

# Fort Miller Patriot

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

website: [fortmillerreformedchurch.org](http://fortmillerreformedchurch.org)

Editor: Nancy Crosby

Secretary: Jan Peterson

September 2022



## Help Us Celebrate Our 200th Anniversary

Family, Friends, and Community – All are welcome on Sunday, October 2, at its 10:30 service, as the Fort Miller Reformed Church congregation celebrates the church's 200th anniversary. The theme for the service will be "Giving Thanks for The Past Eight Generations/Moving Our Church Forward for Future Generations." The FMRC Consistory will lead the service. A reception with refreshments will follow the service.

In 2016, we celebrated the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of our sanctuary building. It was initially used as a community meetinghouse open to all. Starting in 1816, the minister of the Argyle Reformed Protestant Dutch Church began using the building to lead church services. As attendance steadily increased over the next six years, a group of worshippers petitioned the Protestant Dutch Church to establish a church in Fort Miller.

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## From the Pulpit: Speaking the Truth in Love

**Doug Vincent, Preacher**

My father-in-law, the late Rev. John Meyer, held at the core of his life-long ministry these simple words from Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, "Speak the Truth in Love" (Eph. 4:15). For Rev. Meyer, these five simple words informed everything about his Pastoral career and endeared him to a great many people. I thought it a good time to let these words inform all of us whether in mission, ministry, personal or collective life. In a time when our culture has placed a high premium on denial, lies and misinformation, these words and what they mean are vital to us all.

This summer our entire planet experienced a heat wave like nothing ever recorded since 800 AD. Climate scientists have been predicting this summer for over 4 decades. Despite their prophetic warnings, we as a world people have opted instead to continue unbridled consumption, and forever larger profits derived from a finite planet. Scientists tell us that this summer is just the beginning.

**Continued on page 3**

## **A Road Map for The Future: Developing a Vision for FMRC**

During the summer of 2021 the FMRC consistory decided to prepare a plan of action to guide the church into its third century, and its ninth generation of witnessing in Fort Miller. The plan, called "Moving Our Church Forward", has as its goal to grow our church by making it better, and more relevant in the community.

The committee, consisting of five members of the church consistory plus three from the congregation, began its "Moving Our Church Forward" (MOCF) Plan in the fall of 2021. It hoped to accomplish three objectives: examine where the church has been in its recent history, define where we are now, taking into account the changing demographics of Fort Miller, and finally determine where would we like our church to be in the next 3 to 5 years. The essential question we are asking is: What's our vision for the church? Our group spent the Spring drafting and revising and finally publishing a final Plan in April. This analysis will help us lay out a set of actions, beginning this year, to engage more with the community around the FMRC.

The initial event planned was a Strawberry Festival. This took place on June 26 and was attended by about 35 people. The next step of the Plan was to hold outside Sunday services during the summer, weather permitting, at a chapel behind the church overlooking the Hudson River. Two services have taken place so far. The third event, scheduled for October 2, is to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Church. The community is invited to attend.

The MOCF committee will continue to meet throughout 2022 to evaluate how these programs are working and make any necessary changes. Succeeding consistories hopefully will continue this effort and develop new programs and actions. This "Moving Our Church Forward" plan and updates will be published on the church website.

**Mac Sanders, Chair  
Moving Our Church Forward Committee**

## **Fort Miller Neighborhood Bell Tower Committee**

It is with interest in their community that the Church's neighbors have come forward and expressed a desire to help us raise the considerable money needed to repair our bell tower and clean up our bell. Collectively, these neighbors, who have varied professions, offer a wider span of people and organizations that we can reach. It will be truly wonderful to hear the pealing of our bell again. The neighbors have many ideas as to ways our Church can be used as a meeting house again. We have great potential working together!!

**Jan Peterson, Elder  
Co-chair of Fort Miller Neighborhood Bell Tower Committee**

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## **Community Looks to Revitalize Meetinghouse**

The Fort Miller community has expressed a serious interest in helping to fundraise for the restoration of the historic bell tower. Ideally, the hope is that the church will focus its time and money on the actual "bell project" as opposed to the installation of electronic chimes. The suggestion of forming a committee of both church members and other Fort Miller residents was proposed and we are hoping to plan accordingly.

