

Fort Miller Patriot

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

website: fortmillerreformedchurch.org

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October 12, 2018



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**Come and bring your friends to
our Circle's Autumn Roast Pork
Dinner Saturday, October 27
4:30 - 6:00**

***Daylight Savings Time ends on Sunday,
November 4. Don't forget to "fall" your
clocks back one hour before you go to
bed on Saturday night.***

Refection on a Year of Transition

Pastor Jennifer Legg has come to Fort Miller Reformed Church as a part of the Albany Synod's "Fellow Support Group". She is in the second of her two-year fellowship, serving the Turning Point Ministry, which consists of our three local Reformed Churches: Bacon Hill, Old Saratoga, and Fort Miller. Here she shares her experiences and insights with us:

Well, it has now been almost ten months since I moved here from North Carolina to do ministry with the Turning Point Ministry Churches. I love the countryside here, and watching the farmers till the soil, plant, and bail hay. It brings back some of my favorite childhood memories of my grandfather on his John Deere tractor caring for his garden. It gave me an appreciation for creation, animals, hard work, farming and knowledge about where my food came from. All of this shaped my understanding of who God is and our Creator's relationship with us and the world. Like seeds breaking through the tilled ground, our faith is transformed and flourishes like a beautiful plant over time by the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Around this time last year, I was preparing to resign as store manager of the Stonehenge Starbucks in Raleigh, NC. The decision to leave Starbucks after six years was not easy because I was leaving a successful career, people who became like family to me (my customers and co-workers/managers), and the place that essentially "saved my life" after divorce by supporting me in many ways in rebuilding my life and exploring who I was, my gifts and talents, etc. I believe God used this time at Starbucks to work in me, through me, and help me find my way. However, after a few months of prayer, conversations, and then video skype conversation and in person visit with folks from all three congregations, God clearly was guiding me and leading me on a new path towards living out my call and purpose to glorify Him.

(continued on page 4)

Consistory News

This August, as you all mostly know, Fort Miller Reformed Church accepted Rich Hoffman's resignation as Interim Pastor. Rich has been with us as Interim Pastor for nearly three years and we are most grateful for his time with us. He first came to be with us during a time of major change and upheaval in our church. Rich provided us with a stable compass during his time.

During his tenure as Interim Pastor, Rich also went through major challenges and sorrow in his own life, with his wife, Robin, and her fight with cancer. It was a time when we supported each other, which is such a crucial role within the life of a vibrant church, no matter the size.

As we go forward into the next year ahead, we are looking at what we have in hand. We have an ordained Pastor, Jenn Legg, whom we share with Old Saratoga and Bacon Hill Reformed churches, to perform any of the pastoral duties needed... Pastor Jenn will do our Communion service, is able to perform any ordained duties such as weddings, baptisms, funerals, ordinations, etc. and will be preaching at least once a month at our church. Pastor Jenn is available for any pastoral counseling that is requested and is looking forward to home visitations. Doug Vincent will be speaking two to three weeks each month, and we are hoping to have more involvement of lay speakers, from our congregation, to join in the delivering of Sunday messages and conversations.

I hope you will find it in your heart to think of ways you can contribute. Maybe it would be as a greeter on Sunday mornings, or as a worship leader. We have a worship team that would welcome your input in designing laity Sundays and the Consistory will be looking for new members this coming spring.

As we look ahead, we hope to continue fostering our partnership with both Old Saratoga and Bacon Hill Reformed churches, with more shared worship opportunities, Bible study, and our joint commitment to the Albany Synod Fellow Program.

Lastly, I would like to thank you for your weekly financial support. It enables us to pay our bills, as well as continue our benevolences and mission programs vibrant in our community.

