

# MRC NEWS

Middleburgh Reformed Church

Po Box 112

Middleburgh, NY 12122

[www.middleburghreformed.org](http://www.middleburghreformed.org)



## Dates to Mark

11/6  
2 PM OCC Packing Party at  
Jack Miller's Tractor  
4932 Route 30

11/20  
11 AM Sanctuary Discussion for  
the Church Family and the  
location will be announced.

11/23 Ecumenical Thanksgiving  
Eve Service to be  
announced

11/27 Advent Begins

## The Pastor's Pen

My first impression seeing the church after the flood was awe. It was incredible that water peeled the front steel doors back as if they were paper. It's hard to imagine the neighborhood under that much water. This awe eventually gave way to disappointment streaked with frustration. This event will always mark our lives. The question is how.

People are experiencing the range of emotions: feeling guilt, frustration, anger and thankfulness. We ought to be mindful of our mental health and the need to express these emotions, like to a friend who is willing to listen. But we also need to be even more mindful of our spiritual health. We need to be in prayer with God. That use of preposition is intentional, a lot of prayer is *at* God. He'll be patient



## Did you know?

The hymnals and pew Bibles were saved from the flood. They had been carried to the balcony on August 27.

and listen to the whining. However, real work of prayer begins when we start to listen. Our hearts begin to be laid bare and we realize our disappointments, frustrations, failures, and pride. Emotions aren't wrong or right. Emotions are a barometer to our hearts. But this is only the beginning of entering into the Triune life of God. Entering the dance of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit cannot be presupposed- it begins with honest listening and contrite heart before the God that made us, redeemed us and is holding on to us until all this will be made right.

Many people joke with me that they didn't prepare me for this sort of thing in Seminary. Like any joke, there is a kernel of truth attempting to be conveyed. No, indeed Seminary didn't include training for this skill set. But what the people did impress upon me is that more important than what we can do is who we are in Christ. This is more than enough preparation, and one doesn't need to go to graduate school to learn that! But this doesn't seem to be an area of strength of the church in America. One statistic says that 9 out of 13 clergy have prematurely left the ministry in the heaviest hit area by Hurricane Andrew. Why? Couldn't they handle the overwhelming need among the people? Or couldn't they form effective organizations to serve the community? Or couldn't they keep their wits about them as they rebuilt? Maybe everyone moved away? I doubt it any of this was true. All those things can be done to a certain degree of success. But what they don't do is address our true need. These things can be helpful- but they are no substitute for the life of God made true by Jesus Christ. And if the church isn't dealing with that, what are we dealing with?

A verse I've carried with me for a while has been Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not do harm, plans to give you hope and a future." It's on a lot of coffee mugs and greeting cards. The context of this verse is unsettling though. Jeremiah was an unpopular prophet. The people wanted everything to return to normal that minute. That wasn't God's plan. Jerusalem was destroyed and the people taken off to Babylon. And it was into that situation that the Lord spoke this promise and it would be many years until God fully unveiled the plan for the people in Jesus Christ. The promise of Jeremiah 29:11 was true then. And it became blazingly true on the Cross of Christ. It is true today. The Lord will prosper his people. But perhaps just not in the way that we had planned.

I have set up shop in Shawn and Kim Smith's Chiropractic office. They have things put back together nicely, coffee is on and the company is great. And they're back! (I didn't come up with that joke). I'm trying to get out and be available so if you need anything please don't hesitate to call.

*In Christ, Pastor Jeff*



### **WORSHIP SERVICE**

**We will continue to  
worship each Sunday at the  
Methodist Church, Main St**

**9:30 AM**

*We are grateful to our  
Methodist neighbors for sharing  
their facility with us while we  
work on our own building for  
safe return.*

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

**We are meeting each Sunday at  
9:30 in the Methodist Church.  
KIDS! Come join us!!**



# The Work Has Begun

## Volunteer Hands ~ Volunteer Time ~ Wonderful Donations The Plan for Recovery Unfolds

Shortly after the flood, Consistory met to consider how to proceed with recovery of our church facilities. Committees were set up for different areas of the building. Each committee has been charged to consider the function of their designated space and how that space might be repaired to create a facility where God's Kingdom may flourish. It is possible that some of those spaces may look different than they did prior to the 2011 flood. We are reminded that major changes were

made to our facilities following both the 1955 and 1996 floods, and in each case we were able to proceed with repairs that enhanced our ministries.

