

SIDEWALKS

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO CARRY OUT THE MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST

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A Look at 2012

Rev. Nathan S. Busker, D. Min.
Pastor

Each year the members of Ponds Reformed Church gather to elect new consistory members, to celebrate God's work, to thank the many who give their time in service to the church, and to look ahead at the challenges and opportunities of a new year. On Sunday, January 29 the annual congregational meeting was held.

Election of Elder and Deacons

- **Paul Vanella** was elected to the office of elder.
- **Phil Marchbank and Ron Petherbridge** were elected to the office of deacon.
- They will serve a three-year term.

I shared with the members upcoming **goals for 2012.**

Property

- We have received a financial gift for a **new church sign**. With a new sign there will be new outdoor lighting to enhance the visibility of the church at night.
- **Fellowship Hall** – new windows, window treatments, repaint, new chairs & tables.
- **Basement Bathrooms** –in need of a makeover.
- **Parlor** – once we know the leaks have been resolved, the sheetrock

will be repaired, repainted and cabinets installed in the alcove. The kitchenette also needs to be updated.

- **Basement Kitchen.** Need to begin conversation about long-term solution.
- Remodeling the **parsonage master bathroom.**

Ministry

- Develop the **Ministry of the Deacons** to lead the congregation in ministries of mercy, **service** and outreach.
 - ◇ Continue developing the *Ponds Urgent Need Food Pantry*
 - ◇ Develop an *Emergency Response Team*
 - ◇ Create a process for *helping our neighbors* in need
- Expand the **Ministry of the Elders** in **visitation**.
- Increase the number of people engaged in **discipleship** (what does that look like?)
- Continue the conversation about Ponds being an **inclusive** community to LGBT persons
- **Mission Trip** this summer. Still exploring possible locations.
- **Cemetery.** How does the cemetery make the best use of limited space?

Copies of the Ponds Reformed Church *Annual Report* are available in the narthex and outside the church office

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- **Church Bus.** The PYC has outgrown the present bus, and with another church interested in buying our bus, we're looking at the possibility of purchasing a larger bus.

Work for the Future

- **8 Oak Street.** In March, I will be sharing with Consistory a vision for 8 Oak Street as a starting point for congregational-wide discussion.
- **Continuation of the Capital Campaign** will be tied to the final plan for 8 Oak Street.
- **Church endowments.** Develop a strong endowment that supports the mission of the church.

2012 Budget

The mission of the church which is explained in detail in the Annual Congregational Report is supported through the generous gifts of people's time, talents and finances. There was discussion about the budget for 2012 and given the pledges made and other anticipated income, we are facing approximately an \$11,000 shortfall for the year. Pledges have not declined. Instead, expenses have outpaced the growth of member's giving. How do we

proceed? The staff, along with the treasurer and Administrative Committee, which oversees the church finances, is very diligent in managing the church's finances. Every month you will know in the newsletter how we are doing. Only when you are informed can you help in generous ways. And you have. Since my letter in December about this year's budget, many of you have responded by increasing your giving. **Thank you.**

Another question at the congregational meeting was about **assessments**. One of the ways the classis, regional synod and general synod is supported is by per member assessments. The assessment for 2012 is \$89.75. Any contributions to the assessment are welcomed. Please mark your envelope "Assessment".

Once again it was a great meeting in which there was lots of spontaneous applause for the great work that is being done. We give thanks and remember God for God's good gifts and provision as we begin our 303rd year of ministry in the name of Jesus Christ.

At our **Annual Congregational Meeting held on Sunday, January 29** after worship, the following people were presented to the congregation for approval to serve on our governing board, the Consistory:

3 years

Phil Marchbank, Elder
Ron Petherbridge, Deacon
Paul Vanella, Deacon

If there are no legitimate scriptural objections (to the anticipated terms of service listed) submitted to the Board of Elders for their judgment of the same, these newly elected people will be ordained/installed into their respective offices in late February during our morning worship celebration. Pam LoPilato and Janet Marchbank have fulfilled their term on Consistory and we thank them for their service and dedication.

Arlene
Romaine

*Commissioned
Pastor for Christian
Education*



I Need a Vacation!