Mark A. Anderson, Vice President of Consistory

Annual Congregational Meeting

Our slate of Consistory members was approved unanimously, and with much gratitude, at our annual Congregational Meeting on April 29. Mark Anderson continues as our Vice-President of Consistory for the final year of his second 2-year term as Elder. Tina DeJong and Priscilla Sandersprey are also in the final year of their terms as Elders. Sandy Rourke continues as a first term Elder. Remaining in their roles as deacons are Lorraine Ballard, Cindy Blanchard, Elizabeth O'Leary and Madison Squires. Mac Sanders was thanked for his contributions as he rotated off Consistory following his two terms as an Elder. Dolores Rice was recognized and thanked for her valuable work as Church Treasurer.



Alan Rice demonstrates bell-ringing to Cora and Flynn Anderson

Rich Hoffman Completes his Tenure as Interim Pastor

A reception was held after service on August 26 to recognize and honor Reverend Rich Hoffman as he offered his final sermon as our interim pastor on September 2. Rich has been with us since the beginning of November 2015. Many people thanked him for the warmth he has shown our congregation.

In a recent conversation Rich offered words of gratitude to Fort Miller Reformed Church. "I would like to thank FMRC for allowing me the privilege to be your interim pastor for the past nearly three years. I especially wish to thank the congregation for ministering to me during my wife Robin's illness and particularly for the beautiful memorial service you provided after her passing. I will be grateful and remember that for the rest of my life."

Rich shared that members of consistory have complemented him for having been a healing presence in our church. He feels thankful to have been able to provide that during his time here and hopes it will continue beyond his tenure.

Rich also offered words of encouragement to our congregation, both in celebrating our history, and in charting our path forward within the community, and discovering the future of Reformed witness in Washington and Saratoga Counties.

What does the future hold for Rich? He and his fiancé, Terry Anne are engaged, and plan a wedding next year. We wish Rich the very best and Godspeed as he begins the next chapter in his life.



Pastor Rich on Ordination Sunday, with Elizabeth O'Leary, Deacon and Sandy Rourke, Elder

From the Pew

From the Pew contains memorable or inspiring words gleaned from our Sunday worship services by the Congregation.

Words from Reverend Hoffman:

The testimony of God is demonstrated and amplified through his son, Jesus.

We as Christians need to express God's love. It is up to us to go out with a feeling of being sent forth to share God's love.

Words from Pastor Doug Vincent:

Church is a place to get energized but then we need to go out to show, to give, and to model.

The sheep don't participate in who gets through the gate and who doesn't. That is the Shepherd's job.

One of the greatest sins in God's eyes is when people in power steal from the powerless. He has no patience for that.

(Jenn Legg, continued from page 1)

This past year has been both rewarding and challenging. First the challenges: moving to a new place, leaving family and friends, starting in a program that is new and essentially creating it as we go, understanding clearly my purpose and call here with the TPRC, adjusting to not having a set schedule and place of business, adjusting my leadership from manager to pastoral, learning many names quickly, remembering which church I am at and how each church does things and ultimately how am I able to learn from the congregations and pastors as well as share my gifts to help the churches come together as the body of Christ and live out the mission and vision of their call from God.

Now I am not saying challenges are negative things, but what I am saying is that challenges are opportunities to participate in growth, transformation, and adaptive leadership. Now for the positive things: becoming ordained, meeting such amazing people and doing ministry with you all! My time spent in Faithwalking has been a beautiful time of inner transformation for me in deepening my connection with God, learning to dwell in the fullness and love of God. Also, it has been an inner transformation of self-discovery: wounds that need healing, working through anxiety, learning to listen well, learning to be vulnerable at times, how to sit and walk with others, and how to put into practice living missionally as Christ lived and loved.

The Fellowship Program, the pastors, the coaches and all of you have made it possible for me to experience ministry in a unique setting, created a space for me to authentically live into my call and use my gifts, and have supported me through times of beautiful transformation and ministry and through the inner self work. I look forward to another year of growth, transformation, and challenges with you all. I do not look forward to Oct 31 next year; however, I do look forward to reflecting on and sharing in the joy of all that God has done in us and with us in the next year!

