



The Church Bell

The First Reformed Church
Walden, New York

Church Bell, Volume 69, Issue 2

March & April 2024

Spring is the Season of New Growth

Spring has sprung. The weather vacillates wildly between winter's cold and spring's warmth. We are in the season of change and change never comes easily. I like to think of it as a kind of dance, one step forward and one step backward; two steps forward and one step backward. . . Change is a slow continuous process of movement, hopefully forward.

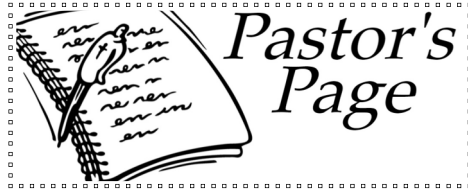
During this season of Lent we have been learning about Sabbath as Resistance, with the help of Walter Brueggemann's book, "Sabbath as Resistance, Saying no to the culture of now. We've been added in the journey by the Wallkill Valley Lenten Series, with each presenter taking a different chapter. This series and this book call us to change our view of Sabbath as a mandate and see it as refreshment and healing. It is easy to get caught up in the swirl of social expectation to be constantly busy justifying our existence and proving our worth, constantly doing at the expense of resting in the Lord. Attitudes are not easily changed, and neither are our habits. We have sacrificed our spiritual growth on the altar of consumerism and constant consumption. God calls us away to rest. God calls us away to refresh. God calls us away to reset our soul and mind.

One thing I like about winter is letting the trees and gardens rest. As spring approaches, I start small; planting seeds inside until the weather settles and warmth radiates from the ground. Winter and early spring give me time to dream about the journey ahead of fresh fruits and vegetables. Now, however is the time to prepare for the growth to come.

The preparation for Easter is heightened and deepened by our Lenten observance. It is a time of planting the spiritual seeds that will continue to grow long after the celebration of Easter has faded from our minds and summer vacations move into the foreground. Learning to rest in the Lord, learning to embrace the Sabbath as a blessing is like the weather of spring, warmth and cold, forward and back until it finally becomes the warmth of our hearts, a fertile garden for our spiritual growth to bear fruit.

This year Easter is a little early, arriving on the last Sunday of March. Now is the time to sow the seeds of a more meaningful celebration. Now is the time to prepare the garden of our souls for renewed growth in Christ. Now is the time to listen and follow the voice of our Lord and Savior, taking one small step at a time.

Pastor Jim O'Connell



Confirmation Class

Confirmation class is in full swing. We currently have five students engaged in learning more about their faith: Kevin Barringer, Ava Barringer, Harold Bruggemann, Courtney Bruggemann, and Addison DenBleyker. They will make a confession of faith on April 14th. As part of their class, they will be taking turns reading the Epistle Lesson on Sundays. Please keep them in your prayers and encourage them when you see them in worship. There will be no confirmation class on March 24th nor on Easter Sunday.

Book Study

A small group of people have been studying Walter Bruggemann's book "Sabbath as Resistance" on Wednesday evenings at 7 pm. The class is being offered in person, at Jim and Phyllis' home and on zoom. The group is meeting through the first week of April. There will be no class on March 20th, as Jim and Phyllis will be away.

Lenten Series

We will be hosting the Lenten Worship service on Sunday evening, March 17th. We need volunteers to provide soups, sandwiches, and cookies which need to be delivered to the church between 4:00 and 4:30 on that Sunday. If you are able to assist, please reply to this email or sign up at the church.

Consistory

On Sunday, February 25th, John Harrington was nominated to serve on Consistory as an Elder.

Boy Scouts

Boy Scout Sunday was on February 11th, we were blessed to have the Scouts take part of our worship service that day.

New Pastor

We are looking for members to serve on a committee to search for a new pastor. We would like to honor Pastor Jim's request to retire. Committee meetings will be in person and not on zoom. Contact Bunnie or Joe if you are interested.