An email was sent out seeking volunteers to serve on the various committees. Many members of our church family have had to make major repairs to their own homes or businesses, and we did not want to add to their burden. Fortunately, several people did step forward to

serve, and the committees began meeting mid-September. Each committee has either a chairperson or liaison from Consistory. If you have any questions or suggestions about this process or ideas that you would like to share, please contact the committee chairperson with your thoughts. Lyrics from an old hymn remind us, *"A church is not a building. A church is not a steeple. A church is the people."* We thank God you were all safe during and after the storm. Please let Consistory know if your church family can help you at this difficult time.



### Committees

**Fellowship Hall** – Chairs: Lara Kelley, Kim Smith; liaison: Donna Wynia

**Kitchen** – Chair Mary Lou Ryan

**Food Pantry** – Chair Stan Roesler

**Sanctuary** – Chair Joan Youmans

The **Property Committee** will coordinate recovery for these spaces, and is co-chaired by Brian DeFeo and Stan Roesler.

The **Finance Committee** has been established to track expenses, to manage the recovery fund, and to record and acknowledge donations. Chair Henry Doerge, Liaison Charley Shoemaker

# Committees in Action

Committees are fervently working. Much progress has been made in many areas. Read below where each committee finds themselves and see how you can help.



## PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The Property Committee is focused on making the Fellowship Hall useable as soon as possible so that it will be available for worship, Sunday School, and other activities. The space has been professionally cleaned and sanitized, damaged electrical wiring has been replaced, and new wall insulation was installed. The next steps will be to cover the insulation with sheetrock, and then reinstall the fin-tube radiation.

After work on the Fellowship Hall is completed, attention will shift to the more heavily damaged Sanctuary. The original Sanctuary windows will be repaired, and glass storm windows will be installed. Also, the Sanctuary will be heated to the extent needed to minimize any further deterioration to the plaster walls and ceiling. Finally, proposals are being sought to replace the doors throughout the property. The Property Committee will be receiving recommendations from the specific area committees in order to oversee and coordinate all efforts to bring back up and running.

## FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The Fellowship Hall Committee has had a great time getting together to brainstorm and dream about how the space can be used again to serve our church and community. We have met three times and submitted a proposal that expresses

all our ideas. The Fellowship Hall currently has all the insulation up (thanks to our work day volunteers) and is ready for drywall. We look forward to the day when our church family can share a meal together under that roof and we pray for God's peace and guidance in all our decisions.



Did you know ... Prior to the flood of 1955 and its redesign, our Sanctuary had a dark Victorian style. Evidence of it can be seen now with the walls open.

## KITCHEN COMMITTEE

This group has met to inventory kitchen tools and supplies not damaged in the flood. Dishes, utensils etc. have been removed from the area and cleaned. They are in good storage until the kitchen welcomes their return. Discussion is focused on needs, and any needed space

## SANCTUARY COMMITTEE

This committee meets at least monthly to begin to shape our worship space. The flood destroyed all of the downstairs and so this (cont. p.6)

## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Kim Smith

Yes, we are still holding Sunday school! We meet after the children's sermon each week. The Methodist church has a Sunday school room upstairs that they have graciously allowed us to use. Our Sunday school theme this fall is "Come, Worship the Lord". We've been exploring what it means to worship as well as learning about creation. Of course, due to the recent flooding, Noah and his Ark have also been a popular topic. We've been doing as much as we can without supplies...and the children have been wonderful.

We're looking forward to the time when we'll all be back in our own space. When that time comes, we'll be looking to replenish our supplies. Between now and then, it would be wonderful if anyone with good organizational, list-making skills could help compile a list of items we'll need to purchase. If you'd like to help, please email me: [kim@midtel.net](mailto:kim@midtel.net)

## SPIRITUAL LIFE COMMITTEE

Stan Roesler

The Spiritual Life Committee's evening discussion group is seeking your guidance regarding topics or areas of interest you would be interested in exploring with others. Please call either Stan Roesler (827-8745) or Jim Spencer (827-4448) with suggestions for discussion.