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you,

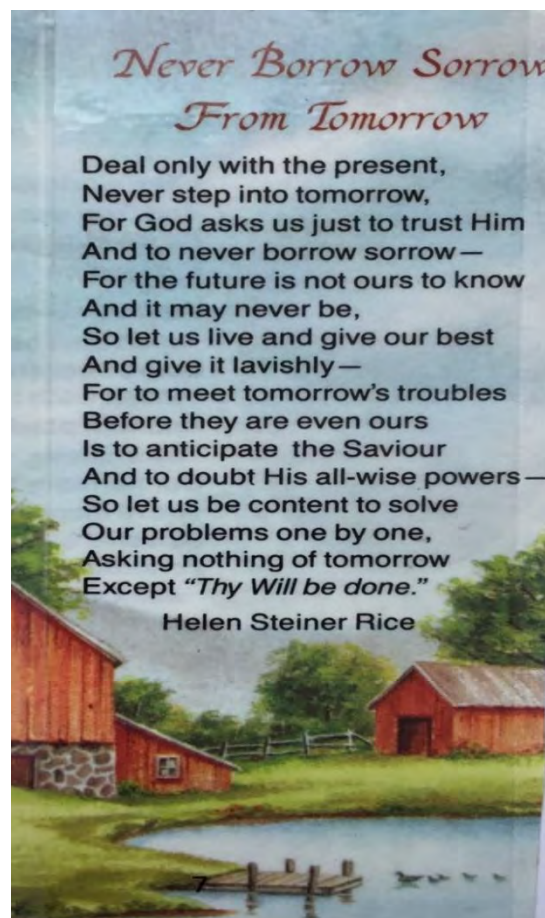
plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:11-13

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Jenn

**If you are in need of pastoral care, please contact
Rev. Jennifer Legg at cell # 919-600-9240 or e-mail
at jennlegg83@gmail.com**

Thank you to **Barb Larsen** for her words of encouragement, from Helen Steiner Rice.



Upcoming Events

Fall Roast Pork Dinner

All our welcome to our annual delicious Fall Roast Pork Dinner on Saturday, October 27 from 4:30 to 6:00. The ever-popular menu includes roast pork with stuffing and gravy, sweet potato souffle, green beans, cole slaw, bun and a dessert of apple brownie with whipped cream. The cost is \$12 for adults and \$6 for children 12 and under.

Weekly Coffee Hour

Please spend a few minutes after service each week to enjoy a half hour of coffee and conversation. Each week's coffee clutch will be hosted by a volunteer from the congregation. We hope that all will join us in this new endeavor to move our catch-up time to after service.

Regional Synod Worship Symposium: "Why Worship?"

What: A day of learning surrounding the Why, What, How and Who of Reformed Church Worship

When: Sat. Oct 20 from 9am-4pm

Where: First Reformed Church of Schenectady

Who: All those who are involved in leading/ planning/overseeing worship are invited
Cost is \$25/person or \$100/church which includes lunch, great worship and creative workshops

SAFER is the Schuylerville Area Food and Emergency Relief Program. Their food pantry location is 12 Spring Street in Schuylerville.
Hours: 9-12 noon Mondays and Fridays
Contact: 518- 260-4779 during pantry hours

"What It Means to Be Reformed" Discussion Group

Pastor Jenn leads a discussion group on "What It Means to Be Reformed" which is open to members and friends of all three churches of the Turning Point Ministry (Old Saratoga, Bacon Hill and Fort Miller)

When: Wednesday evenings beginning Sept. 19, and ending Nov. 7 (no classes 10/4 and 10/31)

Time: 6:30-7:30pm

Where: Old Saratoga Reformed Church

Focus: The history of the Reformed denomination, Reformed theology, the Liturgical worship tradition, and denominational structure

Format: Presentation, with lots of opportunity for discussion

All are welcome!

Fort Miller 6th Annual Turkey Waddle

Join us on Thanksgiving morning for a 5K (3.1 mile) run, walk or waddle around scenic Fort Miller island. The starting line and "warming hut" is the Fort Miller Church/Meetinghouse. Our scenic route follows north along the Hudson River, through the historic Riverside Cemetery, over the NYS Champlain Canal bridge and Lock 6, finishing back at the Church/Meetinghouse. Free will donations are welcome to be donated to a worthy cause.

