

Jhe Church Bell

The First Reformed Church Walden, New York Church Bell, Volume 69, Issue I January & February 2024

Looking Backward to Grow Forward

This time of year, it is easy to overcommit, overextend, to rush ahead, to become super-busy. After all the holiday celebrations with unrealized or realized hopes and fears, we find ourselves in a new year. 2024 is stretched out like a clean canvas beckoning our first strokes of paint for a picture long to emerge. One of the gifts of my grandfather was painting in oils. I was always fascinated to witness the scene slowly coming together as he carefully and intentionally applied layers of color to the canvas. One thing that struck me most was that he didn't start with the pigments but started by applying a thin base coat of off white. Then he would take a pencil and sketch out what he wanted for the painting, carefully working with scale and perspective until he was pleased with this ghostly outline of what would be full of color and depth.



The new year is upon us. It is a canvas upon which our life story will be painted in brilliant colors. There will be things about which we cannot change and things which we can. There will be challenges we can accept or that we can politely reject. There will be foreseeable things and unforeseeable things. But now is the time to take out our pencils and begin to sketch the outline of what we hope, with the help of God, our portrait of the next twelve months will look like when completed.

Yes, we all make New Year's resolutions and then break them even before the month of February. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about setting aside some quiet time to create a blueprint or pattern of how you envision the year 2024 will look when you enter 2025. It will require some thoughtful reflection on looking at 2023, asking some basic questions: what went well? What didn't go well? What was within my control? What was out of my control? What could I have done differently? What were surprises I liked and didn't like? All these questions will add up to helping you see the paint strokes that created 2023.

The farmer in me is looking back over 2023 to see what seeds or plants I need to order for a more profitable. I am looking over when I planted and what resulted from planting at that time. I am sketching out a plan, an outline, and a blueprint for the year based on what I would like to see by the end of next year. Discipleship in our lives is no different. Our faith should be ever growing, ever deepening, ever surprising us with new understanding of God. So, I challenge you to look back on your faith development over the past year to see what you would like to change, update, or push further. The same is also true for the church. What would you love to see the church be at the end of 2024. Help the Consistory to pencil out an outline so that we can fill it with the beautiful colors of God's blessings. Now is the time to plan. Or as someone once said: "Those who fail to plan., plan to fail." Let us paint a beautiful, expectant picture of where we see God leading us as we enter2024.

Pastor Jim O'Connell





Sabbath as Resistance



For Lent, Phyllis and I will again be leading a book study on Wednesday evenings at 7 PM beginning February 21st and concluding March 27th in our home and via Zoom. We have chosen a book by noted Old Testament Theologian, Walter Brueggemann, titled "Sabbath as Resistance." The subtitle is Saying NO to the culture of Now. The book can be ordered from the Presbyterian Book store or

by going online to <u>www.wjkbooks.com</u>. Walter takes us through a six-chapter examination of what Sabbath can mean to us: Sabbath and the First Commandment, Resistance to Anxiety, Resistance to Coercion, Resistance to Exclusivism, Resistance to Multitasking, Sabbath and the Tenth Commandment. "For the most part Contemporary Christians pay little attention to Sabbath." I remember in my childhood the "blue laws" which enforced a uniform code of store closures and even stricter adherence in some communities to what you could do outside in your yard and community. There is one community where you couldn't even drive your car on a Sunday. Fortunately, we have gotten away from these rigid interpretations of the Sabbath, but at the same time have lost a critical part of our faith development and discipleship growth. This book study will help us examine our lives in the face of the intent of the Old Testament and law, giving us a new appreciation for what Sabbath can mean in our lives and in the life of the church. There will be a sign-up sheet in the sanctuary and in fellowship for those who would like to participate. The more the merrier!

Lent is Coming

This year Easter comes early, March 31. What that means is that the Season of Lent begins early with Ash Wednesday kicking it off on February 14. We again anticipate the Wallkill Valley Lenten Series starting with the Ash Wednesday service and rotating through several churches throughout the season and



featuring the preaching of several of our preachers. As of this publication the leaders have yet to meet and pick the theme and rotations of preachers and churches. The first worship will be Ash Wednesday 2/14 at 7pm. We are hoping to be the host church for the beginning of the Lenten Season, and again host on Saint Patrick's day weekend, Sunday, March 18. The Sunday services will be preceded by the host church offering a soup and sandwich dinner. It is always a wonderful way to hear many of the preachers in our classis and reconnect with the members of our local Reformed Churches.

