

Dear friends,

Happy six years! The third Sunday in August is the anniversary of my first Sunday with you, and if you can believe it, it has been six years already. I remain grateful for you and for our church community and our village community here.

This summer, I took study leave time and traveled to the Netherlands for the biannual summer school in partnership between New Brunswick Theological Seminary and the International Reformed Theological Institute (I lead the contingent from New Brunswick). The theme was "The Calling of the Church in Times of Polarization," which is an incredibly important topic. And while we didn't figure everything out (who can do such a thing?), it emphasized once again how difficult it is to exist in a polarized context without becoming polarized ourselves.

Polarization doesn't mean disagreement or conflict, rather, it speaks to the stark good/bad, us/them dichotomy. Our country--and in many places our world--is a polarized one, and the path of least resistance is to choose a side and get swept up with it. And yet, as followers of Jesus, we are called to something different. When Jesus was speaking about the hypocrisy of some of the Pharisees, he told his disciples to listen to what they say, but do not do what they do. That is, Jesus was not saying that the Pharisees are bad. Rather, like many of us, they are complex.

Similarly, we see Jesus breaking bread with, spending time with, and speaking well of those who were labelled as "them" in his social reality. Which is not to say that there aren't things which are more life-giving and less life-giving, or things which are more faithful or less faithful. After all, deep in the Christian tradition is the concept of "The Two Ways," but the two ways do not cut along any social identity, sociopolitical ideology, or social division. Rather, I think, the tendency to polarize, to build camps and lob stones at one another, this tendency is problematic and it spans sociocultural and

historical contexts. This is easy for us, but falling into this social polarization is not faithful, and it is not a way for followers of Jesus to faithfully exist in the world.

At its best, the church is one of the last vestiges of the common sphere. That is, a place where people of different ages, sexes, backgrounds, sociopolitical ideologies, and the like gather together. So much of our world is separated by age, (e.g. "the old people just need to get with it," or "kids these days,") or sociopolitical ideology (e.g. "democrats/republicans are going to destroy us!") or socioeconomic background (e.g. "there are makers and there are takers"). Social polarization leads to nowhere good and everywhere bad.

And yet, we are also called to be thoughtful and intentional. The question is, how do we seek to be faithful while avoiding the polarization trap? This is hard work, but it is the work to which Christ calls us. We confess the "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church," that "catholic" part means universal, that is, it is for everyone. It is a church which encompasses races, cultures, ethnicities, nationalities, languages, socioeconomic backgrounds, political ideology, &c. We've all seen churches that do not embody catholicity (e.g. "if you vote for \_\_\_\_\_, then we don't want you here"), and this is becoming all too common, and this is part of the aversion to the Christian faith.

Our invitation, then, is to model a different way of existing, a way which is most definitely harder, but is far more faithful. A way which moves between the polarized identities and is not afraid of the complexities of existence, and are still thoughtful and discerning. This is difficult work, but it is good work, faithful work, important work, part of God's calling to us on this earth.

With deep and abiding love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Matthew".

Pastor Matthew



## Choir Notes

The Chancel Choir's first rehearsal for the new season will be on Wednesday, September 7 at 7:00 p.m. New members are always welcome! Talk to Stephanie Brewer if you have any questions.



## September events

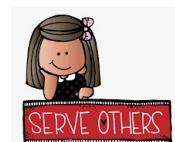
- Sat. Sept. 2, 4:30 p.m. Lasselle/McPherson Wedding  
 Sun. Sept. 3, 10:30 a.m. Worship Service with Communion  
 (Note return to the 10:30 a.m. start time)  
 Thurs. Sept. 7, 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir rehearsal  
 Sun. Sept. 10, 9:30 a.m. Chancel Choir rehearsal  
 10:30 a.m. Worship Service  
 Tues. Sept. 12, 6:30 p.m. Congregational Life Committee meeting  
 Wed. Sept. 13, 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir rehearsal  
 Sat. Sept. 16, 1-3 p.m. Church Picnic at Bozenkill Park  
 Sun. Sept. 17, 9:30 a.m. Chancel Choir rehearsal  
 10:30 a.m. Worship Service  
 11:30 a.m. Benevolence Committee meeting  
 Wed. Sept. 20, 7:00 p.m. Consistory meeting  
 Thurs. Sept. 21 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir rehearsal  
 Sat. Sept. 23, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Women's Retreat at ARC  
 Sun. Sept. 24, 9:30 a.m. Chancel Choir rehearsal  
 10:30 a.m. Worship Service  
 Thurs. Sept. 28, 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir rehearsal

Start dates for Coffee Hour and the Adult Study with Helderberg are pending.

## Altamont Reformed Community Dinners Return Monday, October 2



Our very popular Free Community Dinner returns Monday, October 2. Don't miss a chance to enjoy good food and fellowship. We serve 5:00-6:30 p.m. Invite a friend.



### An Opportunity to Serve - Volunteer for our Community Dinners

Do you enjoy greeting people? Do you like to bake cupcakes? Do you enjoy cooking or serving food, washing dishes and pots and pans, or setting up tables and table settings? These are just some of the tasks that need to be done each month for our dinners. Volunteering for a dinner isn't just work, it is lots of fun. Our first fall dinner will be Monday, October 2. There will be sign-up sheets for specific tasks in Fellowship Hall.



Please call Theresa at 518-872-0072 to have your birthday or anniversary added to the ARCLite list.

