

# Fort Miller Patriot

Fort Miller Reformed Church of America, Fort Miller Road, Fort Edward, NY  
Editor: Nancy Crosby  
April 2016



## Contents

|   | page |
|---|------|
| Message from Interim Pastor Hoffman     | 1    |
| Note from Consistory VP, Alan Rice      | 2    |
| Update on 200 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary | 2    |
| Consistory Report, Jan Peterson         | 3    |
| Sanctuary Repairs, Mac Sanders          | 4    |
| God's Architecture Tour                 | 4    |
| Sunday School, Marylou Squires          | 5    |
| Choir, Deb Anderson                     | 5    |
| The Circle, Tina DeJong                 | 5    |

## Upcoming Events

**\*Saturday, April 30 - Roast beef dinner sponsored by the Circle 4:30 - 6:00**

**\*Sunday, May 1 - Annual**

**Congregational Meeting and covered dish luncheon immediately after church sponsored by the Consistory**

**\*Saturday, May 14 - Washington County Historical Association Architectural Walk through our church and cemetery**

**\*Sunday, May 15 - Healing Service as part of our regular church service**

**\*Saturday, October 15 & Sunday, October 16 - celebration of our church building's 200th anniversary**

## Behold, I am Making All Things New!

### Fort Miller Reformed Church: Looking to the Future

Sisters and Brothers of the Worshipping Community that gathers at the Fort Miller Reformed Church:  
Warm greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus. I have served as your interim pastor since the beginning of November, 2015. The Consistory and I have agreed to a year extension of the contract that would take us until March, 2017.

In the six months I have served, I have observed a number of characteristics in the life of FMRC. Foremost, is your sense of the church's history. In October, we will be celebrating the sanctuary's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. With pride we commemorate nearly 200 years of reformed witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in the upper Hudson Valley. We remember with great fondness the forty years of ministry led by Pastor Emeritus Charles Bailey.

Our history, however, has not always been kind to FMRC. The year or so before I became your interim pastor was a tumultuous time that resulted in the departure of a pastor and several long-time members of the congregation. It is only natural that those who chose to remain faithful in their worship and witness at FMRC, might ask; "What does the future hold?" or "Is there a future?"

I believe our Lord Jesus is the Lord of the future! *Behold, I am making all things new!* (Rev. 21:5 NIV). The newness starts now but continues on into the future. How will this unfold for Fort Miller Reformed Church? I can't tell you, but together we can journey towards the newness God plans for us and our witness. Please pray for guidance and empowerment, and participate in God's new plan for our historic church. God is faithful.

Grace and Peace,  
The Rev. Richard Hoffman  
Interim Pastor

## A Note From Alan Rice, Vice President of Consistory

I just want to say thank you to the Consistory for all of their hard work this past year. It has been a tough year but we have gotten past it and are moving on.

We are very fortunate to have Pastor Richard Hoffman with us as our interim Pastor and we are pleased to announce that we have extended his contract through 3-31-2017.

We are also grateful for Rev. Jamie Grubb and Doug Vincent, our Pulpit Supply speakers. Thanks to Nancy Purinton and Dick Behrens, our RCA Classis Elders, for being there with us and guiding us through this most difficult time.

We are very blessed to have been able to complete the Sanctuary repairs. Now, we need to repair the front entrance to the church and install a handicap ramp as none of us are getting any younger.

We have adopted our mission statement. Now we need to move forward in our pastoral search and increase our church membership and attendance on Sunday.

We look forward to the 200th birthday celebration of our sanctuary.

To the Congregation: Thanks for being patient with us. We do all of this for our Loving God and our little church on the river in Fort Miller which we hold very dear to our hearts. All things are possible because of God. **TRUST IN HIM AND WE WILL MAKE IT.**

Our prayers continue for our beloved former Pastor Rev. Charles Bailey, his wife Debbie and their family. Charles has spent the past year slowly recovering from a traumatic brain injury which resulted from a fall one year ago. Their indomitable and God-filled spirits have helped him overcome months of hospitalization, coma, surgery, and related motor, speech, and language therapy. We thank God for His healing hand, and pray for strength and hope as Charles slowly progresses.