Lenten Series Worship Services

The Sabbath: Saying **NO** to the Culture of **NOW**

And God spoke all these words,
saying, "I am the Lord your God,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of slavery.
You shall have no other gods before me.
– Exodus 20: 1-3

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy
– Exodus 20: 8

And he said to them,
"The Sabbath was made for man,
not man for the Sabbath
– Mark 2: 27

MARCH 10, LENT 4

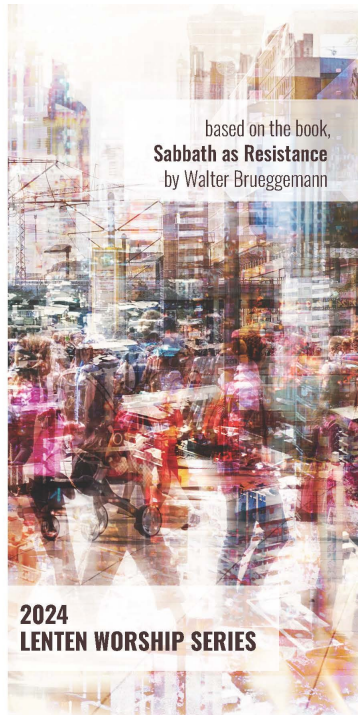
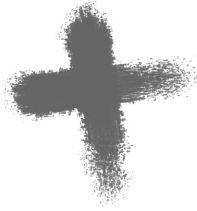
Gardiner Reformed Church
The Rev. Dr. Stan Seagren preaching

Theme: Chapter 5
Resistance to
Multitasking

MARCH 17, LENT 5

First Reformed Church, Walden
The Rev. Gary Sissel preaching

Theme: Chapter 6
Sabbath and the
Tenth Commandment



When you think of the Sabbath, what comes to mind? Rules and restrictions? A day off? Come explore how the Sabbath can become for us instead a time of rest and renewal. The Sabbath was meant to free us from slavery to our culture which so often demands we conform to its habits of consumption, anxiety, and escapism. These lead to a slavery of the soul. Our Lord desires we be freed from this slavery into the freedom of forgiveness, purpose, compassion, and hope. Worship with us and discover the joy of Sabbath not only once a week but as a reality each day.

The REFORMED CHURCHES **of the WALLKILL VALLEY**

First Reformed Church

70 Scofield Street, Walden, NY 12586
Telephone: 845-778-5405
The Rev. James O'Connell, Pastor

Gardiner Reformed Church

166 Main Street, Gardiner, NY 12525
Telephone: 845-255-0190
The Rev. Gary Sissel, Pastor

Meadow Hill Reformed Church

211 Fletcher Drive North, Newburgh, NY 12550
Telephone: 845-564-2279
The Rev. Irving Rivera

New Hurley Reformed Church

1145 State Route 208, Wallkill, NY 12589
Telephone: 845-895-3794

Wallkill Reformed Church

45 Bridge Street, Wallkill, NY 12589
Telephone: 845-895-2181
The Rev. Dr. Stan Seagren, Pastor
The Rev. Howie Dalton

**Join your friends and make new friends
and go on the Lenten/Sabbath journey
of renewal with us!**

Each service is at 6:00 PM preceded by
soup and sandwiches at 5:00 PM

The offering this year, as in the past,
will be for **Habitat for Humanity-Newburgh**
for their good work in our community.

Please make checks payable to:
Wallkill Valley Union Lenten Series.

Worship services will be broadcast online according
to the platform which each congregation uses.





VBS 2024

August 5-9, 2024 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM

THE GREAT JUNGLE JOURNEY

AN EPIC CRUISE FROM GENESIS TO REVELATIONS

Every day, our kids are bombarded with questions: Did God really create everything? Why do bad things happen? Was Noah's ark real? Why do I need to be saved? Can I trust the Bible?

At this VBS, your kids will explore the biblical answers to these questions as they set off on an epic adventure from Genesis to Revelation. Amid sloths, butterflies, river dolphins, and dart frogs, your children will sail along on a fun jungle cruise, stopping at seven ports of call. These ports are the 7 C's of History: Creation, Corruption, Catastrophe, Confusion, Christ, Cross, and Consummation. Kids will discover how these events shape our world, and they will learn to reconnect the Bible to their everyday life.

