

Fort Miller Patriot

Fort Miller Reformed Church of America, Fort Miller Road, Fort Edward, NY 12828

website: fortmillerreformedchurch.org

Editor: Nancy Crosby

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Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself

Sisters and Brothers in the Fort Miller Reformed Church:

I have been pleased to serve as your interim Pastor since the beginning of November 2015. Recent events in our nation have compelled me to speak from the pulpit about the issues related to treatment of visitors in our country, legal or otherwise.

As we reflect on Jesus' life as a model for our own, these words from Leviticus 19:33-34 seem pertinent: "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat him. He must be treated as your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you too were foreigners in Egypt." Bearing in mind Jesus' command requires that we examine our actions in view of the temptation our nation currently faces to turn inward. Jesus always championed the rights of the powerless. At this time in the life of our nation, we are in danger of abandoning our rightful place as one that can lead the world toward greater peace, justice and unity. If we focus only on the proclamation to "Make America Great Again", we risk forfeiting that role. With all of the talk about illegal aliens and undocumented immigrants, we must bear in mind that Jesus instructs us to provide hospitality to sojourners. Where exclusion seems to rule the day, let us seek the openness we are called to show to others whom we might consider "outsiders." As Jesus called us to love one another as we love ourselves, we must remember that love has implications for justice. Let us not forget that we are all sojourners in God's world.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the support and prayers from the members of FMRC and the way that they have loved and supported me and my wife during the course of her illness, and following her death. The continuing support of our congregation means all the world to me, and I thank you all.

The Rev. Richard Hoffman
Interim Pastor

Contents

Page

Meeting House Project	Mac Sanders	2
Welcome to Jenn Leg	Andersons	3
Building & Grounds	Mark Anderson	3
Battenkill Conservancy Mtg	Lorraine Ballard	4
Upcoming Events: Yoga & Turkey Waddle		4
Upcoming Events: Pork Supper,	Jamie Dennis	
Benefit, Bible Study, Festival of Carols		5
From the Choir...	Debbie Anderson	6
Pastoral Search Committee		7
Gideons	Mark Sheffer	7
Church Fair Exhibit	Debbie A & Nancy C	7
New Church Directory	Mac Sanders	7
Nextdoor Fort Miller App		7
Fort Miller History	Mary Major	8
Mission of the Month	Tina de Jong	9
Camp Fowler	Brianna Brooks	9
Praises & Prayers	Congregation	10

Daylight Savings Time ends on Sunday, November 5. Don't forget to "fall" your clocks back one hour before you go to bed on Saturday night.

**Fort Miller Community Meetinghouse
Project Gets Underway**

Last October we celebrated our sanctuary building's 200th birthday as well as the start of our Church in 1822. Between 1816 and 1822, the sanctuary building served as the Fort Miller community meetinghouse, hosting church services, community events and lively discussions, probably political, as the area developed with the opening of the original Champlain Barge Canal. Over this past winter and spring, we discussed getting back to our roots, so to speak, by establishing a Fort Miller Community House Program to host events in our sanctuary and dining room that would be of interest to people in the surrounding area, much like the events that were held in our sanctuary building during those initial 6 years and into the 19th and 20th centuries.

Beginning this summer, a group of about 12 people from our Church and the Fort Miller community began to plan this meetinghouse program. So far, we have a name (The Fort Miller Community Meetinghouse Project) and a final program of events ranging from yoga classes to a community barbecue. The final program is now posted in our Church vestibule for all to see. A marketing plan will guide this program. Social media will be an important way to promote and build this program. You will see it described in forthcoming press releases and newspaper articles. It will also be listed in the calendar section on our website (fortmillerreformedchurch.org) and on our new social media sites as they are developed. We will continue to assess what events "connect" with people and provide the most benefit, making changes to try to continuously host projects that are relevant and fun.

