



Pastor: Rev. Matthew J. vanMaastricht

June 2023

Dear Friends,

If you can believe it, mid-June will mark one year that we have been in a multiple parish with the Helderberg Reformed Church. And it does not seem that there would be any reason to end this partnership.

To my knowledge (and I have been regularly asking), there has not been any issues with how things have been. There may be a mild inconvenience here or there, but there's nothing that would cause significant problems.

But beyond there not being any issues, I think there have been wonderful things, too. Christmas Day fell on a Sunday, and the combined service that we had here was lovely. The combined adult education on Sunday evening has substantial participation, and it has been far more than just feeding two birds with one scone, it has been a place for relationships to start to be formed between the churches, and this speaks to the real benefit of our churches getting to know one another better.

And since we started this, I have had a handful of inquiries of how this came to be, because of other churches who might be interested in such a structure for the future of their ministry. The RCA's webzine, Faithward, invited me to write a piece on this, and you can read it at: <https://www.faithward.org/two-churches-one-pastor-an-old-model-for-the-present-and-future-church/>

Not only this, but the Synod of Albany is considering a learning community for different kinds of collaborative ministry including, but not limited to, multiple parishes. While we are far from the first people to engage in this, even in modern times, we are a bit ahead of the curve and

we are working to create a model that not only works for us, but also how we might be able to help other churches who might be considering other models of ministry for the future.

So thank you, ARC, for your willingness to try this. It was a big step on your part into an entirely unknown future. And while hurdles may present themselves, I don't think that there will be anything insurmountable that cannot be dealt with. We can already see the payoffs in having some seed money to help with the parking lot, and some of that money is directly a result of sharing the costs of a pastor with Helderberg. It was a risk, but it is one that, I think, has paid off.

No doubt this will not be the only step of faith that we will encounter, but let us always remember that even when things seem uncertain, our God remains faithful. "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6).

With deep and abiding love,

Pastor Matthew



Join us for Worship this summer!

For the month of July, we will continue to worship at 10:30 a.m..

For the month of August, our worship hour will begin at 9:30 a.m., except for Sunday, August 20, which is our 10:00 community worship in Orsini Park.



We're going on a trip...

The Congregational Life Committee is sponsoring a bus trip to Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts on July 6. The cost will be \$55 per adult which includes bus fare and museum admission. We will board the bus promptly at 7:00 a.m. Make checks payable to Altamont

Reformed Church with Sturbridge on the memo line. **Send your check to ARC at PO Box 671, Altamont, NY, 12009 by Monday, June 26.** A sign-up sheet is in fellowship hall. Please include your name, contact info and emergency contact. Guests are welcome.



Choir Sunday is coming up! On June 18 the chancel choir will be sharing special music during the service, including both new music and a few favorite anthems from the past year. This day serves as the end of another wonderful year for the choir. Bring your friends and join us! As always, we are continuously grateful for the support and encouragement from the congregation.

Planting the seeds of faith and love

In church, we have the chance to plant a seed of something very special in the hearts, minds, and spirits of children. Again this year, in honor of children's day, please consider bringing annuals for our flower garden dedicated to all those children we love near and far. Flowers will be received on June 11.

Thank you!



Community Dinner

Our next "First Monday Spaghetti Dinner" for the community will be on June 5. Food will be served from 5 to 6:30 and includes spaghetti with sauce (meatballs and sausage), bread, salad and dessert.

We can not do this without the wonderful 30-35 volunteers. Please consider helping out by signing up on the sheets in Fellowship Hall or by calling (518) 861-8711. Thank you!



A huge thank you goes out to our dinner coordinators Carol Lennebacker and Deb Ritzko, the Congregational Life Committee, and all the volunteers who make this such a vibrant ministry.



Announcing Operation Restoration Vacation Bible School! Monday, July 24 - Thursday, July 27, 5:30 - 8:00 pm Together with Hamilton Union Presbyterian Church, New Covenant Presbyterian Church, and the Helderberg Reformed Church, we will be hosting a Vacation Bible School called Operation Restoration: Mending God's World. We will gather each evening at Hamilton Union for dinner, games, singing, and lots of fun! During this exciting program, kids learn to be menders of the universe as they explore themes of feeding, healing, forgiving, praying, and resting. This VBS is open to all kids who have just finished Kindergarten through 5th grade. Students from 6th through 12th grades are encouraged to join us as student volunteers! We are also in need of plenty of adult volunteers to help this program run well. If you have any questions, or to register a child (or as a volunteer!), please reach out to Nancy in the church office, or Pastor Matthew.