Hanging of the Greens

How beautiful the church looks for Christmas! Many thanks to the many hands who helped. The men did the roping, putting up the tree and erecting the creche with the assistance of Joe Weikel, Bill Freeman, John Harrington, and Kevin Harrington. We had 15 children in attendance making the ornaments and paper chain and then hanging the ornaments. The Candelabra were decorated by Jan Goutell and Addison Den Bleyker. Many thanks to Carol Ann Freeman and the Barringer children for helping with this task. Wreaths were made by Ariana and

Barringer children for helping with this task. Wreaths were made by Ariana and Addison Den Bleyker. Boxwood stars were assembled by many hands with the youngest being Aleksa Reichle (Dot was looking down from heaven so pleased). A great meal was prepared by Ariana Den Bleyker, Phyllis O'Connell, Joe Weikel, Jan Goutell, Jan Hanen. Many hands make the job easier!

Submitted by Bunnie Reichle



Advent Wreath Lighting

Many thanks to the families who assisted in the service for the candle lighting: Barringer Family, Crist Family, Lopez Family, Freeman Family and Harrington Family. Submitted by Bunnie Reichle

Christmas Poinsettias

<u>Given by</u>
Dominic Bonasio
Harold Bruggemann Jr.
Carol Ann & Bill Freeman
The Heitz & Sairrino Families
Jan & Phil Goutell

Jan & Phil Goutell Susan Kennedy Mary S. Mentz Phyllis O'Connell

Nancy & Nicky Petrolo Schoonmaker Schoonmaker Joe Weikel Joe Weikel

In Memory of Anne Bonasio Loretta C. Bruggemann **Doris May Rafuse** Barbara Heitz Philip & Bertha Goutell and Gordon & Dotty Parker June Goutell Loved Ones Don Mentz and Parents lim & leanette O'Connell and Warren & Barbara Henseler Clarence & Lucy Nauman Our Parents **Our Friends** Katerina Weikel Katerina Weikel

<u>Given by</u> Schoonmaker Schoonmaker

James & Phyllis O'Connell James & Phyllis O'Connell Phyllis O'Connell In Honor of Our Children Our Grand and Great Grand Children Family & Friends Family & Friends Our Church Family



Worship Team (1 of 5)(Worhip Team pictures selected by Joe)



Photo credit: Jerin Thamby

All glory praise and honor to God the Father and thanksgiving for His providence in Jesus Christ! Welcome to the New Year as we anticipate wonderful blessings the Lord has for us in 2024. Let us keep our eyes on Him and our hope in His plans as we enter this new time of our lives.

We pray our worship uplifts your spirit and leads us to a deeper trust in Him and building in us a heart for service to His Kingdom on Earth.

We are so looking forward to worship in the New Year and all the wonder of what this year may bring.

First up will be our work taking down the greens and the tree and its ornaments and placing them in storage. We'll accomplish this starting at 9:30AM on Saturday January 6th. There are tasks for just about every physical ability level and certainly many hands will make light of this work, so we encourage you all to consider coming out to lend a hand.

We are now in Epiphany which culminates with Transfiguration Sunday February 11th.



We are in the planning stages of our annual Scout Sunday will also be on Transfiguration Sunday. Troup 33 will take as they have in years past a large part of that service. The Scouts will serve as acolytes, lead the congregation in the call to worship, scripture readings and prayer.

Worship Team Continued (2 of 5)



I always look forward to these services where we will recognize the generations of young men and the faithful leaders from the community who have given of their time, talents, and treasures to impart upon these boys the Christian values and guiding principles of what it means to be a Scout. We pray the Scouts may long continue this tradition planting the seeds of citizenship and responsibility in caring for the welfare of others and that we all might support and uplift these tenants every day of our lives. Our most heartfelt thanks to the Boy Scouts, their families and their dedicated leaders.



The Season of Lent begins Ash Wednesday which this year will be on Wednesday February 14th. We are in the midst of planning another Lenten Series of Services with other Reformed Churches of the Hudson Valley. These services are held in the evening of each of the six Sundays in Lent. Although not yet determined at the time of this writing, we hope for a (likely?) return to the practice of having the host church provide a light dinner of soup, sandwiches, and of course desserts at about 6PM prior to the Lenten service at 7PM.