FORT MILLER MEETINGHOUSE PROGRAM SCHEDULE

- | | |
|---|---|
| Sunday, November 5 | 2-4:00 pm BATTENKILL CONSERVANCY ANNUAL MEETING
(all are welcome to learn about the BC'S programs) and
A PRESENTATION BY DOUG VINCENT - "A Canoe Trip
Down the Hudson", with refreshments
Call Lorraine Ballard for information (917) 658-3589 |
| 4 Weds. mornings,
November 15, 22 & 29
and December 6 | YOGA classes (gentle-moderate) 8:30 - 9:30 AM taught
by Haley Graves, \$40 for all 4 sessions; \$12 drop-ins
Call Nancy Crosby for info (518) 695-6132 |
| Saturday, November 11 | 4:30-6:00 FALL ROAST PORK SUPPER
Adults: \$12, children 6-12, \$6 Take-outs available
Call Tina DeJong for info (518) 747-8011 |
| Thurs., November 23
Thanksgiving Day | 9:00 am " TURKEY WADDLE " FUN-RUN FUNDRAISER for
Drake Bay Elementary School, Costa Rica For info, call
Nancy Crosby 695-6132 or Deb Anderson 692-2593 |
| Saturday, December 16 | 5:00 pm NATIVITY, CAROLING and REFRESHMENTS
Call Jan Peterson for info (518) 695-3054 or 518-598-2590 |

Building and Grounds Update

As we go to press, we are ready to embark on a very exciting and long-awaited building project, the creation of a handicap accessible bathroom just off the Fellowship Room. The handicap accessible ramp into the front of the church is being moved to a spring commencement date, due to the retirement of our masonry contractor. In keeping with our mission of being open and welcoming to everyone, it has been a priority to make sure everyone, including anyone with physical disabilities, would be able to attend services or events with equal access and without diminished physical access to the building.

Our contractor, Jim Smith, will be renovating the current DeGroot Room and back study, into a large handicap accessible bathroom and one large meeting room. The small bathroom off the study will be eliminated to make much needed space in the furnace room. We look forward to our renovations and improved accessibility for all.

Mark Anderson, Consistory Vice President



Marge Shostak holds one of her arrangements which often grace our Sunday Services

Welcome to our new Fellow, Jenn Legg

We are very happy to announce the arrival this Fall of our shared “fellow”, Jennifer (Jenn) Legg. Jenn will be working for the next two years with the three Reformed Churches in our area as part of her post-graduate training, having completed seminary school at Western Theological Seminary in Michigan. This Fellow Support Group is a new venture for the Albany Synod, which is sponsoring the two-year program. The Group consists of several members of each of the 3 RCA churches (Fort Miller, Bacon Hill and Old Saratoga in Schuylerville), along with their respective ministers. This collaboration will allow them to support Jenn in developing her new role.

According to Jan Peterson, one of our church’s liaisons who worked to help prepare for this new position, Jenn will be relocating from Raleigh, North Carolina. There she attended the First Reformed Church in Cary, along with our old friend and former FM attendee, Ron Hamm. As part of her requirement to get a seminary degree, Jenn interned for the Good Samaritan Ministries in Americorps in Holland, Michigan. She worked with the homeless and low-income families, which is her passion. She has been active in her Church, especially the Youth Group, and has recently become an Elder there, and is the Worship Committee leader. She is a mentor and spiritual advisor for the Jobs For Life program at Dorcas Ministries. To support herself she has been working at Starbucks as a store manager

Jenn visited this past September to find a place to live and meet with as many people as she could in a few short days. She introduced herself to our congregation on Sunday, September 17 and said she was looking forward to sharing her walk in faith with us. Deb and Mark Anderson hosted Jenn for dinner and gave her a tour of Greenwich, where she has secured an apartment.

We hope that our new “Fellow” will feel welcomed and at home here!