Beyond the "bell project," members of the general community are also hoping to help revitalize the church and its surroundings by offering community-related projects like a farmer's market, gallery, meeting space, and other arts-oriented projects and activities. It is our belief that a vibrant communal space would enhance the church's reach by highlighting its importance to Fort Miller and beyond.

**Brian Katz, Co-chair of Fort Miller Neighborhood Bell Tower Committee**

## 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Continued from page 1

The petition stated: “with the importance of being formed into a congregation, we do earnestly request the Classis of Washington to organize us as a church and receive us into their connection and under their care.” This petition was granted and on August 23, 1822, the Fort Miller Church was established.

The October 2 service will reflect upon the six historical events which shaped the church: the formation of the church in 1822, its 1855 closing, the revival movement called the Great Awakening, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century/early 20<sup>th</sup> century meetinghouse programs that took place here, the Great Depression, and its rebirth after World War II. We will recognize the people who led the church through these tumultuous and challenging times, which includes our recent COVID crisis. Notably, the service will focus on the future of the FMRC and how the church’s consistory is addressing the pertinent questions of: where are we now, what is our vision for the future, and how are we moving our church forward? **The consistory’s goal is to keep our church open and witnessing into its 9<sup>th</sup> generation.**

This special service on October 2 will both honor the past and focus on the FMRC’s future. Please help us celebrate!

**Mac Sanders**  
**200<sup>th</sup> Celebration Chairperson**

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### **Please Stay in Touch with FMRC!!**

Our phone number is 518-507-6020.  
The wifi access password is FMRC1822.  
Our website home page can be found at:

**[fortmillerreformedchurch.org](http://fortmillerreformedchurch.org)**

Check out our updated and improved website! It now has a current listing of church events, as well important information such as the posting of our pastor search. You will see photos and videos of church activities. From the home page you can also link to our Facebook page.

## Speaking Truth in Love, Continued from page 1

The water shortages already apparent in places like Pakistan, Germany and the United States Southwest imply that by the end of this century some 3 billion people will be displaced; denial, lies and misinformation have led us here.

At the center of the 12 step programs which took hold in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the notion of being “brutally” honest with oneself in order to effect change. The kind of change sought is a change toward self-care, and self-love. This “self-help” movement which most often recognizes God, or a higher power as the key to overcoming addiction, has helped millions of people with all kinds of personal demons learn how to arrest their decline and find health and self-respect again. When we lack in health and self-respect; when we despise who we’ve become we tell ourselves lies, we live in denial, we seek out misinformation. We become like the lost sheep alone in the cold wilderness, paralyzed by fear and the inevitable fodder for the wolf.

When we are brutally honest with ourselves, or as a global collective with our leaders, even if that Truth is “inconvenient”, we are found. The person that God made us is uncovered beneath the shroud of lies, deception and denial. In this way we learn how to love ourselves, find respect for ourselves, and discover God’s enduring love. Loving ourselves and glorifying God are not mutually exclusive; we find one, as we do the other.

Speaking the Truth IS Loving. When we must speak the Truth whether to ourselves or to others, it is always wise to do it with love; to show respect and exude kindness. However, we must at least speak the Truth in order to respect ourselves and others as well as to take care of our God-Created home. There is still hope for our weary planet, but only if we get honest....brutally honest. The time has come for us to revisit Rev. Meyer’s central theme in ministry, “Speaking the Truth in Love”, that we might Love God and ourselves all at the same time. As we go forward from here, let us “Speak the Truth in Love” and find our way back to the flock that is our home.

**Doug Vincent**



## **2022 Consistory Report: The State of our Church**

The last couple of years have been very challenging for us, like most other churches. During COVID most of our Consistory meetings were via Zoom. We were not able to hold services for many months. Thankfully, the threat of COVID is greatly reduced now and folks are returning.

Even though we do not have an ordained minister to lead us every Sunday, we are very thankful for all our Pulpit Supply speakers who lead us in worship on Sunday mornings and also all our lay people who help out. We are grateful to our Supervisor Jordan White from the West Glenville Reformed Church who tries to keep us on the right path doing things decently and in order. Thank you, Jordan, for all your patience with Fort Miller.