Prepare to swing into fun as we head out on *The Great Jungle Journey!*

Spread the word to family, friends and neighbors!!

Lots of volunteers needed. Contact Bunnie Reichle at bunniereichle@hotmail.com

Submitted by Bunnie Reichle



Easter Flower Orders



Kindly complete this form if you wish to place flowers in the sanctuary for our Easter service. Flower availability and prices are listed below. Flowers may be given in memory or in honor of someone. You may take your flowers home with you after our Easter Service on March 31st. The deadline for ordering is Sunday, March 10 2024 *Thank you!*

\$4.99 Price 4" Tulips _____

4" Hyacinth _____

\$7.99 Price 6" Lily

6" Tulip _____

6" Hyacinth _____

\$19.99 Price 8" Lily _____

\$29.99 Price 10" Lily _____

Given by: _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Check here if you will be bringing your plant home

Check here if you would like your plant delivered to you

Gathering Hope Book Club

Join us Monday, April 1st, as we discuss Sharon Garlough Brown's novella, REMEMBER ME. In this 120 page sequel to *Shades of Light*, Katherine Rhodes, the beloved director of the New Hope Retreat Center, finds her own grief tapped by Wren Crawford's struggles with depression and loss. Through a series of letters to Wren, Katherine reflects on the meaning of Christ's suffering and shares her own story of finding hope. How does one begin to live again under the crushing weight of grief? And how can healing come when there's so much left unresolved? With Katherine as a companion in sorrow, Wren moves forward in her commitment to paint the stations of the cross for a prayer journey at New Hope, discovering along the way a deeper communion with the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief. Readers are invited into a similar journey of reflection through Katherine's words and Wren's paintings. At the back of the book, a devotional guide with Scripture readings, prayer prompts, and full-color art provides the opportunity to ponder the depths of God's love by meditating on Jesus' journey to the cross.

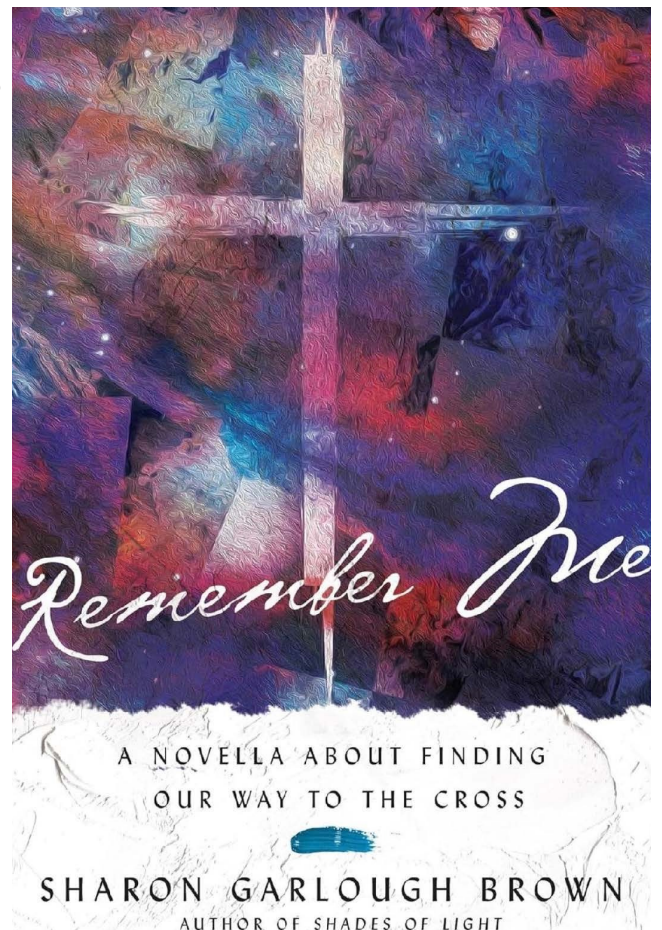
"'It is finished,' Jesus says. It's a bold declaration for us to make too. What does it mean to say 'It is finished' when so much is unfinished?

