

MRC NEWSLETTER

Middleburgh Reformed Church PO Box 212 Middleburgh, NY 12122
www.middleburghreformed.org



The Sanctuary Progresses

With the hopes and prayers of all, soon we will worship in our sanctuary.

The Sanctuary Committee continues their weekly / biweekly meetings charged with restoring our sanctuary for worship. While considerable work of our contractor, Dimensions North, continues, now finally, when one looks into the sanctuary, progress can be seen! With a new basement in tact, floor joists are now in place, and flooring has arrived ready to be put in place. First, however,

final decisions about the balcony must be made. The balcony needs serious attention in support to assure its safety. At one of our last meetings, Rich Rappleyea, of Dimensions North brought drawings and suggestions for its repair.

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Summer Calendar

Dates to mark on your calendar. Info to clip for a frig magnet.

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Sunday School

Wear the armor of God and always feel His protection.

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Pastor's Pen

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

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The Sanctuary Progresses (continued from page 1)



MISSION

Our everyday Christian lives are marked by Mission, our reaching out in Christian love to others. Whether it be a hello and smile to a stranger in the grocery store, a letter to a far away relative or friend dealing with a personal challenge, our touch reflects what He has taught us.

In this way, MRC actively participates in touching children around the world with Holiday Shoeboxes, spreading His word.

Please shop for gifts to fill shoeboxes for children of the world, in need. Don't forget crayons, looseleaf paper, and pencils when they are on sale in August!

The committee has investigated options, and has chosen to move forward in repairing the balcony, being strongly guided with the economic reality of major expense to the project if it were to be removed and the organ relocated in a downstairs design. On June 4, work for balcony repair began, and one of the first priorities was to affix the balcony to both side walls and the back. Work on the balcony should go swiftly, and upon completion of that task, you will see flooring being laid in the sanctuary. Solid Douglas fir was chosen, adding to the strength already in place with the foundation.

The committee has been faced with and continues to be faced with many difficult decisions, remaining fiscally responsible. The work continues and we look forward to returning to our area of worship in the near future.

It is said you need a firm foundation to build your faith on. Because we have a faith firmly based on the love of Christ, we will have a firmer foundation for our place of worship to glorify our heavenly Father.

-Joan Youmans,
Chairperson

Meals for Volunteers

In April we helped to feed volunteers who came to the area to assist in the recovery effort. Those who served the meals were richly blessed to meet several folks from Pennsylvania. As we shared meals, we also shared our stories with each other. Hearing about their history of mission work was nothing short of inspirational. More opportunities to serve those who come to serve are scheduled for June and July. Watch for sign-up sheets at church and email messages.

Thank you in advance for your support!

One of the meals for which we are responsible is supper on Sunday, July 15. We will host the volunteers for a picnic at our church with the whole church family and others from the community. Bring a dish to share, lawn chairs, and lawn games. Invite your neighbors too! Following supper, we will have a hymn sing and vespers.

-Mary Lou Ryan



Sunday School Closes with a Bang!

The beauty of God shines in the faces of our children.

Sunday School students closed their 2012 Sunday School year in full armor during the Sunday June 10 service. Almost 20 students faithfully and actively attended Sunday School this year, and learned to equip themselves in the Armor of God, placing trust in God, and knowing he walks beside them giving them courage and strength every single day, regardless of what they may face. And using the spirited music, role playing and quoting memory verses, showing how they apply to their everyday lives, the students took full command of the service, reminding us all “to have no fear, He walks beside us all the way.”

Students and the congregation thanked Kim Smith, Donna Wynia, and Chloe Snyder for their dedicated work as teachers in the program. Students have enjoyed a new aspect of their Christian lessons, sharing one

Sunday a month, Mission Sunday with Pastor Jeff. Students have learned where to look at home, in their community and in their world for deeds to others, expressing elements of their faith. And everyone has enjoyed the work Russ Ryan has leant the program this year. Several Sundays, the youth have joined in with the Adult Choir, filling the air with musical message.

A special thanks to all for helping this year be a marvelous year of Christian growth for our young members. Sunday School will take a break during summer, and many children have plans of enjoying time in the local day camp program and Camp Fowler. Happy, sunny days to all!

(Thank you, Rylie Smith, for helping with this article.)

THE PASTOR'S PEN

The view shocked me out of my anxiety. The details of flying were enough to worry about, but added to that was a canceled flight, a tiny plane to Toronto that was all window seats, and the full view of the pilots flipping switches in the cockpit. But ten minutes after takeoff we had view of the Schoharie Valley. The lower and upper reservoirs of the Power Authority seemed to be the same elevation. The drama and the beauty of the moment had me, I'll admit, a little choked up. My circumstances had me so preoccupied about getting there that darkness surrounded my vision until God broke through and I was giving thanks.