We are very thankful to Debbie Anderson for her many years and dedication to our church as Organist and Choir Director. Last year, she decided to step down and spend more time with her family. We look forward to seeing her and Mark again this Fall. In the meantime, Tina DeJong has done an excellent job providing music for us with her CD's – thanks to Tina.

We were very fortunate to have Bradon Jarosz with us from May through August 4. We had a nice send-off for him and hope he will visit us when he is home from college.

We are thankful to Laurie Flanders, Mary Rowland, Randi Sheffer and others who have provided refreshments for our weekly coffee hour after service. We are also grateful to Randi Sheffer for the beautiful flowers out in front of our church.

We have managed to keep up with our routine work of the church and paying all our bills. We are so thankful to all of you for your generous support.

### **Maintaining our Property:**

In 2021, we had to replace two oil tanks in the Church and we also had to do a lot of exterior and sill work on the Parsonage and Tenant House. In 2022, we had to replace the water tank in the church. We did some cleanup work on the riverbank behind the church so we could enjoy our Sunday services outside.

We have repaired the bell tower roof and painted the front of the church. This fall, we are going to gut and replace the bathrooms in both the tenant house and parsonage.

Some years ago we received the Washington County Preservation Award and our sanctuary and other properties have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. We take pride in having maintained the properties, our heritage, which have been handed down to us over the last eight generations.



**Bell Tower repairs underway, July 13, 2022**

### **Now the bell tower:**

The bell tower contains our historic, 1871 Meneely bell. We have not rung our bell as of late because of the deterioration of the bell tower. We have retained a structural engineer to evaluate the bell tower and give us a plan to repair it and again ring the bell. His preliminary assessment reads, in part:

“The building’s wood frame is showing its age. The original construction only retains a fraction of its original strength, overall retaining an estimated 20% of its original strength. This is a common problem of structures of this type and age.”

His preliminary fix is to construct an interior skeleton, build it on concrete pylons poured into the earth below the front entryway and then tie this interior skeleton to the bell tower. We should have his final assessment and recommended repair early this fall.

Then we'll need construction drawings to go out to bid to come up with a project cost. We don't have even a preliminary cost estimate, but it will be expensive. We will, most likely, need an extensive fundraising program to pay for this expense, i.e., donations and grants. We will keep everyone posted on this project.

This year the Consistory and 3 members of the congregation developed a new plan to "Move Our Church Forward," which is described in detail in a separate article. Our plan of action for the remainder of 2022 and beyond is:

1. Continue to be a witnessing, all-welcoming church.
2. Implement our version of the Fresh-Expressions program.
3. Continue participation in the Albany Synod Mediation Program to get rid of any lingering division.
4. Continue with our pastoral search. We need to have an installed minister to lead us and to provide moral authority.

#### **Church Profile:**

Our Pastoral Search Committee has completed our church profile and it has been approved by Classis and the Reformed Church of America (RCA). It is posted on the websites of the RCA, the Albany Synod and our Church website, as well as Western Theological Seminary job board. We are praying that if we get an Ordained Minister to lead us, some of our differences will be resolved, and we will continue to grow in our Faith and be an all-welcoming vibrant Church in Fort Miller on the River.

Thank you all for your patience as we continue to move our Church forward, and we ask for your prayers and support.

**Allan Rice, Senior Elder**

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Sunday, Oct 2 10:30 Fort Miller Reformed Church 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Service**

#### **ALL ARE WELCOME – Refreshments to follow**

Tuesdays, Oct 4 - Dec 13 4:00-5:30

Bible Study with Doug Vincent – Book of Romans and how Paul developed Christianity

Every Sunday coffee hour immediately after 10:30 service - Delicious treats and great companionship

Thurs Oct 20 – 22 RCA "Churches Learning Change" Retreat at Honor's Haven Resort in Ellenville, NY  
Contact Jan if interested

Thurs. Nov 24, 9 am: 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Fort Miller Turkey Waddle, Thanksgiving morning, with a free-will offering to a local family in need