Comfort Foods Community offers a food pantry at St. Joseph's Parish Hall on 31 Hill Street in Greenwich on Wednesdays.
Hours: 9:00 – 11:00 am and 5:00 – 7:00 pm

From the Choir... Climbing High Mountains

The Choir and the Congregation blended their voices in a rousing new gospel hymn this Sunday, "Lord I'm Climbing High Mountains, Trying to Get Home". It was one of the new pieces contained in a hymnal which I brought back from a choral conference I attended last October in Star Island, Vermont. The hymnal is called "Anthems for the Small Church Choir", by Peter and Mary Alice Amidon. It contains many familiar hymns but also many early American gospel hymns and lyrics that reflect the values our church embraces: tolerance, acceptance, and loving outreach.

As Choir Director, I am always grateful for my faithful group, willing to come to practice early each Sunday before Church service, ready to sing. We love raising our voices in praise and believe this a great way to honor God by choosing arrangements and lyrics that glorify Him and share His love.

Thanks to faithful choir members: Tina & Henk DeJong, Elizabeth O'Leary, Sandy Rourke, Carol Call, Dolores Rice, Mark Anderson and Mitch and Carol Throop.

Deb Anderson, Choir Director

Our Best Wishes to Sandy Rourke

Sandy Rourke has informed us that she will be leaving us to move back to her family farm to assist her mother. Sandy has been such a wonderful addition to our Church family these last few years, cheerfully joining the Choir, serving on the Worship Team Committee, attending the different classes offered by our three Reformed churches, volunteering with our dinners, and becoming a valued member of the Consistory. She will be greatly missed - and we hope that in time she may be able to rejoin us again.

Blue Ribbon for The Fruit of the Vine

"The Fruit of the Vine – How one small church impacts the larger community" was the title of this year's FMRC exhibit at the Washington County Fair. We won first place, receiving the blue ribbon and a check for \$30. The theme for the exhibit grew out of a Laity Sunday activity, in which members of the congregation were asked about their involvements and volunteer work in the greater community. It was an impressive array of contributions from our members, ranging from delivering Meals on Wheels and Washington County jail outreach, to sitting on Boards for local food pantries and farmland stewardship. The exhibit was constructed from grape vines gathered by Deb Anderson and her grandchildren, Cora and Flynn. The leaves, labeled by Nancy Crosby, listed the many labors of love which members of our congregation contribute to our larger community.



"Fruit of the Vine" Display

Updated Church Directory

Thank you to Jan Peterson, Church Secretary, for completing our new church directory. Extra copies are available from Jan as either print or digital copy.

Ye Olde Safe

Fort Miller Reformed Church is the repository of many valuable historical documents. In order to better protect this archival information, we acquired a new document safe this summer through the generosity of two donors. The new safe provides fire and theft protection and has twice the capacity of our old safe. Among the historical documents stored in the safe are the minutes from the August 22, 1822 organizational and consistory meetings at which our church was originally organized. We are the 8th generation stewards of this and other irreplaceable documents.

Our previous safe served us for 50 years, and came to us from Orr's Store, which was located up the Fort Miller Road. The store closed around 1960, after Mr. Orr passed away. The safe was manufactured by the Cincinnati Safe Company, in the late 18th or early 19th century. The combination still works and the door closes tight (with some effort). It has numerous sections inside to file documents and a drawer to hold cash. It is made from cast iron and weighs probably close to 1,000 lbs. We would like to find a new home for this safe which is currently housed in our furnace room. The safe is "as is, where is." We do not have any terms yet for disposing of the safe. If anyone is interested in acquiring this safe, please call Mark Anderson, Vice President FMRC Consistory (518) 692-2593, to set a visit to inspect the safe and start the discussion for possible acquisition.