The Worship Team has volunteered First Reformed to host the Lenten Service on Saint Patrick's Day March 17th as other churches are engaged in those festivities in their towns. I'm certain there will be more information forth coming on this so keep an eye out for this year's Lenten Series Brochures.

Broadcasts of our Services has been quite successful (ok, not perfect!) and will continue on our Facebook page. <u>https://www.facebook.com/FRCWalden</u> as well as being simulcast on Revered O'Connell's Facebook Page. What a blessing to be able to reach out and worship with those from home near or far. As always, and I do mean always, in our on-going efforts to improve your on-line worship experience, your constructive criticism and comments are most very welcome! I encourage you to let me know how we might improve them!

We are ever so thankful and give God the glory for everyone who has made the choice to attend our worship Services. We encourage you to talk with friends and neighbors. Invite them to come and experience our services for themselves in the safe and welcoming environment of our sanctuary.

Worship Team Continued (3 of 5)

I want to thank God for everyone who contributes to our Worship Services. There are indeed so many and you too can contribute as well! We are always looking to bring more people in to active participants in Worship Services. There are many and widely varied roles you can take depending upon the Gifts God has given you that might lead you to be one of our readers of scriptures, leading the congregation in the responsive Call to Worship, or singing in Choir and/or Praise Team, or offer special music, or greet congregants before service, or be an acolyte, or help decorate the sanctuary with flowers or making banners to display, or assisting in sound and broadcast production. Really, there are so many areas the Worship Team would welcome your contributions, and it is our deep and sincere desire to include as many as possible in our services.



PRAISE TEAM

The Praise Team meets Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM for rehearsal in Crist Chapel and you are always most welcome to stop on by and have some fun with us! Even if you're not yet comfortable singing or playing in front of the congregation we encourage you to share in the lift in spirit we experience by singing His praises with us. There is safety in numbers!

We are so very blessed and appreciate Bunnie Reichle for sharing her many talents in music and organization. We look forward to the Choir Anthems this season which she has already selected through to Easter!

We are also very grateful too for our guest accompanist's for providing piano accompaniment when Bunnie is out of town. God has blessed us each year with even more talented souls to contribute to our worship services.

Foremost we give thanks to God for bringing us Reverend O'Connell, for his teaching, leadership, inspiring, enlightening, and uplifting sermons, for his mentoring, caring, prayer and selflessly sharing his wonderful gifts of music and voice to our worship services. Thank you, God!

I love to list for you the lyrics of our Hymns of the Months. They are very much like prayers we can use to glorify God.

In January we will singing verse #1 from Hymn #362 "Morning Has Broken" as the acolytes light the Christ Candle. Authored by Eleanor Farjeon in 19321 and arranged by David Evans in 1927 it is based on Exodus 16:7, Psalm 5:3, Psalm 59:16 and Lamentations 3:22-23.

¹ Morning has broken like the first morning, Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

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Worship Team (4 of 5)

Our Hymn of the Month in January will be #370 "God of Our Life". Authored by Hugh T. Kerr in 1916 and composed by Charles H. Purday in 1860, it is based on Psalm 31:15, Psalm 102:27 and Lamentations 3:22.

¹ God of our life, through all the circling years, we trust in You; in all the past, through all our hopes and fears, Your hand we view. With each new day, when morning lifts the veil, we own your mercies, Lord, which never fail.

² God of the past, our times are in your hand our life, with us abide. Lead us by faith to hopes true Promised Land; be now our guide. With you to bless, the darkness shines as light, And faith's fair vision changes into sight.

³ God of the coming years, thro' paths unknown we follow you; When we are strong, Lord leave us not alone: our faith renew. Be now for us in life our daily bread, Our heart's true home when all our years have sped.

We will end our services in January with verse 1 of the Departing Hymn #799 "God Himself Is with Us" authored by Gerhardt Tersteegen in 1719 and composed by Joachim Neander in 1680 and based on Psalm 47:7, Isaiah 6:3 and Hebrews 2:20.