Battenkill Conservancy to Hold Annual Public Meeting at Fort Miller Meetinghouse

The Battenkill Conservancy has announced that Doug Vincent, who preaches here bi-monthly, will be their featured speaker on Sunday, Nov 5, beginning at 2pm. The presentation is part of BkC's annual meeting about their work with the Battenkill watershed. Doug is a river enthusiast and will offer a talk and slide presentation about his 28-day canoe trip down the Hudson in 2009. Beginning at Lake Tear of the Clouds, Vincent and a colleague paddled stretches of the river before ending 180 miles down-river at the tip of Manhattan and within sight of NYC's Statue of Liberty.

Vincent is a licensed clinical social worker with a Masters in Social Work from Rutgers Graduate School of Social Work. He currently resides along the river in Fort Miller adjacent to the Fort Miller Church and Meetinghouse.

The sanctuary and church structure were originally built as a community meeting house for Fort Edward and the surrounding area in 1816. Given the Meetinghouse and Church's scenic and historic location on the banks of the Hudson River, Battenkill Conservancy decided that it is the perfect setting for the talk.

The meeting is open to the public and all are welcome. Seasonal refreshments and light fare will be served. Attendees are encouraged to come early and tour the grounds, the church sanctuary, the historical archives and the Riverside Cemetery located just down the road.

For more information contact: Lorraine Merghart Ballard @ 917-658-3589 or email battenkillconservancy@gmail.com



Jumpstart your day with Yoga at Fort Miller Meetinghouse/Church!

A beginner to moderate level yoga class will begin on Wednesday, November 15 and run for 4 weeks, from 8:30- 9:30 AM. We are very fortunate to have Haley Graves as our instructor. This 60 minute class is suitable for all levels. There will be a focus on the foundation and basics of yoga, while modifications for more advanced students will be offered. Participants can expect a gentle, yet energetic yoga flow- the perfect balance for an early morning class and a healthy way to jumpstart the day. The 4 class series costs \$40, paid in full by November 15. There is also a pay-per-class option at \$12 per class. Please bring your own mat!

Originally from Greenwich, NY, Haley has spent the past 5 years living and working in New York City. She is a 200-hour certified yoga teacher with an additional 85 hours of training in prenatal yoga. Haley has enjoyed teaching adults and children in Manhattan for the past 2 years. Having recently re-located back to Greenwich, she is very excited to begin teaching yoga and getting involved in the community. Haley also loves to cook and experiment in the kitchen...hint hint, she may bring some healthy treats for after class:).

Fort Miller 5th Annual Turkey Waddle

Join us for our annual 5K (3.1 mile) run, walk or waddle on Thanksgiving morning at 9 AM. The starting line and "warming hut" is the Fort Miller Meetinghouse/Church. Our scenic route travels along the Hudson River, through the historic Riverside Cemetery, over the NYS Champlain Canal and Lock 6, finishing back at the Meetinghouse/Church. Donations are requested. This year we are raising money to assist an elementary school in Drake Bay, Costa Rica. They are in critical need of basic supplies in this remote area that has been damaged by Hurricane Nate. So, put your turkey in the oven, and come join us. There is sure to be someone else going at your pace. For more information, or to pre-register, please contact Nancy Crosby (518-695-6132) or Deb Anderson (518-692-2593).

A Festival of Carols and Nativities

On Saturday December 16th at 4:00 Fort Miller will host an open festival of carols and a sharing of beloved Nativity scenes. Bring your family and friends and celebrate the season with music. Light refreshments to follow. If you have a Nativity scene you would like to share, please let one of the Andersons know so we can plan for display space. (518-692-2593)

Adult Bible Study

Adult Bible Study, led by Interim Pastor Rich Hoffman, is planned for Thursday evenings in the fellowship hall, including October 19, November 9, and 30 from 6:30 to 7:30. It is not necessary to bring your Bibles as passages are distributed for study. We began the study on September 14 in the Gospel of Mark, using the manuscript inductive method in which the verses of the study are given to the participants on printed paper. Each session is divided into four periods in which the passage is read aloud, discussed, and applied to our own personal lives. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Hoffman at 518-545-0439 or chaprich56@gmail.com.