## Church To Celebrate The 200th Birthday Of The Sanctuary Building from Mac Sanders

On Saturday and Sunday, October 15 and 16, our congregation and the Fort Miller community will celebrate the 200th birthday of our sanctuary. The History of Washington County, N.Y. (1878) states that “the meeting house of this church (i.e. the Fort Miller Reformed Church) is the oldest place of worship in the town (of Fort Edward), it having been built in 1816 ... upon a lot given by Barent and John Bleecker.” A local carpenter, Shepard Norcross, built our meeting house/sanctuary (presumably with the assistance of a construction crew). The local community raised \$1,500 to fund this construction. In 1822 a “Reformed Protestant Dutch” church was organized. Except for a 14 year interruption (1853-67), a Reformed church congregation has worshipped in our sanctuary, a total of 180 years of history and tradition.

A committee, comprised of consistory and congregational members, started meeting in February to plan the events for this 2-day celebration. While the plans are not yet finalized, the program for Saturday will focus upon the history of our area and the role that our meeting house/sanctuary played in the development of our community. The congregation, community and political leaders will be invited to participate in the program that day. Following our program, we will host a luncheon with a birthday cake celebrating our sanctuary’s 200th birthday. On Sunday we will hold a traditional Dutch worship service with a liturgy and sermon that will be appropriate to 1816.

Plan to join us for an interesting and fun weekend.

**FORT MILLER REFORMED CHURCH  
CONSISTORY REPORT FOR THE  
PATRIOT  
from Jan Peterson, Clerk**

If the Fort Miller Reformed Church was a ship, it could be said that, thankfully, we have navigated into calmer waters after the 2014/15 year of stormy seas. I don't think anything illustrates that fact more than comparing the minutes of the Consistory meetings of March 26, 2015 to the one we recently held on March 31, 2016.

The minutes of the March 2015 meeting reflect the turmoil we Consistory members felt as we faced the departure of our presiding interim pastor, along with the loss of many long-time and cherished members of the Consistory and the Church.

What a difference a year makes!! At the Consistory meeting held on March 31, 2016, we voted on and passed our new mission statement. It states, "Our mission is to be an all welcoming Church to spread God's word of faith, hope, love, and support in Jesus' name." At the recent (and harmonious) Consistory meeting, we voted to extend Rev. Rich Hoffman's contract as our interim minister for a year up to March 31, 2017. We will continue with Rev. Hoffman preaching twice a month and Doug Vincent and Jamie Grubb each preaching once a month. We are fortunate that they have been so dedicated to this Church. Doug and Jamie have been with us almost from the beginning when our need for preachers arose. We love to hear their sermons; consequently, our attendance rate has held steady. Rev. Hoffman, who came to us in the fall, is an ordained minister recognized by the Reformed Church of America. As our

spiritual leader, Rev. Hoffman represents our Church in many ways such as at the Greater Schuylerville Ministerial Association meetings. He enables this Church to offer our Congregation the full spectrum of services one expects from a church such as communion, Christian counseling, and visitation of the ill and elderly in their homes and hospital rooms. We have someone who can share in our joys such as weddings and baptisms, and he can comfort us at funeral/memorial services of our loved ones, as with the recent passings of Adam Shostak and Jean Gaylord. With the help of our "ministerial team", in a year, we have managed to create a new norm for our Church with which, hopefully, we all feel comfortable. Special thanks to Rev. Hoffman, Doug, and Jamie.

To further illustrate what a difference a year makes, the March 2015 Consistory minutes reflect we were just beginning the renovation of the sanctuary. The minutes refer to picking out a paint color for the walls, and finding volunteers to pull up the old carpet. A year later, our sanctuary looks beautiful, with newly painted walls and ceiling, renovated floors, and beautiful aisle runners. We no longer have to worry about water leaks (remember the pail in the corner), because they have been fixed as well. Thanks to Mac for all his hard work making sure things got done.