It means we are people who live hope in two directions, both backward and forward. We long for the kingdom to come in fullness, even as it has already come.

And we trust that the One who has begun the good work in us and for us will indeed complete.

This Lenten exploration does not require prior reading of *SHADES OF LIGHT*. Meeting will be held in person and via Zoom. Contact Ariana Den Bleyker at denbleya27@gmail.com for more information.

Submitted by *Ariana Den Bleyker*





Youth Group

Starts April 21st, and will meet third Sunday night of each month at 7pm

Youth Group Leaders: will be Jointly run by Ariana Den Bleyker & John Harrington



*First Reformed Church
of Walden, NY presents*

COOKIE CHAT & CHEW BAKE-OFF

Simply bring enough cookies for each participant to receive; one to taste and one to take home. All participants will vote for the Blue Ribbon Cookie of the night. Winning cookie receives a prize and everyone leaves with a plate of yummy cookies and a recipe book of all the cookies sampled during the evening.

Simply register and email your recipe, bake your cookies, and join us for a fun night of tasty treats, light refreshments, and fellowship.

March 15th | 7 pm | Fellowship Hall
Recipe Deadline: 3/8

70 Scofield Street
Walden, NY
845-778-5405
frchurch@frontiernet.net

All are welcome!
Faith. Fellowship. Family.

FIRST REFORMED CHURCH
PRESENTS

Faith & Family Nights

Join us for our next generation Sunday School experience as we dine, study scripture, and spend time making memories as families in a warm environment.

Coming Fall 2024



Faith. Fellowship. Family.

UPCOMING FUNDRAISERS SUPPORTING FAITH & FAMILY NIGHTS



Chunky Blanket & Coffee

**April 14, 2024
1:00-3:00 PM
\$40**

**First Reformed Church
70 Scofield Street
Walden, NY**

Faith. Fellowship. Family.

Help support our program and
make your own chunky lap blanket.
All you need is your own two hands. RSVP: 3/25



PAINT & SNACK

HELP FUNDRAISE
OUR NEW SUNDAY
SCHOOL PROGRAM

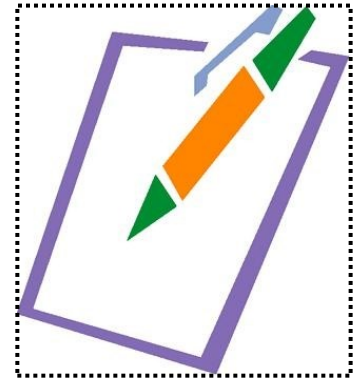
**APRIL 28, 2024
2:00-4:00 PM**

\$45 PER PAINTER | RSVP 4/1
FRCCHURCH@FRONTIERNET.NET

FIRST REFORMED CHURCH
WALDEN, NY
70 SCOLFIELD STREET

FAITH. FELLOWSHIP. FAMILY.

Some Other Reminders



Praise Team: rehearsing Wednesdays at 6:30 PM in Crist Chapel. All are welcome. If you are interested in singing or playing an instrument or would like more information please see Joe Weikel.

Operation Christmas Child: we collect supplies for this mission throughout 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: 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. If you are interested in joining Choir or performing special music please see Bunnie Reichle.

Backpack Snack Attack: are packing in Fellowship Hall 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 Easter worship service on Sunday, March 31st.

Montgomery Food Pantry: The Food Pantry operates on Tuesdays from 10AM–Noon & on Wednesdays 6:30-8:00PM. If you are interested in volunteering at the Food Pantry please let Ariana Den Bleyker or Diane Crist-Moore know.

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.

Facebook: If you or your team or group would like to request something church related be posted to the church Facebook, please send your request to: Diane Crist-Moore, Angel Santana Jr. or the church secretary.

Instagram: to request something church related be posted to the church Instagram account please send your request to Jerry Hanen.

Newsletter: Please submit articles, and information for the newsletter by the following dates: December 15 for the Jan/Feb newsletter, February 15 for the Mar/Apr newsletter, April 15 for the May/Jun newsletter, June 15 for the Jul/Aug newsletter, August 15 for the Sep/Oct newsletter, Oct 15 for the Nov/Dec newsletter.