If you haven't seen our parking lot lately, it's past the end of its life, and our insurance company has also brought up concerns about it. We've patched it and replaced sections over the years, but those are not holding up and the parking lot continues to deteriorate at a faster rate than can be patched. So it's time to replace it. And if we are going to do it, we are going to do it right. The current parking lot will be entirely milled out, a base will be shored up and the drainage will be addressed so that we have fewer water problems in the building.

With the bid and expected cost overruns (because what doesn't have issues that pop up?) we are budgeting \$100,000. We do have a majority of that already between the Capital Improvement Fund and a generous pledge from a Congregational family, but we still have a ways to go. We are beginning a capital fund drive to raise \$40,000 to repave the parking lot.

There is a parking lot on the wall in the sanctuary, and the spaces will gradually fill up as we get closer to our goal.

We know that everyone's financial situation is different, but we invite you to consider if you are able to give beyond your normal pledge to help us as we help our facility move into the future! If you give by check, you can just put "parking lot" in the memo line, or if you give in another way, please somehow note that it is for the parking lot.

We know we've had a lot of building projects in the last decade, but these are all an investment into the future of our ministry and providing a solid and safe infrastructure for it.



David Lasselle June 1
 Kristen Gannon June 2
 Matthew Twaddell . . . June 4
 Beka Ferguson June 6
 Scot Strait June 9



Amanda Dame June 10
 Emilee Stevens June 11
 Jan Davis June 15
 Ellen Howie June 20
 Marco Audi June 24



Now that summer is arriving, we are seeking several volunteers to take on some outdoor painting projects. We can assign you a designated section that needs repainting, and then you can work on it when it is convenient for you. Some of the painting is not up high, where using a ladder is required. If interested, please contact Greg Goutos, at (518) 495-0148, or by email at ggoutos@nycap.rr.com.

We will once again be accepting donations of flowering annuals for the round garden by the side entrance. Sun-loving annuals, such as Marigolds and Petunias can be brought to church for the dedication on children's day, Sunday, June 11.

The committee has recently been very busy with the selection of a paving contractor to recommend for the major project involving the church parking lot and driveway. Four estimates were obtained, and this undertaking will be costly, but is necessary. This project is planned for sometime in August, and more info will soon follow.

On April 29, eleven church volunteers joined the Property Committee for the annual Spring Clean-up Day. Thank you to all who participated: Kim and Gardner Gurney, Kathy and Bill Johnson, Chris and Maria Conover, Jeff and Jeannie Counterline, Craig Sargent, Greg Goutos, and the always enthusiastic Hendrik!



September 16
Bozenkill Park



Attention ARC Women: Save This Date, September 23 for our annual retreat. (Changed from last month.)



As of May 24, the income from the John U. Miller Memorial CROP Hunger Walk had reached \$91,000, not far from the goal of \$100,000; 25% of the funds raised will come back to support food pantries and soup kitchens in Albany County, including the pantries in Altamont, New Scotland and Guilderland. The remaining 75% is used by Church World Service and its partners for global hunger relief and development programs, including improving access to clean water. Thanks to ARC team members Kitt Jackson, Angie Stewart, and Chris Tucker, who raised \$1,598. You can still make an online donation on the web page: <http://www.crophungerwalk.org/albanyny>. Find or enter the name of our team and click the "donate" button.



General Synod Meets June 8-13

The General Synod of the Reformed Church in America will be meeting on the campus of Central College in Pella, Iowa, from June 8-13. Delegates from all over the US and Canada will gather to hear reports, vote on recommendations, and discuss the preliminary report from the Restructuring Task Force. Please pray for safe travels, for President Dwayne Jackson as he presides over the meeting, for wisdom and discernment, and for all of the worship leaders, group facilitators, and staff who work behind the scenes. The 2 delegates from Schenectady Classis are ARC members Angie Stewart and Kitt Jackson. You can follow the meetings and read daily recaps at the RCA website: <http://www.rca.org>.

From the missions:



★ Pastor Brad and Robin Kautz report that it's summer on the Jicarilla Apache Reservation in New Mexico. The school year is winding down, and Vacation Bible School, which will take place in June, will be led by a mission group from the Connections Church in Denver, CO. This particular group has been to Dulce before and enjoys building relationships with the children who attend. The Jicarilla Apache Church also holds weekly campfires for the community, and will continue Sunday worship, Sunday School, and outreach ministries to the local jail and the dormitory housing a number of youth.