¹ God himself is with us: let us now adore him, and with awe appear before him. God is in his temple; all within keep silence, and before him bow with reverence. Him alone do we own as our God and Savior; praise his name forever.

In February we'll sing verse 1 from Hymn #777 "The Lord is Here". Authored by Timothy Dudley-Smith in 1985, composed by Jessie S. Irvine in 1871 and arranged by David Grant in 1872, it is based on Matthew 18:20.

¹ The Lord is here! His promised word is evermore the same, himself to be where two or three are gathered in his name.

Our Hymn of the Month for February will be #569 "Living for Jesus a Life That is True". Authored by Thomas O. Chisholm in 1917 and composed by C. Harold Lowden in 1915, it is based on Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 11:28; 2nd Corinthians 3:17; 2nd Corinthians 1:10; Colossians 3:17; and Hebrews 13:21.

¹ Living for Jesus al life that is true, striving to please him in all that I do; Yielding allegiance, glad hearted and free, This is the pathway of blessing for me.

Worship Team (4 of 5)

[Refrain] O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to thee, for thou, in thy atonement, didst give thyself for me: I own no other Master, my heart shall be thy throne; my life I give, hence forth to live, O Christ, for thee alone.

² Living for Jesus who died in my place,
Bearing on Calvary my sin and disgrace;
Such love constrains me to answer his call,
Follow his leading and give him my all. [Refrain]

³ Living for Jesus wherever I am, Doing each duty his holy name, Willing to suffer affliction and loss Deeming each trial a part of my cross. ^[Refrain]

⁴ Living for Jesus through earth's little while, My dearest treasure the light of his smile, Seeking the lost ones he died to redeem, Bringing the weary to find rest in him. [Refrain]

We will end our services in February with the Departing Hymn #842 "Lord Let us Now Depart in Peace", composed by George Whelpton in the 19th century is based on Matthew 18:20 and Luke 2:29.

¹ Lord, let us now depart in peace, who in thy name are gathered here; disclose the brightness of thy face, and be forever near. Amen.

All are welcome in our worship services, and we encourage you all to invite a friend or a neighbor to worship alongside us. The Worship Team encourages you all to look inward, take an inventory of your God given gifts and talents then prayerfully consider offering them service to the Lord. There are no bounds to the blessings that can come from the least of our offerings. No gift is insignificant. All have a divinely intended impact. We may never know how our service will touch someone else's life.

With love in Christ Jesus,

Joe Weikel (845) 820-2317 sjbw@ymail.com

Property committee

We continue to do repairs as needed around the church and I thank Bill Freeman for his help on this. He knows a lot more about this building and what is needed than I do but I am learning. Most repairs this month have been minor which we are thankful for. We do have some projects that we are planning to attack this winter and would welcome assistance from anyone willing to come and work with us for a few hours. We typically work there one day a week for a few hours and take care of what we can during that time.

Our biggest accomplishment this month was that we installed new smart bulbs in

the chandeliers in the sanctuary. This will allow us to dim and control the lights in the sanctuary by remote control. This is only possible with the installation of the new wireless internet throughout the

If you are interested in helping us with any projects and have a few hours to give please give me a call or send me a text or email.

Jerry Hanen 917-968-1535 Jerrylhanen@gmail.com

VBS 2024

Yes, it is that time of year already for planning for VBS 2024. Our theme is The Great Jungle Journey: An Epic Cruise from Genesis to Revelation. Plan on the first week of August. More news to follow. Start spreading the word!!!!

Submitted by Bunnie Reichle

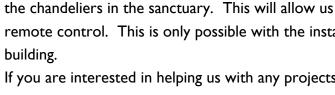


Sam Shorter



On December 8th, Sam Shorter finally got to see his brother Frank, after about 30 years. Sam's friend, Lisa, and her fiancé, Ray, along with John Harrington, met Sam's brother Frank and his wife Michelle, down at the veterans facility, where Sam is living. What a blessing! They were both very happy to see each other.

Submitted by John Harrington





GATHERING HOPE BOOK CLUB

The Gathering Hope Book Club meets in person once a month and a Zoom option is always available. The next meeting is February 5th at Jan Hanen's house. The club is open to all members of the church and the greater Walden community. The next meeting is February 5th at Jan Hanen's house.

The book we are studying is Shade of Light and a few copies might still be available in the Ramapo-Catskills Library System. Additionally, the novel is available as a KINDLE e-book and through Audible.