Welcome to New Consistory Members

Welcome to our newest Consistory Deacons, Lorraine Merghart Ballard, Cindy Blanchard and Madison Squires. Our thanks to Mary Lou Squires and Jan Peterson for their service. Also, congratulations and thanks to Mark Anderson, our new Vice-President of Consistory. He replaces Alan Rice, our "retired" Vice President, who, by the grace of God, piloted us successfully through troubled waters.

Fall Roast Pork Dinner

Please join us for our ever-popular annual Fall Roast Pork Dinner. It will be held on Saturday, November 11 from 4:30 to 6:00. The traditional menu includes: roast pork with stuffing and gravy, sweet potato souffle, green beans, cole slaw, buns and, for dessert, apple brownie with whipped cream. No reservations are necessary. Take out is available. The cost is \$12 for adults, and \$6 for children 6 – 12. For additional information, contact Tina deJong at 518-747-8011.

"Heart of Gold" Benefit Dinner

A "Heart of Gold" benefit dinner for Jaime Dennis will be held on Sunday, November 5 from 1:00 – 5:00 PM at the Gansevoort Fire House. Jaime is the daughter of Bruce and Helen Loveland. There will be a Ziti dinner at \$10 per person, along with numerous raffles. Raffle tickets are \$1 each, or 10 for \$5. The funds will go to defray medical expenses related to Jaime's recent unexpected heart issues. The Fire House is located at 1870 Route 32N, Gansevoort, 12831. Please see Cindy Blanchard for more information.



Seasonal flowers, provided by Marge Shostak



Cora Anderson making Valentine cards for folks at the Washington Center for the Elderly

From the Choir....

Thanks always to our very faithful choir, who are with us 52 weeks a year, quite an anomaly for a church of any size! I think our faith is strengthened by the power of shared singing and love of music as a way to praise God each week.

As a small church, we, of course, have to be fluid as to what we are going to sing each week, depending on how many members are there. We are continually amazed at how often a choral anthem selection dovetails so beautifully into the message from the pulpit that day! Coincidence? Hmm...

I recently had the opportunity to attend a choral singing workshop on the very beautiful Star Island, one of the Isle of Shoals, off the coast of Portsmouth, NH. It was led by Peter and Mary Alice Amidon of Brattleboro, VT, who have developed music for churches and community choirs based on early American music, gospel, shape note, early hymns and their original compositions. We already use many of their

arrangements, which I am sure you have heard us sing... the arrangement of 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot' we sang recently in church and at the memorial for Rev. Hoffman's wife, Robin. The Amidons have developed many pieces for hospice singing, where they sing at the bedside of the terminally ill, as a means to lift spirits and ease passage through music.

Star Island was like stepping back in time about 100 years. A stunning complex of wooden hotels and cottages from the 1800's, with very little modernization. Electronic devices were put away for the weekend. Our singing group met 3 times a day in a stone building to sing mostly acapella.... Thick fog rolled over the island and in through the doors... an evening sing by candlelit lanterns was magical. There were pieces that brought some of us to tears they were so beautiful, both in their arrangements and in their lyrics.

I have begun to share some of the music I learned during this special weekend. For me it was a trip to the mountain... inspiring, and reminding me that music can be as important to ministry as the spoken word. I am so very grateful for the dedication of our devoted singers and their willingness to sing challenging pieces!

Thanks this year to Sandra Rourke, Elizabeth O'Leary, Tina DeJong, Dolores Rice, Carol Call, Carol Throop, Henk DeJong, David Flynn, Mark Anderson, and Mitch Throop.

Deb Anderson, Musical Director



Our Choir, singing us Joy



Deb Anderson with our Fair Exhibit

Our Church exhibit at the Washington County Fair won a red ribbon this year. It highlighted a sermon given by Pastor Rich about Jesus's admonition "as I have loved you, so you must love one another", including sojourners from other lands.