How many times have we said this? Life is stressful, no doubt about it. Here on earth we rush about, day after day running from one activity to the next. Our days begin at six AM and don't usually end until nine, or for some of us, even later. Recently I had the privilege of spending some time with one of our high school students. He is a great guy with much on his plate, including school, homework, music and sports. He informed me that after rising for school each morning at 6:30, he usually doesn't get to bed until 11:30 or midnight each night. No wonder our teens need to sleep in on weekends!

This type of schedule is a reflection of the world we human beings have created. In our need to control our lives, we have created a non-stop, go, go, go all the time, each and every day situation. With the stresses of relationships, bill payments, car repairs, the responsibilities of homeownership, raising children, taking care of aging parents, work and/or school related tasks, etc., vital physical needs like rest get completely pushed out of the picture. Even our meals have become a reflection of our manic need to "do", instead of to "be". The "Go Wrap" was invented for just such a purpose – this way we can eat WHILE we drive, or walk, or work. No time to sit down with a knife and fork over a conversation and take 30 precious minutes out of an overfull day. I

know – this is MY life, too. Any day of the week and you will find me eating lunch while sitting at my desk, typing away on my laptop.

In 1895 the average person spent 9.5 hours per night sleeping. Today, the average is 6.5 hours while the average human body REQUIRES 8 hours of sleep. We are a sleep deprived society. Sleep deprivation affects everything we do. It negatively affects concentration, the immune system, our mood and ultimately, our relationships. I know from personal experience that when I am lacking sleep, I am also lacking patience, kindness and am more irritable.

Jesus knew when he needed rest. He also knew when he needed a spiritual "recharge." He would often slip away to rest and be with his Father – away from the crowds, away from the world's business, away from the responsibilities for which he was sent by the Father into this world. Like us, Jesus too, was a human being. Besides basic rest, human animals crave and desperately need connection to God the Father. After particularly demanding times, Jesus would retreat to pray, reflect and simply be, in order to refresh, recharge and reconnect.

How is it we, who live far faster-paced lives, can even expect to be in relationship with God when we can't even take the time to eat a meal or get a full night's sleep, let alone find the time to slip away and connect with God the Father? This time is vitally important, not just for our spiritual wellbeing, but our physical wellbeing, as well. It's really hard to do!

Like Jesus, we too MUST seek out God. We must schedule time to get away and just be.

What happens when we schedule a doctor's appointment, or make

time to have the oil changed in our car? We write the appointment on our calendar! Things that are priorities get allotted a specific time in our lives – the 30 minutes it takes each day to shower and get ready for work. The class I take at the gym, or the walk I go for. The sixty minutes it takes to watch the nightly episode of Law and Order before I head off to sleep. These things get a place in my day because I value them.

Prayer, devotions, reflection, silence and solitude, scripture, Bible study, worship and simply resting in the presence of God are all priorities, or as a disciple of Jesus, at least they should be. A weekly hour of worshipping God ends and starts my week off on the "right" note. It gives me time to review the last seven days and prepare for the next seven from a Christ-perspective. Wednesday night Bible study provides time to grow in the Word with others on the Christian journey, sharing our thoughts and our lives with each other. Prayer strengthens and builds not just the spirit, but the body as well as it provides time for a brief rest in an otherwise busy day. Sometimes that rest looks like I am doing "nothing" and by the world's standards that may very well be. But as Christian disciples, we do not live our lives based on the world's standards, but on a higher standard. We live our lives based on God-centered standards, where resting in the presence of God while trusting that the Lord will take that time to fill us with good things, is of great and lasting reward.

Take a Lenten vacation for your soul. Schedule one or more things into your life that will have life-giving rewards. Then allow yourself to rest in the Lord and enjoy! You'll find it's time well spent.

Sunday School News

Rotation #3 Begins!

On February 5th our Sunday school year continues with two new Gospel stories: Jesus Calls His Disciples and Nicodemus. Children start off learning who Jesus called as his first disciples and what it means to us today to be Jesus' disciples. On March 4, they will begin the story of Nicodemus, the mysterious visitor who comes to Jesus under the disguise of darkness.

Welcome Rotation #3 Station Leaders

Jeanne Donnelly –
Techno-Storytelling
Beverly Lange – Games
Marci Sorce – Fun with Food
Kerry Thurston – Crafts

Thank You Rotation #2 Station Leaders

Missy Elfers – Science Lab
Pam LoPilato – Fun with Words
Arlene Romaine – Games
Helen Romanowski – Crafts

Rotation #4 Station Leaders Are Still Needed!