Paul writes in Colossians: "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." There is a lot of "*whatevers*" and "*alls*" in life. Most of it is not so exciting. Most of it is not Sunday morning or Friday night. But Christ asks us to see all of life through him. When Paul writes: "in his name", it is shorthand for- in the story of Jesus, the Son of God, the Word of God. The Father spoke and the Schoharie Valley was, in Christ. So Paul reminds us that we are invited into a life of thanks to God, in Christ. Returning to the Father with thanks through Christ completes the intention of life. We are to be aware of God's grace and give thanks in the "*whatever*" moments. At the conference I was blindly rushing as a professor reminded us: "If you leave God out of the little things, you'll leave him out of 90% of life."

The Dutch painters of the 17th century marking a change in course painted scenes with ordinary people doing normal things. This was novel against the late Renaissance with its' classical sophistication and iconic images (like Michelangelo). So it was a striking move to paint the "working person." Jan Vemeer's *Astronomer*, portrays a man touching a globe at a desk facing a window or the famous girl with the pearl earring. Nicholas Maes' *A lady snipping parsnips with a child*, is doing, well, just that. They are common moments that happen all the time. In both these cases the faces are full of light from a window or some outside source. But it's more than just natural sunlight- it's the insistence that God in Christ can be experienced, even in the sciences and domestic arts.

When we pray: *your will be done*, we are not just praying for the right end. We are praying for the right means. The gospel is just as interested in the ways of life as it is the destination. Being aware of God's grace and beauty in each moment expands life rather than diminish it. This is life from God, life eternal.

The health of a person (and any group of people, including church) isn't measured in business or even being nice. It is measured in giving thanks to the Father in Christ whenever and in all. When beauty breaks in and we see it we can cultivate it or move on. That is what our eyes will be filled with and that is what others will see in us.

Since it's summer, on my current reading list is Sherlock Holmes stories, especially after the recent BBC series came out. I also just discovered Edward Hoagland in "Notes from the Century Before." It is about remote British Columbia about one hundred years ago after Hoagland spent three months in a cabin in 1966 learning oral history. Wonderfully rich writing. I also just finished *On the Road*, by Cormac McCarthy. Terrifying and eye opening to grace in a world barren by a cataclysmic event wiping out almost all life on earth. No, I will not be watching the movie, I don't care how cool Vigo Morrison is. This writing is too good.

~Pastor Jeff

Trash and Treasure Sale

Leslie Hooper

**Saturday August 18, 2012
9 AM - 3 PM**

There are three ways you can help make this event successful! First, start sorting and saving items to donate to the sale. Come help us set up! We will get it all ready on Friday August 17, between 8 AM and 8 PM. Stop by for as long as you can lend a hand. Or mark the 18th to help at the sale. Cleaning up at 3 PM needs many hands!

As our Fellowship Hall is used by several community groups on a regular basis, advance storage and storage of leftovers is not always possible at our facility. **Please try to bring your donations on Friday, August 17 from 8 AM to 8 PM.** We do have some limited storage space. Starting August 1, smaller, boxed items can be placed in the conference room. There is space in our shed for a few larger items, but the shed is kept locked so you will need to call ahead for access. Also, large and/or construction items

such as appliances, windows, cabinets, etc. cannot go into our dumpster. If you bring these items and they do not sell, please help us by removing them after the sale.

Please call Leslie Hooper (827 4754) if you have questions or would like to volunteer some time with this event. On Friday and Saturday, August 17 & 18, call the church phone (827 5134) during the day. Thanks for supporting this fundraiser for church!



Popular Items to Donate

- Toys Rugs Tools Books
- Dishes / cookware Furniture
- Bedding Linens Draperies
- Jewelry Collectibles
- Garden supplies Household items
- Sports equipment Holiday decorations
- Craft Supplies
- Small appliances

SORRY - NO

Clothing

TVs or Computers



Save the Date!

Terry Pilon, area coordinator for Operation Christmas Child, has recently returned from a shoe box distribution in Uganda. She will share stories and pictures of that adventure with us on July 23 at 6:30 p.m. Dessert will be served! Plan to attend with your whole family to hear about the impact of a simple gift given in Jesus' name. Bring friends!

Faith and Determination
Past-Present-Future

June 2012

For 280 years there have been many times that have tested the faith and determination of those who belong to our church family here in Middleburgh. Burning of the first sanctuary, reoccurring floods, building projects, new pastors, membership changes, etc.—have affected each generation of those who have worshipped the Lord in this place. The recent flood and our ongoing recovery efforts are now part of this history.

We are not experts in the flood recovery business, but we have had a lot of experience in dealing with flooding. We do not have unlimited resources, but we are blessed to have resources available. We have not gone as fast as some would want, but we have progressed farther than others thought we could. We have not all agreed with every decision, but we have all had the opportunity to participate. Our decisions as a worshipping congregation come from committees formed from members of our church family. The nature of a committee is to discuss options and make decisions for the good of all. We have questions and concerns about everything, but we have to trust in the Lord and in each other that our faith and determination will carry us through once again.