Sunday School News

Calling all children to attend our weekly Junior Church and Cradle Roll! Cindy Blanchard, Sunday School Superintendent, plans fun crafts and activities that engage children of all ages, and enriches them with Bible stories. They take place during our hour of worship so that parents can attend service while their children are in Sunday School.

Pastoral Search Committee

Our Pastoral Search committee has been active in their ongoing efforts to hire a permanent Pastor. They have developed a job description which is being disseminated, along with our Mission statement, to 16 different RCA and Presbyterian seminaries and colleges.

Gideons International Bible Blitz

The Gideons is an association which represents many Protestant denominations dedicated to spreading the Gospel. Mark Sheffer recently attended the Gideon's "New York City Scripture Blitz" in which 257 Gideons gathered from 18 states to provide Bibles and testimonials at key locations throughout the City. Mark was part of the group that entered Rikers Island Federal Prison which houses 40,000 prisoners. At this location alone, more than 30 people received Jesus Christ into their lives. The attendees succeeded in offering 73 churches services, and personal witnessing, at nursing homes, hospitals and jails around New York City, including personal testimonials at Times Square. Additionally, there were 177,190 Bibles distributed. Mark also attended a Gideon banquet locally on October 13, where Doug Vincent and Richard Hoffman were invited guests.

New Church Directory and the Nextdoor App

The first draft of a new Church Directory has been updated and distributed by Mac Sanders. Please take the time to make sure that your information is correct. With so many avenues of communication these days, we want to be sure that the Directory has all your information, including home phone, email, cell phone, and RV or drone address if applicable. Contact: Mac Sanders 518-587-3783 (home), 518-683-4176 (cell), macsanders@nycap.rr.com (email). And now for the latest social media: **Nextdoor** is the free private social network for your neighborhood community. Sign up for "Nextdoor Fort Miller" today!

A Thanksgiving Poem, thanks to Barb Larson

FILL YOUR HEART WITH THANKSGIVING

Take nothing for granted,
for whenever you do
The "joy of enjoying"
is lessened for you—
For we rob our own lives
much more than we know
When we fail to respond
or in any way show
Our thanks for the blessings
that daily are ours . . .
The warmth of the sun,
the fragrance of flowers,
The beauty of twilight,
the freshness of dawn,
The coolness of dew
on a green velvet lawn,

The kind little deeds
so thoughtfully done,
The favors of friends
and the love that someone
Unselfishly gives us
in a myriad of ways,
Expecting no payment
and no words of praise—
Oh, great is our loss
when we no longer find
A thankful response
to things of this kind,
For the joy of enjoying
and the fullness of living
Are found in the heart
that is filled with thanksgiving.

Helen Steiner Rice



Eight Generations in Fort Miller

Mary Major lives in a house that goes back eight generations, on a bucolic point of land referred to locally as "Hatch's Point". That is where her Scottish ancestor, William McAuley, purchased property on the North River Road in Fort Miller. William's daughter, Sarah McAuley Shepherd, decided that Fort Miller needed a church. That is how Fort Miller Reformed Church came to be. It was at Sarah's request that her husband, Samuel (a Unitarian), petitioned for a church to be built. Through subscriptions, \$1,500 was raised to construct our meetinghouse, which was built in 1816 and doubled as a place of worship.

Each successive generation of Mary's family had its involvement with our Church, as organists, Sunday School teachers and superintendents, and members of the Ladies Circle.

Mary's earliest memories of Church include Les de Groot handing out "Rally Day" buttons. She also recalls Christmas time during the war, when all the men were off to battle. Her Aunt Belle, wife of Jim Petit, dressed up as Santa Claus and handed out gifts to the children.

Mary's own children were baptized and confirmed here. With her two grandchildren, they span 199 years, across 8 generations, and pleased to still be here.