To help get your thinking started, here are just a few of the many possibilities:

- The story behind your favorite hymn(s)
- Recovering the spirit, vigor, conviction of the new-born church of New Testament times
- Life is a game, a game which is moving toward a goal. There are rules to follow in lie, and the game will not go on forever. How then shall we play the game, from a Christian perspective?
- Meditations for church lay leaders

- Spiritual formation connecting with the Divine Center, God
- Total forgiveness
- Augustine
- Money and values
- Readings from Corrie ten Boom, a Dutch concentration camp survivor who became a world-wide witness, a troubadour of Jesus
- A deeper understanding of Jesus
- A Christian interpretation of what happens when the living soul leaves the body, frequently erroneously refer to as death
- A series of spiritual meditations by Eugenia Price
- Reflections on the 12 core aspects of Christian faith by Scott Peck

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Mary Lou Ryan



We have a location for our packing party! Karen and Jack Miller have generously offered their showroom.

Plan to be there at 2:00 on Sunday, November 6 for some serious packing and lots of fun. This is an event for the whole church family. Everyone will enjoy choosing gifts to bless a child in need.

You are encouraged to bring photographs of yourselves and personal notes to include in the boxes you pack. Children want to know who sent their wonderful gifts and why. Those who find a photograph in their boxes are always thrilled. In answer to the question of why strangers would send gifts, the children are told that it is because the donors love Jesus. That opens the door for children and families to learn about the greatest gift of all, our Lord and Savior.

We are still in need of a few gifts and donations to cover shipping and discipleship materials. Please contact Mary Lou Ryan at 827-4093 if you are able to help with either of these. Thank you for supporting Operation Christmas Child through your prayers and donations.



## Sunday School Memory Verse

GENESIS 17:7

“I will make my covenant with you. It will last forever. It will be between me and you and your children; after you for all time to come. I will be your God. And I will be the God of all your family after you.”



## A MEMORY VERSE FOR ALL

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not do harm, plans to give you hope and a future.”

too will be a big project. Our goal is to be sure our worship area best meets our worship style, needs and local personality. The committee is inviting all of you to a church meeting on November 20, right after service. Location to be announced. We will have small group break out sessions to discuss and collect your input how best to organize our space, complimenting what we do in our sanctuary and how we do it. Our discussion will be led by, facilitator, Phyllis Palsma. We plan no more than a 2-hour meeting, and light refreshment will be offered. An activity area will be arranged for children, so that parents may actively participate in the discussion. Please reserve Nov 20 to help!

\*\*\*\*\*

### FOOD PANTRY COMMITTEE

While the food pantry remains closed due to space and access issues, the committee is delighted by outside assistance and donation. When the pantry is ready to open and serve our community, it appears it will open in great shape due to donations and support from outside and inside. We look forward to that day and are grateful to all that this announcement can be so strong and positive.

\*\*\*\*\*

### FINANCE

Many of you have asked about the financial picture and need that are now upon our church as we recover

from the Flood of 2011. A committee has been formed and is now working to define just what that financial picture and burden will look like. Right now a “bottom line” is not clear as assessment for damage and repair continues. Committees are working diligently with their pieces of assessment in each area of the building in conjunction with the property committee. Insurance estimates are being sought as well as recovery funds from such sources as FEMA and others to help build this picture. So we will need to wait a bit longer before this information may be accurately passed on to you. Despite the hardship families are feeling in our community and surrounding areas, we have been blessed with several donations of money and time from you and our neighbors. We are most fortunate and grateful. Certainly more donation and support will be needed and a more concrete answer as to how much is needed will be coming. In the meantime, donation and support for recovery and rebuilding is welcome. A separate account has been established for those donations. Anyone wishing to contribute to this fund is asked to write their check to the Middleburgh Reformed Church, noting Recovery Fund in the memo area. Thank you to all for your most generous donations and support furthering our work and service to our Lord.