Sunday, Dec 25 10:30 AM Christmas Service with Doug Vincent preaching

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## **Schedule of Sunday Preachers**

We are fortunate to have four people who have committed themselves to preaching at our Church once a month. It is working out that Doug Vincent takes the first Sunday, Rev. Chris Dungan takes the second Sunday and offers us communion; Preaching Elder Dick Behrens has the third Sunday and Rev. Jim Farinacci takes the fourth Sunday. I would like to thank Elder Mark Sheffer for stepping forward to preach this summer when others have had conflicts. Christmas falls on a Sunday this year, and Doug Vincent has agreed to preach that day which is a blessing.

**Jan Peterson, Elder**

**Worship Committee Chair**

## Turning Point Committee

The Turning Point Committee is comprised of the Fort Miller Reformed Church, Old Saratoga Reformed Church, and Bacon Hill Reformed Church. This committee resulted from the committee that was formed to support our 'Fellow' – Jenn Legg - some time ago. As we walked with Jenn on her journey, we gradually realized that the churches could be of support to one another. We kept this committee going and named it the Turning Point Committee (TPC).

How can we be of support to one another you ask? As ministers and interim ministers retire and move away from the three churches, the Turning Point Committee (TPC) can offer consistency of support, an understanding of mutual issues that need to be tackled, and talk therapy when it comes to dealing with the frustrations of trying to grow a church while living in today's world. This includes the difficulties of functioning without a minister as well as dealing with the complicated search process that any one of us has to go through when a minister leaves. In the beginning, we had three 'ministers' on the committee, now we have one – Rev. Jan Vincent from Bacon Hill. The good news is that Old Saratoga just hired a new minister who is retiring back to this area.

As our three Churches continue to offer joint services rotating at each other's churches, we gradually are becoming not only more familiar with the physicality of the churches, but also the people who go to them. At these joint services, there is a happy mingling of the Congregations. This can only get better and better with time.

Another advantage is the sharing of services. For example, not every TPC Church may have the participants to offer Adult Bible Study or Vacation Bible Study. But if all three churches are involved, it makes what any one Church can offer more "full-bodied" and more interesting in the participation of the attendees.

Other examples for the future are a joint choir and a sharing of the audio/visual equipment and skill set concerning Facebook and other social media platforms. These things have been done in the past to a certain extent but a realization of sharing what we have is a good notion for all three churches to consider as time goes on.

If the three Churches do a decent job of tending to this Committee like one does a newly planted shrub, the possibilities for the joint growth of the Churches as joint partners are endless. Instead of water, soil, and sunshine, it would be continuing dedication to TPC, a mutual understanding of what we can offer one another, and our shared interest in offering Bible centered services following the ways of the Reformed Church of America.

New representatives are always welcome. Presently, Jan Peterson, Tina DeJong, and Mac Sanders represent Fort Miller RC, Anne Mitchell represents Old Saratoga RC, and Rev. Jan Vincent, Jennifer Thomas, Susanna Combs, and Becky Diggin represent Bacon Hill RC.

**Jan Peterson, FMRC, Elder**  
**Rev. Jan Vincent, BHRC**



**Jenn Legg with Consistory Members Laurie Flanders, Elizabeth O'Leary, Jan Peterson and Cindy Blanchard in 2019**



## **Worshipping On the Riverbank**

One of the initiatives in our “Moving Our Church Forward” plan for this year was to build a chapel on the riverbank behind the church to connect our congregation with the Hudson River. We hope to have a “worship-with-nature” experience and attract new people. A group of volunteers and a contractor cleared the riverbank and the back portion of the church property. We purchased a wooden platform to serve as the base for our pulpit and three canopy tents to screen the sun. We held lovely services the first two Sundays in July. Then Mother Nature intervened with a windstorm which blew across the river, causing much damage and loss of trees throughout Fort Miller. It blew down two large trees along our riverbank and onto the chapel area. A tree service has cleared the area and the chapel program will resume in 2023.