Mac Sanders, Buildings and Grounds

Staying in Touch with FMRC

Along with our newly renovated office space, our new Church phone number is **518-507-6020**. We now have wifi access in our office, and the password is FMRC1822. And for your viewing pleasure, Sunday morning worship services are now posted on our website:

<https://fortmillerreformedchurch.org>

Our Giving Circle – Mission of the Month

The Vereengheit Circle, Dutch for circle of friendship, has a mission of benevolence. Tina de Jong organizes their monthly charitable contributions. The main principle behind tithing (Latin for 10%) is the fact that what we do with our money shows where our heart is. Matthew 6:21 says "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." The monthly donations support organizations who offer critical services to those in need. Next month, for example, a donation will be made to Dorcas Ministry in North Carolina, to help the victims of Hurricane Florence. In September the recipient was Habitat for Humanity. This past June, funds were donated to our RCA summer camp. Among the other recipients are: Grace House offering hospice care in upstate NY, HH Hole in the Woods in Luzerne, Haynes House in Granville, Ronald McDonald House in Albany, Shelters of Saratoga (SOS), and the Open Door, serving the hungry and homeless of the Glens Falls area.

The Circle is also planning to pay for the installation of a new sink and faucets in our Church kitchen.

Please come out to support **the Circle's upcoming pork dinner on Saturday, October 27 from 4:30 to 6:00.**



One of our many lovely Church flower arrangements by Marge Shostak

Happy 90th Birthday to Leslie DeGroot!!

Special Birthday wishes are sent out to Dr. Leslie DeGroot in recognition of his 90th birthday this past month. His good works and contributions to Fort Miller Reformed Church have been deeply felt and much appreciated through the years.

DeGroot Room Renovation

For 35 years, the DeGroot Room addition has served our church well. It was in 1983, through the generosity of the DeGroot family, that we added a meeting area and bathroom on the first floor and two additional Sunday School rooms on the second. About three years ago, we reevaluated our facilities and concluded that we needed a handicapped accessible bathroom and a meeting room with modern office capabilities. For about two years after that assessment, we concentrated on raising the funds for repurposing the DeGroot Room first floor space and building a ramp at the front of the church to provide handicapped access. With the necessary funds raised we started this past winter to make these improvements, first in the DeGroot Room. We completed this project in late spring. We now have a conference area that comfortably seats at least 18 people (12 at our conference table and an additional 6 around the room) AND has an office area. This includes desk, internet and wifi access, a new lap top computer and printer, new internet telephone service, a new portable telephone with extended range and a new document safe to protect important papers in our archive collection. In addition, we have a new handicapped accessible bathroom, fully ADA compliant. We retained the bathroom in the northwest corner of the dining room so we now we have two bathrooms on the first floor of our church.

We thank the many people who donated the funds and gave their time and effort to make all of this a reality.

Mac Sanders, Buildings and Grounds

Fort Miller Painting from 1953



“Fort Miller Street Scene” by Frances De Groot

We have recently acquired a print of a painting by Frances DeGroot titled “A Fort Miller Street Scene.” It is on display in the newly renovated De Groot room. The painting was done in 1953 and shows the front of our church along with what was the Davis house (now owned by Jan and John Peterson) next to the church, the front portion of the Orr house next to the Davis house and, across the street, the Petit house. What makes this painting truly exceptional is the inclusion of 4 adults, in addition to 3 children in the foreground, who were prominent in our church at the time:

- * L.N. (Les) Orr, long-time church and consistory member and local store owner and postmaster.

- * Gert Orr Hitchcock, his daughter, and Edith Davis, wife of Colonel Jefferson Davis.

- * Lillian (Lil) Petit in the front of her house raking the lawn. Lil was the wife of Jim Petit, long time church member and organist at the church. The children are Evelyn Rice walking down the sidewalk (left) and Allan Rice and Malcolm Sanders in the lower right corner.

This is an idyllic painting capturing a moment in time some 65 years ago in the front of our church.