Finally, the balance on hand in our checking account on March 25, 2015 was \$5,448.15. The balance on hand on March 31, 2016 was \$6,447.14. We have managed to stay in the black throughout this year in spite of the fact that we lost members and did a big renovation on the Church building. We are blessed.



Historic Churches of Washington County

### **Worship in Washington County: Fundraiser and Guided Bus Tour**

An interpretive bus tour entitled “God’s Architecture” will be conducted on May 14, 2016, from 10 am to 3 pm. All proceeds will benefit Washington County Historical Association. The bus location will be either Salem Central School or Fort Miller Reformed Church. The cost of the tour will be \$40 for WCHS members and \$55 to non-members. The tour will focus on five historic houses of worship: the two Society of Friends meetinghouses in Easton, both of which portray the architecture of the Quakers; the Fort Miller Reformed Church, 1816, a highly intact example of the meetinghouse type located in the historic Fort Miller hamlet; the Coila Presbyterian Church, a handsome brick building erected in 1834; and the First United Presbyterian Church of Salem, ca. 1797. Join WCHS for this unique opportunity to celebrate the region’s religious and architectural history.

#### **The Vereenigheit Circle News from Tina De Jong**

The Vereenigheit Women’s Circle may take on a new shape. While the mission remains to provide financial support to the Church, the Circle is finding new life in involving the men of the congregation in its various activities. With this may come a new name, but it will still retain its underlying meaning of unity and friendship. This past year the Circle sponsored numerous events. They sold Strawberry Shortcake at Whipple City Days, served luncheon to the Washington County Historical Society as part of their 75th anniversary celebration, had a pork roast dinner, and enjoyed their annual Christmas social, at the Greenwich Cafe. Funds raised by the Circle’s events are used to assist with the Church’s fuel bills, scholarships for summer camp, the Neil Sanders scholarship, improvements to the Church facility, and various benevolences.

### **Sanctuary Repairs and Improvements (Almost) Completed from Mac Sanders**

From March through November, 2015 we completed significant repairs and improvements to our sanctuary:

- During the severe 2014/15 winter, we experienced water damage to the ceiling and walls in the northwest corner of the sanctuary. Starting in March, the damaged plaster was removed and repairs were made.
- The sanctuary roof was repaired, i.e. the valley between the sanctuary and the 1896 dining room was fixed and new slates were installed.
- The wall-to-wall carpet covering the sanctuary floor was removed and the hardwood flooring under the carpet was refinished and exposed. (Note: Our records show that this hardwood flooring was installed in 1924 at a cost of \$425)
- The dining room floor was cleaned and resealed.
- The exterior south side of the sanctuary and dining room were repainted. Spot repair and repainting was completed to other exterior portions of the sanctuary and dining room.
- The interior of the sanctuary was repainted.
- Two new oriental aisle-runner carpets were purchased.

The best part of this repair and improvement program was that we were able to pay for it with money on hand in our building fund. We thank all of those people who, over the years, have contributed to our building fund to make these repairs and improvements possible.

We are now planning two additional improvements. The first is replacement of the sill under our sanctuary entryway. The second is we need to provide handicapped accessibility through the front entryway and have a handicapped accessible bathroom. Perhaps we can complete both projects this year. If not, they will be completed in 2017.

## **A Note about Sunday School from Marylou Squires**

The Sunday School presented a beautiful Christmas Program on December 20. The children made tree ornaments for the residents at Morgan's Run. For Valentine's Day, they made 150 Valentine cards for the Argyle Nursing Home and Morgan's Run. The Sunday School served the chili from the chili cook-off and the love donation of \$73.00 was earmarked for use to send children to Camp Fowler. More recently, the children made Easter baskets for Morgan's Run. We have been teaching the children how to find Bible verses independently in their Bibles.