**Mac Sanders**

**Moving Our Church Forward Committee Chair**

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## **FMRC's First Strawberry Festival**

Our church's first Strawberry Festival was held on June 26. We wanted to do something for the community primarily; secondly, it was to raise money for our bell tower, which is in need of repairs. I would estimate that around 25 people attended, in addition to church members. One family drove from Whitehall because the daughter wanted to come with her family to celebrate her birthday which was that day! I want to thank those people who picked and prepared the strawberries, baked the shortcake, and helped to host this event.

**TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK!**

**Jan Peterson, Chair**

**Strawberry Festival Subcommittee of the MOCF**

## **As You Do to the Least of my Brethren...**

Our Church donates to numerous benevolences in support of our local and global communities. One way we give locally is through our **Mission of the Month**. Last month our funds went to the Tabor family here in Fort Miller who lost everything in a house fire. We also assisted our Bacon Hill neighbors, the Hernandez family, who relocated to work on a dairy farm here last year. Other examples of the life-changing programs which our benevolences support include:

\*Haynes House of Hope in Granville provides physical, emotional and spiritual support for the terminally ill.

\*Comfort Food Community in Greenwich aims to end food insecurity and build a strong, sustainable local food system.

\*Open Door Mission in Glens Falls has as its mission to model our Faith in Jesus by providing practical solutions to physical, spiritual, and relational brokenness.

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**Funds raised from last year's 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Turkey Waddle were donated to the Martin Family, friends of Madison Squires. They grieved the loss of his friend, Jake, 27, and Jake's father Rick, 51, who passed away from COVID.**

## From the Choir

Our organ was rebuilt by Jim Petit from an organ that was taken out of a church in Amsterdam. Rita Kilmer was our next organist after Jim, and then Debbie Anderson. Debbie was a pianist, but Jim Petit taught her the ins and outs of the organ. She is now semi-retired as our organist. We enjoy when she can join us and are so grateful to her. Debbie was our choir leader too, and that sadly came to a halt during COVID. We had to stop having services for many months, then met outside when weather allowed. When we finally returned inside, singing still wasn't permitted for health reasons until this spring, 2022. At that time, we were fortunate to have Bradon Jarosz, a very talented high school friend of Allan and Dolores Rice, fill in for this summer.

**Tina DeJong**, Choir member and CD Music provider

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**Dolores Rice leads the Church in saying farewell to Bradon, our summer organist**

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**We offer a group hug to our beloved organist and choral director, Deb Anderson**

## **Congratulations to Deb Anderson on her (sort of) Retirement**

A heartfelt congratulations was offered to Deb Anderson as she retired as our church organist on March 28, 2021. We have been blessed for over 25 years to have her talent, dedication, and creativity grace our church with her music and voice, her choral direction, and her cheerful spirit. She enriched our spiritual lives with her musical choices, including the shape note singing she brought back to us from a workshop she attended in Vermont. We are fortunate that Deb will continue to “play with us” on Sundays when she is available.



## Washington County Gideons

Washington County Gideons International have been busy placing Bibles where people can find them. Sixty Bibles were distributed at Washington County Jail. Members of the local Gideons had their usual booth at the Washington County Fair in August, and over 700 Bibles were placed in residents' hands or taken to give to loved ones. A Pastors' banquet was held with over 40 participants, and \$12,500 in funds were raised for Bibles worldwide.

"If my people, which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."  
2 Chronicles 7:14

**Mark Sheffer, member of local Gideons**

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**Mark Sheffer leading worship service last Christmas**

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**Flowers planted in front of church by Randi Sheffer. The Ukrainian flag hanging in front of church reminds of us to pray for the people suffering in that region**

## Communication is Key

Whether you are part of an organization, family, or friendly group, communication is key. With this mind set, the Fort Miller Reformed Church Consistory ventured into an active listing training provided by the Schenectady Classis. Led by Reverend Abby Norton-Levering and assisted by Suzanna Combs, the Consistory spent several Saturdays learning about active listening and constructive feedback and communication.

The Consistory's participation in these sections is one more way we are helping the Fort Miller Reformed Church move forward. With effective communication skills, the Consistory has been better able to conduct meetings and get church business done.