Mac Sanders, Archivist

Fort Miller Community Meetinghouse Program

The mission of the Fort Miller Community Meetinghouse Program is to bring people in the Fort Miller area together to participate in events of general community interest and have a way for people to get to know their neighbors better. Its roots go back to 1816 when the sanctuary was constructed and served as a townhall and as a location for the community to gather. Six years later the Fort Miller Reformed Church was organized. In keeping with its original purpose, a group of Fort Miller neighbors and friends gathered a year ago to come up with ideas for a program of events to bring the community together. FMRC agreed to host these events in its sanctuary and dining room. Over the past 10 months these events have included:

- ❖ The Battenkill Conservancy's annual meeting
- ❖ Yoga sessions taught by Haley Graves
- ❖ The "Turkey Waddle", a Thanksgiving fun run benefitting an elementary school in Costa Rica
- ❖ A presentation about local grassland birds by Laurie LaFond of Washington County Grasslands Important Bird Area (IBA)
- ❖ The Washington County Suffrage Movement presentation sponsored by the Fort Edward Historical Association and the Washington County Historical Society
- ❖ A Valentine's Day celebration, "Pots of Love", with live music by Mitch and Carole Throop
- ❖ "Nature in Three Dimensions", a moss art craft project led by Demicia Lloyd of Revibe Studio
- ❖ Game Night, a fun gathering for playing cards and board games
- ❖ Scenic bicycle rides starting at the FMRC

Our program events are now listed on our new website: (fortmillermeetinghouse.org). Also, we now have a social media site (nextdoorfortmiller) where people in the Fort Miller area can share messages of community interest. Please check out this website and join "nextdoor". We are planning additional events for this fall and into 2019. They will be posted on our website.

Mac Sanders, coordinator, Meetinghouse Program, (518) 587-3783
macsanders@nycap.rr.com



Jan Peterson, Allison and Penelope Perkins working on their moss art projects



Doug Vincent helping out with Battenkill Conservancy's River clean up day

Congratulations to:

- ❖ Jim and Lorraine Ballard, celebrating their 30th wedding anniversary, and expecting their first grandchild
- ❖ Nancy Crosby, in the birth of her granddaughter, Finnley Grace, on August 3
- ❖ Mark and Randi Sheffer as they await the arrival of a grandchild to Hiedi and Jaquan

To Remember in Prayer:

- ❖ Debbie and Mark Anderson in the loss of Debbie's brother in law, Chuck
- ❖ Mary Major and family in the loss of her husband's brother
- ❖ The Curtis and Sanders families as they mourn the loss of Sean
- ❖ Sandy Rourke as she moves to her family farm in Schoharie following the loss of her brother
- ❖ Hank and Tina DeJong as they travel to visit family in the Netherlands next month
- ❖ Les de Groot, Marge Shostak and Harriet Moore, with recent health issues
- ❖ Those in nursing homes, including Idalee Sanders, Sue Clifford and Dorothy Anderson
- ❖ Residents of North and South Carolina who have suffered from Hurricane Florence
- ❖ Those receiving assistance at home: Abby de Jong and Dee Morrison
- ❖ David Hine, nephew of Jan Peterson, who has gone through chemo treatments
- ❖ Debbie Smith, niece of Lou and Laurie Flanders, suffering with Parkinson's Disease

Praises for:

- ❖ Helen Loveland as she continues to recover from knee surgery
- ❖ Marge Shostak's strength recovering following a recent medical issue

Thank you to:

- ❖ Mark Anderson, VP of Consistory, who devotes countless hours to both our Consistory and facilities
- ❖ Mac Sanders for the multitude of weekly chores he completes in and around our buildings
- ❖ Deb Anderson, our organist, for painting the trim in our new church office
- ❖ Tina and Hank de Jong for hosting our annual Church picnic at their home, as well as our church dinners
- ❖ Dick Behrens and Nancy Purinton, our RCA Classis elders, who devote time to attending our annual Congregational meeting and monthly Consistory meetings
- ❖ Jan Peterson and Priscilla Sanderspre for growing our Church garden again this summer

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