Finance Update

Dear members of the congregation,

As many of you in the congregation, know and understand, budgeting is not an exact science, especially for churches, where we rely on our members (through pledging) and on the Grace of God. This year's budget was exceptionally difficult as we struggled with escalating and unknown costs of utilities, insurance and possibly new regulations/requirements from Synod.

As a fiduciary body, the Consistory strives for transparency with the congregation. This is the first time we are presenting a budget with a current deficit. We do not present this lightly, but we got to a point where we felt this was the best option at this time.

We want you to know that we will be monitoring both the expenses and revenue closely throughout the year. We will continue to seek out grants for whatever programs we can. Currently, we have a grant to help fund VBS and another grant to help us update Fellowship Hall. Our general liability policy has been re-termed now to reflect a calendar year. It previously came due in March, which made budgeting more difficult.

Again, we want you to know how much we appreciate your tithes, time and talents. We also appreciate when you use the envelopes marked Classical Dues. In 2024, the church will be assessed \$139.46 per member. By contributing towards this cost, you are helping to free up funds for other missions and expenses.

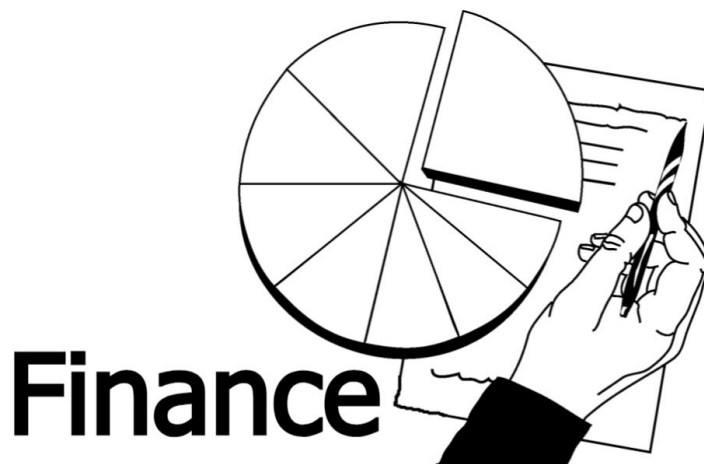
Please feel free to contact any of us if you have any questions or concerns. We would love to hear your feedback.

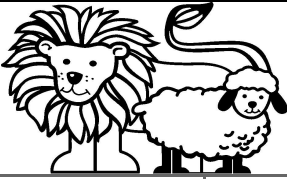
If you have not submitted your pledge, please do so at your earliest convenience. This will help us as we continue to review our 2024 budget.

We remain, and always will be, the same First Reformed Church you know and love, and to whom your giving has helped, and continues to support, many fine ministries such as Back Pack Snack Attack, Operation Christmas Child and Safe Homes just to name a few.