**Randi Sheffer, Consistory Deacon and Clerk**

## The Rice Family in Fort Miller

Allan Rice guesses that driving a school bus runs in his family. He and his wife Dolores wake up at 4:30 each morning to get the school bus rolling for Fort Edward children. Likewise, his Aunt Cate's mother, Fanny Rice, used to pick up children with her horse and buggy and transport them to the little brick schoolhouse still visible on Bald Mountain Road.

If you ever wonder about the trap door in the floor next to the new bathroom in our church, Allan can tell you what it was: a hand pump for drawing well water back in the day. He knows because as a youth he lived in the Tenant house on the church's property, and that pump was the source of their water – no indoor plumbing back then. He also remembers the “three holer” (small, medium and large) outhouse that his family used, down by the riverbank. The rent at that time was \$7 a month. His Aunt Kate and Uncle Ralph Humiston later bought the house next door and lived out their lives there.

Allan's grandfather, George Rice, had left his family's logging business up in Thurman in 1916 to take a job at Clarks Mill earning \$10.75 a week. His new wife, Fanny, joined him, leaving behind her work as cleaner and cook for the loggers. She must have really missed that. She used to do all their laundry as well as peel a half bushel of potatoes a day to keep them all fed. George and Fanny took all their possessions, including their cow, and rode the trolley from the Thurman area to the end of the line in Fort Edward. Then they walked the rest of the way, cow in tow, to their rented home in the hamlet of Bald Mountain. From there, George had to walk 2 ½ miles each way to the mill for his 10-hour shift six days a week. On Sundays, in the winter, he hitched up his horse and drove his carriage into Schuylerville to sell beef, which he had butchered on the farm.

We have come a long way since the early twentieth century!



**Allan Rice's mother, Louise (middle), and his aunts, (Dorothy Lacko, on left), Josephine Middleton (who passed this year, on right), and the late Cathleen Humiston (seated)**

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## From the Pew

“From the Pew” contains memorable or inspiring words gleaned from our Sunday worship services, with **thanks to Jan P.**

### From Doug Vincent:

In response to our attempts to grow the Church and find a new minister: “Keep God in your hearts and behaviors. Ask yourselves, ‘Is **God at the center** of what we do? The only way out of a circle is through the **center**.’”

### From Dick Behrens:

“Be aware of the trappings of life that prevent us from hearing God's word.”  
“Live out your love for others.”

### From Rev. Chris Dungan

“The last word is hope not death.”

### From Rev. Jim Farinacci:

“God is not afraid of our emotions.”



## COVID Times

The past two years have been a time of aloneness. We were forced to stay at home from school and work, and to keep our six-foot distance from each other. Instead of meeting in person, the phrase "See you on Zoom" became all too common. In light of the impact that all this social distancing and illness has had on each of us and our congregation, I am including the following Annual Report from 2021 because it summarizes very well the challenges we faced, and how our Consistory adapted to them, to keep our church alive and well.



**Elizabeth O'Leary leads outdoor service when COVID prevented indoor worship**

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### **Looking Back: Consistory's Annual Report, April 15, 2021, with no annual meeting due to COVID**

We on Consistory have had a challenging year, as the rest of the world has, dealing with the threat of COVID. We have been able to hold regular meetings throughout this year even though many times it had to be outside on Jan's side yard. When it got to be Fall, we were rushing to beat the darkness that came earlier and earlier with each passing month. With that being said, we have managed to keep up with all the current operations of the Church. We have paid all of our expenses and contributed to all of our benevolences thanks to your generous support. We are very grateful!

Over this past year, we have been lucky to have the unfailing ministerial support and talents of Doug Vincent, Marcial Reyes, and Rev. Chris Dungan who have all been approved by Classis. They have reminded us of why we are here – to worship the Lord.

Consistory recognized that although we were going through a pandemic, it was important to stay connected with everyone in our Church as best we could. Many of our members such as Tina and Henk de Jong, Randi and Mark Sheffer, and Marcial Reyes visited those people we cannot communicate with by email such as Marge Shostak, Barb Larmon, and Ed and Marge Maille (sadly, who have both since passed). Jan sent out a bulletin every Saturday with information in it about our individual church family's prayer needs, praises, and monthly birthday lists.

