7th.

The next ten weeks brought great changes to my internal works. I received two new keyboards, a new pedal board, and new combination action. The new combination action kept the eight generals for my full organ and added six generals for my swell manual and six generals for my great manual. With new technology there are six levels of memory so I really have sixty four generals for full organ and thirty six generals for each manual. I am now in the 21st Century.

With the new keyboards and pedal board all the internal wiring had to be replaced, including the 1946 lamp wire that went from the on/off switch to the main power supply. The old paper insulation was a fire hazard. This new wiring is connected to plastic connectors that match up with new plastic connectors coming from the organ chamber.

I was crated up in Chicago and sent by UPS freight back to Middleburgh. I arrived on April 25th and was carried back upstairs on the 26th. Thank you to all the men who carried me down in February and back up in April. Sid spent Wednesday and Friday attaching wires from the organ chamber to the new plastic connectors. I was playable and on Sunday, April 30th I was used again as part of the church service.

Now that I am back, Russ will have to get used to all my new features. Please keep in mind, nothing was changed in the organ chamber, all the work was strictly mechanical, no pipes were altered. I am still a pipe organ, some of my pipes date back to the original 1886 organ, others date from an 1895 organ update. Other ranks of pipes date to a 1946 and a 1983 renovation.

I am glad to be back. More importantly, I am glad to be updated with all the new features. I am also glad that everything works. Russ has a lot of practicing to do to get used to all my added features.

Thank you for my stay at the SPA. I am ready for many more years of service.

Sincerely,
The Organ Console



PS: Did you know that at the end of June 2017, Russ will have served as organist at MRC for 40 years?!

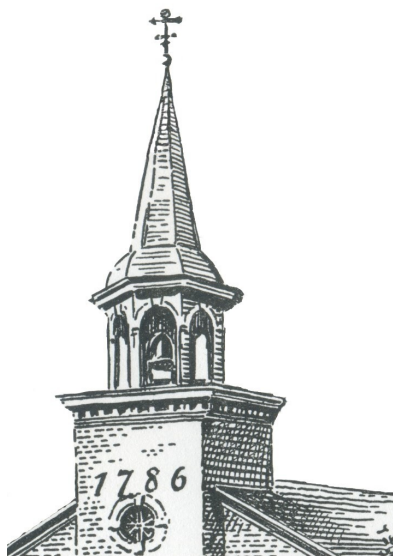
CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor Jeff Kelley
827-8785, home
email: jeffa.kelley@gmail.com

Church
827-5134, office
email: reformed@midtel.net
Mailing Address:
PO Box 112
Middleburgh, NY 12122

Property Caretaker
Doug Kingsbury
827-7791
email: dougk@midtel.net

Consistory Members
Kim Smith, Vice President
Susan Pendergast, Elder
Joan Youmans, Elder
vacant seat, Elder
Mary Lou Ryan, Deacon
vacant seat, Deacon
vacant seat, Deacon
vacant seat, Deacon



Our Mission and Vision

As the body of Christ, the mission of the Middleburgh Reformed Church is to demonstrate the transformative message of Jesus Christ. Our vision is that we will grow as disciples through prayer, worship, education and service.

Summer Dates to Note (for our church and in our community)

June 11th: Worship and Picnic, Timothy Murphy Park, 11—2 pm
June 18th: Baccalaureate, Middleburgh United Methodist Church, 7 pm
July 2nd: Worship celebrating the Lord's Supper
July 23rd: Community Worship on the High School Lawn, 11 am
August 6th: Worship celebrating the Lord's Supper
August 19th: Trash & Treasure Sale
September 10th: Beginning of Christian Education for Youth

June 9 and June 17: Middleburgh Heritage Days
June 23, July 28, August 25: Fourth Friday Street Festivals
Fridays in July: Summer Band Concerts on the High School Lawn

Lots of ways to stay connected

Here are some options for you when getting your church newsletter. Newsletters and Monthly Events sheets are available on our website: www.middleburghreformed.org

Also, on the website, you can sign up for Weekly Email Updates from Pastor Jeff. These include prayer requests that are shared on Sundays, announcements and reminders, and thoughtful tid-bits from the Pastor's desk.

Please contact us via email: reformed@midtel.net if you would prefer to receive our newsletter electronically and stop receiving the paper version. Thank you for helping us save paper and postage.

You can also find us on Facebook! Our page is frequently updated with reminders, announcements and events.