After the flood of January 1996, the congregation had to consider the building project being proposed at that time and what could be done to minimize the damage of possible future floods. It was decided to replace several older, lower buildings with a new,

higher building which could meet our needs and be part of our mission in service to our community. While some proposed trying to move or replace the church itself, our 1786 sanctuary stands today in testimony to our collective desire to preserve its history and beauty for generations to come. In 1997-1998 modifications were made to the sanctuary. The organ motor was moved to the balcony and the heating system to the attic of the new building. The outside cellar entrance was sealed, flood doors were built and we hoped and prayed we would be spared from future floods.

Although the changes made then were wise and would have helped to lessen the damage from a “normal” flood, no amount of preparation would be enough for the devastation of August 28, 2011. Committees were set up and the work began. With grateful hearts we returned to the newer portions of our building on January 29, 2012. Our beautiful sanctuary will take more time, more work, more decisions, more faith and more determination in order to recover this very special place.

Again our collective desire is to rebuild our sanctuary for worship of the Lord. Again, decisions are being made about design and function, how to do the work and how to pay for it. Again, we hope to minimize the damage that future flooding could cause. The foundation and cellar of our sanctuary are stronger than before and will be easier to clean. The balcony will be stronger and safer to use. The flooring will be beautiful and able to withstand flood waters if they come again. As the work continues, we recognize that the decisions we are making now will also benefit future generations who will worship in the Middleburgh Reformed Church.

~Leslie Hooper

Property Committee Report



The Property Committee has completed work on the job description and guidelines for the position of Property Caretaker. The Building Use Form has been revised and is available for those who wish to use our facilities. Building use policies and cleanup checklists are posted so that those using our facility will know what we expect and will be able to do their own set up and clean up. A “room by room” punch list is also posted for those who wish to volunteer some time in the continuing recovery of our facilities. A church workday will be scheduled for late August.

In an effort to decrease expenses related to property, it is hoped members of the congregation will volunteer to help with tasks we need to have done. Basically, we have three choices: we do things ourselves; we pay to have things done for us; or things just won't get done.

Please call Leslie Hooper, chair of the Property Committee, (827 4754) if you have concerns or questions or would like to volunteer for tasks on our recovery list.



Great Riches

MRC Recovery Finance Committee

Imagine a people fleeing from bondage to follow a leader to their promised land. Our mental picture probably includes people carrying bundles of a few meager possessions. Yet when we read the account of the Israelites in Exodus 12:35-36, we learn that God prepared his people for their journey by providing great riches.

Later in the story of the Israelites, the time came to construct the tabernacle, a place of worship. (See Exodus 35-39.) Moses instructed the people to “bring the Lord’s offering” and for those with skills to employ them in the project. We learn that God’s people gave so generously that Moses had to command them to stop giving!

From what kind of bondage has God delivered you: addiction, disease, broken relationship, financial difficulty...? How has God blessed you: good health, family, friends, enough to eat...? How have you responded to God? Does your offering express your gratitude for all that God has done in your life, for the great riches you have received?

Today we find ourselves in a situation somewhat like that of the Israelites as we rebuild the sanctuary and seek to replace contents from our facility lost in the flood. At this time, it appears that even by depleting our investments, we are falling short of the funds needed to complete the reconstruction project. We ask you to prayerfully consider how your resources and skills may be utilized for the glory of God in our recovery project.

Financial contributions may be sent to *MRC Recovery Fund*, PO Box 112, Middleburgh, NY 12122. To volunteer your time and skills, please contact Leslie Hooper at 827-4757. Thank you.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

SUMMER CALENDAR

- July 15: Picnic for Flood Volunteers
- July 16 – 20: Community Day Camp
- July 27: Ice Cream Social at Band Concert
- July 28: Booth at Arts & Crafts Festival
- August 5: 300th Anniversary Ecumenical Service
- August 18: Trash & Treasure Sale

SPECIAL NOTES

- July / August Worship 9:30 AM
- Communion: August 19
- Consistory Mtgs: 2nd Thursday, 7 PM
- Bible Study: Thurs., 3:30 PM, at Thelma's
- Food Pantry: Wed. 4-6 PM, Sat. 9-11 AM

CONSISTORY MEMBERS AND COMMITTEES

ELDERS

- Jim Spencer – Vice-President, Consistory
- Sarah Bramer – Youth Education
- Charles Shoemaker - Stewardship
- Donna Wynia - Fellowship

DEACONS

- Brian DeFeo – Benevolence
- Leslie Hooper – Property & Spiritual Life
- Karen Miller - Insurance
- Stan Roessler – Stewardship & Investments

CONTACT INFORMATION

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