The bulletin also informed everyone of who was preaching, whether it be Marcial videotaping himself, or Doug emailing his sermon to all of us, which Lorraine put on our Facebook page. Dolores made sure that we all got THE UPPER ROOM by mailing them directly to our homes.

We must praise Deb Anderson, our long-serving Choir Director and Organist, for her dedication over many decades. Even though she has retired, we will still see her and hear her play, just not as often.

We thank the efforts of Rev. Kent Busman who was our Classis-appointed Supervisor for part of this last year prior to Rev. Jordan White, our current and fifth Supervisor since Rev. Charles Bailey retired. Even though he has been with us a short while, he has already been able to give us valuable information which we did not have before.

We have not been able to enjoy our beautiful Church building as much as we would have liked this year. But it has not been neglected. The Church pews were painted in the sanctuary and the Church was nicely decorated for the holiday season thanks to the efforts of Marcial, Mac, Lorraine, and Jan. Also, the sidewalk and driveway were kept maintained throughout the winter month. Tina made sure we had tulips, hyacinths, and lilies for Easter, and we were able to hold a beautiful service inside with communion offered. This summer, the outside of the parsonage and the tenant house will be painted and repaired, ensuring that our historic Fort Miller complex remains in good stead.

As we start our new fiscal year 2021/22 beginning April 1, we will be saying good-bye to Elders Elizabeth O'Leary and Cindy Blanchard, our co-Vice Presidents on Consistory, as well as Deacons Lorraine Ballard and Madison Squires. We thank them for their leadership over the past four years with an extra thanks to Elizabeth who stayed on an extra year as was requested of her.

As people get vaccinated and Covid eases its hold on us, we can begin to look to the future again. Plans are underway to form a new Search Committee when the new Consistory is in place. The Search Committee will endeavor to find a new part-time ordained minister and/or seek the assistance of our neighboring church ministers by sharing with another church. In the meantime, we will be actively assigning pastoral duties to the new Deacons and Elders.

Our Church mission is to be an all-welcoming church to spread God's word of faith, hope, love, and support in Jesus' name and that is what we will continue to do under RCA.

### **And now, from the other side of COVID...**

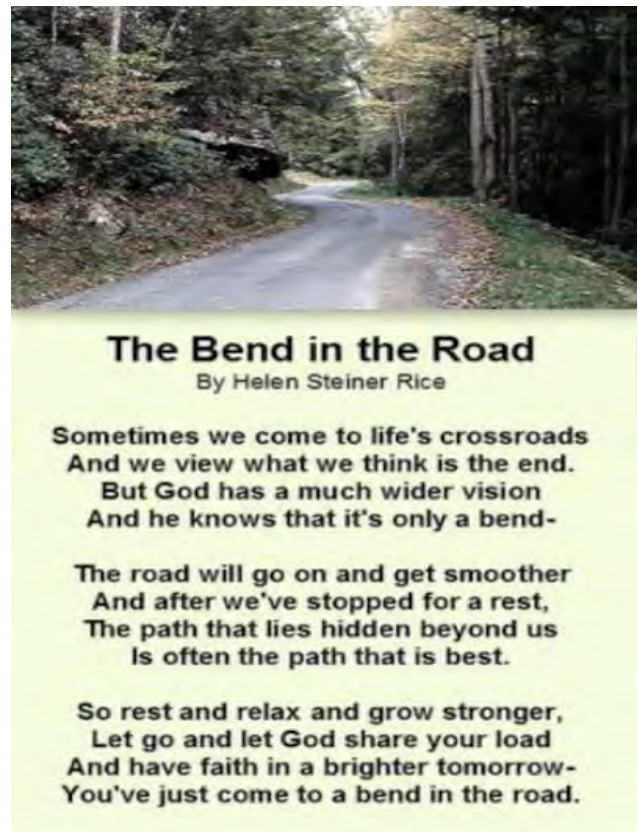
Finally, little by little, we returned to in-person worship. I asked a few former Consistory members to reflect on their recent time in service to our Church:

**Lorraine Ballard** spoke about her five years as a member of Consistory. "Recognizing the importance of service was perhaps the best lesson I took away from my time as a Deacon. It was an opportunity to observe the dedication and commitment by those who were called to serve...simply by selflessly showing up to do the tasks at hand. That and the fact that Sunday services do not happen without each member being willing to take a role, help out in their own way and, when it's time, to step back gracefully."