Thanks to Deb Anderson and her granddaughter, Cora, for hand delivering the Sunday School's Valentine cards to Washington Center (PVI).

### **From the Choir by Deb Anderson, Organist and Music Director**

The Fort Miller Reformed Church choir continues its tradition of weekly anthems, 52 weeks a year, which we understand can be a very rare thing indeed, especially given the size of our church. I chalk it up to a very dedicated group of choir members who love to sing and make it a priority to faithfully meet every Sunday. We love when the music is right on and adds a special time to our hour of worship together while we can laugh about the moments not as glorious, but knowing our hearts, if not our notes, were in the right place!

We moved from the upstairs choir loft to the sanctuary this past summer and have received feedback that the congregation enjoys being able to actually see us during the anthems! This year Dolores Rice added her lovely voice to the soprano section, joining Tina DeJong, Carol Call and Carol Throop. Elizabeth O'Leary is doing a great job as our lone alto (except when I can sometimes join in) and Mark Anderson, David Flynn and Henk DeJong fill out the bass/tenor section. We added the piece, "Here I am, Lord", a former choir piece, to the congregation's repertoire, as it was a favorite of all.

We have two very talented substitute organists, Becky Hoague and Bonnie Clauss, who have filled in for me when I am away. Anyone loving to sing and feeling moved to join us, we meet at 9:30 am before the service on Sundays.

### **Update on Schuylerville Area Food and Emergency Relief (SAFER) from Elizabeth O'Leary, Board President**

Along with our food pantry, we also have a backpack program with Schuylerville School. A child in need will bring home a backpack on Friday night filled with nutritious food to eat over the weekend and then return the backpack on Monday. Our number of people/families that we serve at the pantry has decreased (which means the economy is finally on the upswing). We will only be open on Monday and Friday mornings for June, July, and August. As always, we rely on the kindness and generosity of the community, and they never disappoint!! We thank you all for your continued support!

### **Call for Church Family History**

Has your family been attending FMRC for several generations? If you would like to include family history stories in our 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on October 15 and 16, please contact Nancy Crosby at 695-6132

**Congratulations to:**

- The Sheffer and Washington families, at the christening of Beatrix Iris Washington in Manhattan last month
- Gary and Marylou Squires on the birth of their new grandson, Landon Daniel Mockry, to their daughter, Sydney

**Thanks to:**

- Consistory for the countless hours they have put in to meetings and planning in order to provide our church with pastoral care during this time of transition
- Deb Anderson and Jan Peterson for preparing our church bulletin each week
- Kent Busman and Danielle Bailey for being guest speakers during worship service, as well as Mark Sheffer, Madison Squires and others who have helped at the pulpit
- The Circle and other church members who helped prepare food for the Shostak family and the Gaylord family funeral services, the chili cook off on 2/7, and the Lenten service held at our church on 3/7
- Tina DeJong for taking care of ordering our flowers which graced our sanctuary on Christmas and Easter services
- The Anderson Family and Trevett Mill Works for sponsoring a bounteous First Friday Dinner at the Centenary United Methodist Church in Greenwich
- Cindy Blanchard and Marylou Squires for their dedication to our Sunday School children
- Lorraine Ballard for her help planning, and sharing her Main Street building, for our Strawberry Shortcake sale during Whipple City Days

**To remember in prayer:**

- Laurie Flanders and Marge Shostak, as they undergo treatment for illness
- Leneta Gamache and Idalee Sanders, as they recuperate from falls, in assisted living
- Reverend Rich Hoffman's wife, Robin, as she heals from surgery
- Those in area nursing homes: Cathleen Humiston and Mary Larmon
- Vivian Wilbur and Dee Morrison, at home
- The family of Marge Shostak, in the loss of her husband, Adam
- The Gaylord and Squires families, in the loss of Marylou's mother, Jean Gaylord
- The family of Nancy Crosby, in the loss of her sister, Linda

Fort Miller Reformed Church  
1239 Fort Miller Road  
Fort Edward, NY 12828