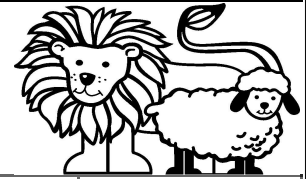
Sincerely,

The Finance Team

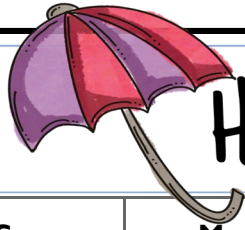




March 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 7:30 Men's Breakfast
3 Communion 8:15 Women's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Soup & Bread Lenten service Meadow Hill	4 7:30pm Book Club	5 9:15 AM Choir Practice	6 6:30 Praise Team 7:00 Book Study at Phyllis & Pastor Jims house	7	8	9 7:30 Men's Breakfast Daylight Savings tomorrow, Sunday morning 2am
10 8:15 Women's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship Lenten Service at Gardiner Flower Orders due	11	12 9:15 AM Choir Practice	13 6:30 Praise Team 7:00 Book Study at Phyllis & Pastor Jims house	14 7pm Consistory	15 7pm Cookie Chat & Chew Bake off (all welcome)	16 7:30 Men's Breakfast St. Patrick's Day is tomorrow
17 8:15 Women's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 5pm Soup & sandwiches 6pm Lenten Series Service here at FRC	18	19 9:15 AM Choir Practice First Day of Spring	20 6:30 Praise Team Pastor & Phyllis away no book Study tonight	21	22	23 7:30 Men's Breakfast
24 Palm Sunday 8:15 Women's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	25	26 9:15 AM Choir Practice	27 6:30 Praise Team 7:00 Book Study at Phyllis & Pastor Jims	28 Maundy Thursday	29 Good Friday	30 7:30 Men's Breakfast Healing Service tomorrow on Easter, invite anyone & every- one you know who needs a healing
31 Easter 10:00 Worship 11:00 Easter Egg Hunt						



HELLO *april*



2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 7:30pm Book Club Starting new book.	2 9:15 AM Choir Practice	3 6:30 Praise Team 7:00 Book Study at Phyllis & Pastor Jims	4	5	6 7:30 Men's Breakfast
7 Communion 8:15 Ladie's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Soup & Bread	8	9 9:15 AM Choir Practice	10 6:30 Praise Team	11	12	13 7:30 Men's Breakfast
14 8:15 Ladie's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 1:00 to 3:00 Chunky Blanket Fundraiser	15	16 9:15 AM Choir Practice	17 6:30 Praise Team	18 7:00 PM Consistory Articles for newsletter are due	19	20 7:30 Men's Breakfast
21 8:15 Ladie's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 7pm Youth Group	22	23 9:15 AM Choir Practice	24 6:30 Praise Team	25	26	27 7:30 Men's Breakfast
28 8:15 Ladie's Study 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 2:00 to 4:00 Paint & Snack Fundraiser	29	30 9:15 AM Choir Practice				

Around the Congregation

Church Prayer List

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

I Thessalonians 5:16-18

Please Pray for:

Bunnie Reichle, Ariana Den Bleyker, Angel Santana Jr. & family, Gail Yeaple, People of Ukraine, Jonathan Reichle, Jill McCormick, People of Gaza, People of Israel, Ed & Susan Kennedy, George Heitz & family, Mike DeZemo, Richie Lendle, Angel Santana Sr., Mary Weikel, Smith family, Military personnel, and the home-bound.



Funds Received

January
11252.01
(grant received)

February
7,843.84

*Daylight Savings
March 10, 2am*



Happy Birthday to...

March

Jaymee Barringer	March 7
Justin Lendle	March 8
Angel Santana Jr.	March 9
Vanessa Simmonds	March 11
Lucas Barringer	March 16
Jill McCormick	March 18
Elizabeth Cocks	March 22
Emily Davis	March 23

April

John Daniel Harrington	April 5
Donna Bohler	April 10
John Harrington	April 10
Pastor Jim O'Connell	April 15
Lois Crist	April 24
Jennifer Kotchenrather	April 24
Weston Sanger	April 27

Please contact the church office to let us know if we missed anyone's birthday or anniversary. Thank you. 845-778-5405 or fchurch@frontiemet.net



ANNIVERSARIES

Nicholas & Nancy Petrolo
March 22nd
Dominic & Judy Bonasio
March 31st

Current Inclement Weather Policy:

Sunday's mornings- call the church office (845-778-5405) after 7:30am. If Worship service is canceled there will be a message left on the voicemail system stating so. If it has not been canceled then you will just hear a standard greeting.
Monday to Saturday- it will be up to each leader if they want to have their group meet or not. Please remember to always use your own discretion when making a decision on if you want to travel to church.

2024 Goodwill Offering Envelopes:

- January - Deacon Fund
- February - Backpack Snack Attack
- March - Habitat for Humanity
- April - Hearts for Hungary
- May - TOM Food Pantry
- June - Operation Christmas Child
- July - Deacons Fund
- August - Safe Homes
- September - Backpack Snack Attack
- October - Operation Christmas Child
- November - Operation Dalmatian
- December - Hearts for Hungary