★ The Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York has announced the retirement of Director and CEO Molly Nicol as of August 1. Tom Nardacci has been named as the new CEO, and he will begin work on June 1. He and Molly will work together through the next two months to ensure a smooth transition. Volunteers are needed throughout the next several months for various tasks at the Patroon Land Farm in Knox. Visit <http://www.regionalfoodbank.net/volunteer> to sign up.

★ Church World Service reports that they recently sent 840 blankets and kits to border shelters. Do you think that some of our hygiene kits were in that shipment? Visit <http://www.cwsglobal.org> to read about their various programs with refugees, migrants, and for community development.

★ The Regional Synod of Albany met at the Lynnwood Reformed Church on May 7-8. The Rev. Becky Town, co-pastor of the Knox and Thompson's Lake Reformed Churches was elected President, and Elder Noreen Fargione from the Delmar Reformed Church was elected Vice-President.

★ Camp Fowler is getting ready to welcome some 500 campers this summer. Cabin counselors are still needed some weeks. Visit <http://www.campfowler.org> for more information, the camp schedule, and forms for volunteers and camp registration.

★ Denny Barger of Dreams Alive reports that the most recent Medical Missions Team trip to Amman, Jordan, saw 254 patients over 5 days. In addition to providing medical care to the patients, who were mostly Syrian refugees, the team prayed with them and gave them a copy of the Gospel of John. Denny also got to visit a small Syrian refugee camp on the border of Syria and Jordan. Teachers from the Good Shepherd School in Amman sometimes visit the camp to provide some basic education lessons for the children. Prayers are requested for the 20-year-old son of the director of the Good Shepherd School, who was severely burned in a recent accident.

Dreams Alive has begun a new outreach to Palestinian children living in an informal refugee camp, in Amman. They are also continuing to support the Baltic Global Initiative in their efforts to support Ukrainians, both refugees and those displaced internally. Please pray for an end to the war, for new opportunities to serve, and for courage in the face of difficulties.

★ Many Ukrainians crossing the border into Hungary have found shelter at the Dorkasz Reception Center, a former summer camp turned refugee camp. This project is partially supported by funds from RCA Global Mission and gifts from generous members and friends of the RCA. Another program, Further Steps, assists families find more permanent housing.



Committee Reports:

Benevolence: Authorization was requested and granted to host its summertime Lemonade on the Lawn on Sunday, July 16, with a special offering to support a request from RCA Global Mission for their work in Sudan.

Congregational Life Committee: 150 people were at the May community dinner. CLC gave each pre-schooler a thank you note with a Stewart's gift card in appreciation of the work they have done making centerpieces for the community dinners. A bus trip to Sturbridge Village is planned for July 6. Work is being completed on the ARC float for the Memorial Day parade May 21.

Property: Three estimates were received for the parking lot paving project. After much consideration, Property Committee recommended that DelSignore Paving do the work. They were chosen because their quote of \$89,938 included better pricing for disposing of the milled asphalt, they had the best drainage solution, and they were highly recommended by local businesses who have used them: Hannaford, Stewart's, and Agway.

The estimate included the price for 40 tons of sub base. There was discussion that this may not be enough for the parking lot. It was noted that this is an estimate, and there is no way of knowing the true amount needed until the parking lot gets milled up and they can see what is underneath it. Consistory agreed that ARC needs to be prepared for the unexpected expenses associated with getting this job done right, so that we are not needing more work done in a few years. The motion was made to initiate a fund drive for \$40,000 for this purpose. Matthew will set up a schedule for each Consistory member to give a progress report on the Capital Campaign during church service announcements.

The parking lot will be paid for with the capital campaign fundraising, the ARC Capital Improvement Fund, the Memorial Fund, and maturing bonds.

Faith Formation: Matthew had discussions with the pastors at Hamilton Union Presbyterian Church (HUPC) and New Covenant Presbyterian Church about the feasibility of a Vacation Bible School between our churches. Plans are being made for an evening program July 24-27 at Hamilton Union. HUPC will cover the cost for the curriculum. At Matthew's recommendation, Consistory approved going forward with this opportunity and will advertise it for children and volunteers.

Board of Elders: The following people have been received as members to ARC: Tom Boink, Tracy Meyer, Rick Seppa, Kim and Gardner Gurney, Jan Chisholm. In addition, another family has requested a letter of transfer of their church membership to Altamont Reformed. The service date to welcome them is to be determined.



Altamont Reformed Church

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To contribute articles for the ARC Lite, send to the editor c/o ARC

or email the editor, Theresa Lasselle, at lasselle@aol.com

ARC's website: <http://altamontreformed.org/>

The due date for the next edition of the ARC Lite is June 23