- Eileen Kerkes. . . . . September 3
- Deb Ritzko . . . . . September 3
- Barbara Bidleman. . . . . September 3
- Mary Luidens . . . . . September 13
- Judy Stevens . . . . . September 15
- Tess Dube . . . . . September 16
- Sarah Stedman . . . . . September 17
- Jim Yohey . . . . . September 20
- Kristy Dame. . . . . September 21
- Becca Jackson . . . . . September 22
- Jeanne Countermine . . . . . September 25
- Andrew Dame. . . . . September 28
- Mandi Tooker . . . . . September 29

## Women's Retreat

The ARC Women's Retreat will be held Saturday, September 23, from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. If you have already signed up, please send or give your \$10 registration fee to Kitt Jackson as soon as possible to confirm participation.



The Congregational Life Committee is asking people who would like to take a trip to see the Christmas Spectacular with the Radio City Music Hall Rockettes to please see the sign-up sheet in fellowship hall and sign your name under the date(s) you would be able to attend the trip. The cost is \$145 per person for the bus and a show ticket. A decision on the trip must be made by October 1. Ask your friends to join us!

### Church Picnic

Saturday, September 16

Bozenkill Park, Large Pavilion, 6374 Gun Club Road

1:00 -3:00 p.m.

This event is a pot luck. The Congregational Life Committee will provide chicken, lemonade, water, and paper products. Please bring a salad, chips, fruit, or a dessert. A food donation sign-up sheet is in Fellowship Hall. Please sign up if you are attending so we know how much food to buy. You can also contact Nancy McNiven at the church office with the needed information. Let's start the fall at ARC with a good time of fellowship and fun. Invite a friend.

## From the Missions.....

✉ Josh and Alison Perkins and family have returned to their home in the UAE after visiting family and supporters in the US. Please pray for them as they readjust to life there and begin a new school year. Josh is hoping to make contact with more local people and potential church leaders and find new opportunities to share the Gospel...

✉ Project Hospitality (on Staten Island) is opening a new Community Service Center on Canal Street, which will enable them to reach more people with their various programs.

✉ Cornerstone Protestant Campus Ministry at UAlbany has begun a new semester of programming under the leadership of Pastor Laurie DeJong Zuverink. They will also be holding their Fall Fundraiser on Wed., Sept. 20 at 6:00 p.m. The in-person dinner (gluten-free, vegan, and vegetarian options available) will be at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 85 Elm Ave. in Delmar (new location) but will also be live streamed on Facebook. Guest speaker will be Leah Scognamiglio, Cornerstone Alum Class of 2013.

Contact Kitt Jackson if you wish to attend and sit at the ARC table. The meal is free, but an offering to support PCM will be received.

✉ Pastor Brad and Robin Kautz report that fall programs are in full swing at the Jicarilla Apache Reformed Church in Dulce, NM: Sunday worship, Sunday school, 2 Bible studies, and a weekly prayer meeting. It's a busy mission! The Kautz family continues to feed people who show up at the parsonage, so if anyone would like to make a special gift to support that facet of their ministry, please write a check to ARC Benevolence Committee earmarked "Apache" any time this month and we will forward the total given to their church.

✉ The Capital Area Council of Churches has partnered with the Alzheimer's Association to present a Dementia-Friendly Worship Service at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 17, at the Delmar Presbyterian Church, 585 Delaware Ave. (corner of Cherry Ave.) The 30-minute service will feature familiar hymns and short uplifting messages for people with dementia and their caregivers. To register, call Tony at (518)675-7214 or e-mail him at [tarivera@alz.org](mailto:tarivera@alz.org).

✉ The Regional Food Bank will hold their Chefs & Vintners Harvest Dinner at the Glen Sanders Mansion on Sept. 28, Visit <http://www.regionalfoodbank.net> for more information and to buy tickets. Cost: \$175.



## Consistory Considerations

### NEW BUSINESS:

The Dell desktop computer used by the church Office Administrator needs to be replaced. A basic desktop computer running the Windows operating system is needed. A basic HP desktop PC with a keyboard, mouse and monitor was purchased. The final cost was \$685.

### PARKING LOT:

The paving is complete. Greg Goutos will do a final walk before signing off on the work. The final price of the project was \$89,900, which was the same as the original estimate.

### NEW BUSINESS:

The two dehumidifiers running in the church basement are not working and need to be replaced. The motion was made and approved to proceed with the replacement of this equipment if the total cost is under \$1,000, based on the recommendation of Greg or the property committee.

Angie reported that the hot water had been turned off in the church as a money-saving measure. Consistory agreed that when the church building is in use for services, it should be turned on.

## Property Committee

In early August DelSignore Paving completed the parking lot paving project, which also included adding a drainage ditch with a pipe that will divert stormwater away from the back of the lower level of Fellowship Hall. This was a major project that has been discussed for several years and needed to be done to ensure a safe area for all who use our facilities. Thank you for all who have contributed to the fund drive to support this capital project.

In the next month we will be replacing the stair treads for the front entry to the sanctuary using composite lumber. The past year or two, the existing wood treads have been showing wear and are starting to decay.

September and early October are good months to do some outdoor painting around the front entry porch. Please consider helping with this short task. We will show you what to do, and then you can work on it on your own schedule when you have the time. If interested, please call Greg Goutos as soon as possible at (518) 495-0148, or email him at ggoutos@nycap.rr.com.

## 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](mailto:lasselle@aol.com)

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

The due date for the next edition of the ARC Lite is September 22