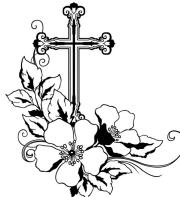
For more information or to participate, please contact Ariana Den Bleyker at denbleya27@gmail.com or 845-825-0288.

WOMEN'S STUDY SUPPORT GROUP

On Sundays, the women gather in the Fellowship Hall at 8:15am to study and reflect on lessons learned from Women of the Bible. Feel free to join us for the first time if you are able. We would love to have you. If you would like a study guide ordered for you, please text or call Phyllis O'Connell (201-294-2293)

SUNDAY'S FELLOWSHIP HOUR

If you are able to make a food donation for our Sunday Fellowship hour, please speak to Phyllis O'Connell. The following items are always appreciated: coffee, bottled water, boxed juice, veggie tray with dip, fruit platter, cheese/crackers, and/or finger desserts. And the first Sunday of each month we have Soup & Bread. Please bring your favorite soup to share.







<u>Some Other Reminders</u>

Praise Team: rehearsing Wednesdays at 6:30 PM in Crist Chapel. All are welcome.

Operation Christmas Child: we collect supplies for this mission through-out the year, see Carol Ann Freeman for more information.

Men's Breakfast: every Saturday, in Fellowship Hall, from 7:30am to 8:30am, suggested donation of \$5.

Choir: rehearsals are on a short pause, but will start again very soon and are on Tuesday mornings, from 9:15 AM to 10:00 AM. The rehearsals are during the hours the Preschool is in session so the doors to the church will be locked but someone from choir will be there to open the door.

Backpack Snack Attack: are packing on Wednesdays at 5:30 PM for the 23/24 school year. See Angel Santana Sr. for more information.

Communion: is on the first Sunday of the month, during the worship service.

Healing Service: the next healing service will be during the worship service on Sunday, March 31st.

Montgomery Food Pantry: The First Reformed Church is scheduled to volunteer at the Food Pantry in February. The church contacts for the Food Pantry are Diane Crist-Moore and Ariana Den Bleyker. The Food Pantry operates on Tuesdays from IOAM–Noon & on Wednesdays 6:30-8:00PM. The items needed at the pantry are: Pasta, sauce, rice, macaroni & cheese, tuna, beans, instant mashed potatoes, peanut butter, jelly, canned veggies, canned fruit, canned soup, cereal, baby food, baby cereal, formula and diapers.

Saturday Night Worship Service: will be starting up again soon and will be at 7:00 PM in Fellowship Hall, every other week.



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January 2024									
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat			
	1	2 9:15 AM Choir Practice	3 6:30 Praise Team	4 ENL at Crist Farm	5	6 7:30 Men's Breakfast			
7 Communion 8:15 Women's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Soup & Bread	8	9	10 6:30 Praise Team	II ENL at Crist Farm	12	I3 7:30 Men's Breakfast			
14 8:15 Women's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	15	16	17 6:30 Praise Team	18 7pm Consistory ENL at Crist Farm	19	20 7:30 Men's Breakfast			
21 8:15 Women's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	22	23	24 6:30 Praise Team	25	26	27 7:30 Men's Breakfast			
28 8:15 Women's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	29	30	3 I 6:30 Praise Team						

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February 2024										
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat				
				I	2	3 7:30 Men's Breakfast				
4 Communion 8:15 Ladie's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Soup & Bread	5 7:30pm Book Club offsite	6 9:15 AM Choir Practice Food Pantry 10AM–Noon	7 6:30 Praise Team Food Pantry 6:30-8:00PM	8	9	10 7:30 Men's Breakfast				
11 8:15 Ladie's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	12	13 9:15 AM Choir Practice Food Pantry 10AM–Noon	14 Lent Begins 7:00PM Ash Wednesday Service Food Pantry 6:30-8:00PM	15 7:00 PM Consistory Articles for newsletter are due	16	17 7:30 Men's Breakfast				
18 8:15 Ladie's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship PM WVULS	19	20 9:15 AM Choir Practice Food Pantry 10AM–Noon	21 6:30 Praise Team Food Pantry 6:30-8:00PM	22	23	24 7:30 Men's Breakfast				
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