Nancy Crosby, with thanks to Mary, and Mac Sanders



Camp Fowler at sunset, Speculator, NY

Brianna Brooks Attends Camp Fowler

Brianna Brooks got lost in an Adirondack bog, and lost her glasses when her sailboat capsized. How does she describe these harrowing experiences? "Really fun!" They were just some of the adventures she encountered during her week at Camp Fowler this summer. During the orienteering session, campers played "Capture the Flag" while learning to use a compass to navigate through a bog. Brianna didn't mind that she was lost in the bog for an hour. And when their sailing lesson resulted in a capsized boat, she saw the humor in that situation as well. She learned to make a camera from an oatmeal canister, and waited the 24 hours it took for the photographic paper to develop into pictures they had taken. "Because I was in the older group," Brianna explained, "we got to attend indoor chapel at night, which was great." She described the amazing sight of "Uncle Kent", Counselor Kent Busman, transporting a cross lighted with candles across the lake in a canoe. Brianna was supported in attending Camp Fowler with donations from our Consistory and Circle.

From the Pew

"From the Pew" is an occasional column containing memorable or inspiring moments gleaned from our services.

Inspirational words noted by a church member, during Pastor Rich's recent sermons:

"The testimony of a drug addict changed me. When he talked about how God worked in his life, it touched my heart and changed my life."

"Like a mustard seed, belief starts small and blossoms into something great."

"God uses us like farmers use seeds and bakers use yeast."

And from several of Pastor Doug's sermons:

"We don't make miracles, it is not our lot. That is God's job."

"It is so wonderful that the Bible is relevant to the present and is showing us how to handle the problems we have now."

"With all that mercy we are getting from God, shouldn't some of it trickle down through us to our fellow man?"

Mission of the Month

Tina de Jong is organizing our monthly charitable contributions, which are being donated to a different worthy cause each month. The recipients range from Doreen's Soup Kitchen in Glens Falls to the Costa Rican villagers in remote Drake Bay, recently devastated by hurricane Nate. The donations consist of 10% of the offering on the first Sunday of each month. If you have a charity that is dear to your heart, please contact Tina at 518-747-8011.

Congratulations to:

- ❖ Siobhan O'Leary for completing her Masters in Education of Literacy in May 2017
- ❖ Recent retirees, Mark Sheffer and Carol Throop

Thanks to:

- ❖ Our Consistory members, for their devotion to our church and many hours of hard work
- ❖ Cindy Blanchard and Mary Lou Squires for their dedication to the children of our Church
- ❖ Jan Peterson and Priscilla Sanderspre for growing our Church garden again this summer
- ❖ Tina and Hank de Jong, for hosting our annual Church picnic at their home, as well as our church dinners
- ❖ Those who bring cheer to the Washington County Facility for the Elderly
- ❖ Dick Behrens and Nancy Purinton for attending our annual Congregational meeting

To Remember in Prayer:

- ❖ Mimi Boyd, her family, and care-giver Deb Anderson, in the loss of Bill Boyd
- ❖ Harriet Moore, Dolores Rice's mother, experiencing health problems
- ❖ Our interim Pastor, Richard Hoffman, in the loss of his wife, Robin, on June 22
- ❖ Bruce and Helen Loveland's daughter, Jamie, with heart issues
- ❖ Sandy Rourke, in the recent loss of her father, Jim
- ❖ Kay Lopez, recovering from knee replacement
- ❖ Those in Adult Care Facilities, including Idalee Sanders (Teresian House, Albany), Sue Clifford (Washington Care Facility),
- ❖ Abby deJong, and Dee Morrison, cared for at home
- ❖ The family of Leneta Gamache, a Circle member and a patriot, who passed away Feb. 24
- ❖ Marge Shostak, with ongoing health problems

Praises for:

- ❖ Our beloved former pastor, Charles Bailey, and his wife Debbie, as he continues on his amazing path of healing
- ❖ Laurie Flanders' recovery from cancer, followed by a broken leg
- ❖ Mark Anderson's mother, Dode, for successful transition to Adult Assisted Care facility in Florida

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