**Elizabeth O'Leary** described the challenges of dealing with COVID. "What broke my heart most was that we couldn't sing in Church. I really missed that. The COVID regulations changed all the time. We were trying to keep our Church open. It was difficult to get someone to preach on Sundays. Everyone on Consistory did a great job. Doug Vincent was a blessing. I'm grateful to him for being gracious and helpful, and a good friend to all.

**Jan Peterson** recalled the frustrations as well. During COVID, gratefully, we had the preaching services of Doug Vincent and Marcial Reyes. Jan said, "I was concerned that people would be too afraid to come to Church. So, I made it easy for them. All they had to do was show up and leave. I took care of the rest in my capacity at that time as Deacon, Church secretary, and Finance committee member. Marcial was a huge help in all of this. Besides preaching, he was available for anything that needed to be done, such as getting our Church services online, helping us take care of frozen pipes, to providing for us Christmas trees and decorations."

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### **Prayers for those who can't join us in Church!**

Each Sunday we pray for those who are not able to attend service for health or other reasons. We miss **Barb Larson**, who currently resides in Shaker Place Nursing Center in Albany. Barb often submitted poems by H. S. Rice for the Patriot, so this one (above) is in her honor. We also miss **Marge Shostak**, and are grateful to Rev. Chris Dungan, for making her welcome at the Shushan Presbyterian Church! **John and Carol Call** remain in our prayers as well.

**Congratulations to:**

Gregory Peterson, son of John and Jan Peterson in his marriage to Lauren Squadere on August 12  
Tina and Henk DeJong in the marriage of their granddaughter Emma on June 18

**Remember in Prayer:**

Jim and Mary Rowland in the recent loss of their daughter  
Fort Miller residents who suffered devastation of damage and downed trees from a storm in July  
The Tabor family as they adjust to the loss of their home, and deal with Ed's illness  
Helen Loveland with ongoing health issues  
Brenda Babson and her family in the loss of her father, Ray Baehm  
The family of Beverly King in her recent passing  
Lorraine Ballard and her sister Jen in the recent loss of two of their brothers  
John and Carol Call with ongoing health problems  
Allan Rice as he receives treatment for his back  
Don Moore, Dolores Rice's stepfather with health issues  
Barb Larson following her surgery  
Doug Vincent in the loss of his mother in April  
The family of Ed and Marge Maille in their passings  
Laurie and Lou Flanders in the loss of her mother, Gloria Thomas  
Deb Anderson in the loss of her dear friend, Mimi Boyd  
The DeJong family in the loss of Anna Bierma  
Sue Clifford, in Washington Center  
We hold in our hearts and thoughts those who have gone by over the recent years, including  
Dolores Rice's mother, Harriet Moore, Jan's nephew David Hine, Deb Anderson's brother David  
Flynn, Mark's mother Doris Anderson  
Abby DeJong and Dee Morrison, at home

**Praises:**

For the outpouring of support for Ed, Kim, Ciara and Nicole Tabor in the loss of their home to a fire  
For those who prepare our weekly coffee hour, bringing us all together after worship service  
Those who have continually supported our Church through the years, including Dr. Leslie de Groot,  
who passed away in 2018

**Thank you to:**

Wendy Bittel for her many years of helping to keep our church clean  
Tina DeJong for our Easter lilies and Christmas poinsettias which beautify our Church and homes

We apologize if you or your loved one has been overlooked in these praises and prayers.  
Please let us know and we will raise up you or loved ones in prayer.





**Valentine cards made by some crafty folks – Lou Flanders, Henk DeJong and Jim Rowland. The cards were delivered to residents of Washington Center Nursing Care Facility in Argyle.**



**Fort Miller Reformed Church worships with nature on the riverbank of the Hudson River, July 2022**

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