Rotation #4 dates are
April 15 – June 10

High school youth and adults are encouraged to use their gifts and talents in leading ONE station of their choice for 8 Sundays. Have a gift to share, an interest or talent? Use them in Christ's service to our children.

Station ideas have included *Fun with Food, Games, Storytelling, Computers, Video/Movies, Fun with Words, and Crafts*, but can be as diverse as YOUR interests and abilities.

Want to know more? Speak to Helen Romanowski or Pastor Arlene.

Nursery Help is Needed!

We are blessed at Ponds Church with many families with young children AND a beautiful, well-stocked nursery for them to play in during worship! What's missing? YOU! Adults are needed for the spring months to volunteer to staff the nursery on Sunday morning in order that parents may attend worship worry free! Please sign up on the sheet found outside the nursery. Questions? Call Sharon Fadini at 201-644-8302.



Christmas
Pageant
2011

YOUTH MINISTRY

PONDS YOUTH CENTER

The Ponds Youth Center will go snow tubing on Tuesday, February 7 and will enjoy a week off for Winter Break Feb. 20–24.



Adults and high school youth are welcome to serve as volunteer staff one day per week. Speak to Pastor Arlene for more information.

PONDS YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULE

February 1 - Youth Group

February 8 - **NO YOUTH GROUP**

February 15 - Youth Group

February 22—**NO YOUTH GROUP**
(Ash Wednesday)

February 29 - Youth Group

All meetings at 7:30 pm
at Wyckoff Reformed Church

RESOURCES FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The Upper Room

This **free daily devotional** is available for the taking and can be found in the narthex, or outside the church office. Copies are available on a first come, first served basis for the enrichment and nurture of your faith in both regular and large print copies.

Wednesday Night Bible Study



Everyone is welcome and encouraged to grow in knowledge and faith through this weekly study of the Gospel of Luke held in participants' homes. All you need is your Bible and a desire to know more! Watch the weekly email (*This Week at Ponds*) or the bulletin for each Wednesday's location.

Christian Lending Library

Are you aware that there are a variety of books available each and every Sunday at coffee hour for individuals and families to borrow on a variety of Christian topics? From children's books to Christian fiction for all ages, to parenting topics and more! Books may be borrowed for up to two weeks at a time by simply signing your name on the card found in the pocket inside of each book. **Books are kept in the painted, metal book cabinet in Fellowship Hall.** Check it out today!



Coming in Lent

In February

Ash Wednesday Pancake Supper and Worship FOR ALL AGES!!!

Wednesday, February 22



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6:00 pm

Supper in Fellowship Hall

7:00 pm

Worship in the Sanctuary

Join the church family for our traditional pre-Lenten supper of pancakes, sausage and applesauce. At 7:00 pm we will gather for a brief worship service including the imposition of ashes in the sanctuary to observe the beginning of a holy Lent. This event is for ALL ages!

In March

Lenten Mini-Retreat led by Pastor Arlene

“A Room with a View”

Saturday, March 17
12:30 – 5:00 PM

Carmel Retreat Center, Mahwah

Come enjoy an afternoon mini-retreat, away from the fast pace of life and devoted to rest, spiritual nurture, and engagement with the Lord in deep and meaningful ways. Lent is the perfect time to recharge your spiritual batteries! Lunch is included. The event is free. Just a few spaces are still available! Contact Pastor Arlene.



In April

Children's Easter Path Good Friday Activity

Friday, April 6 9:00 am—Noon



This special event hosted by the Christian Education Committee is for all children, age 3 – 5th grade with an adult. Come learn the real meaning of Easter! This activity is open to the entire Oakland community - friend and neighbors welcome!

Synod of the Mid-Atlantics

Every two years the Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics hosts a Lay Recognition Dinner. This provides an opportunity for Reformed churches to recognize the hard, faithful work of volunteers within their congregations. This year Ponds Reformed Church is recognizing *Bobbie Fuduli and Karl Schiener*. They will be recognized at The Imperia in Somerset, NJ on Friday, March 30. *If you would like to attend with others from the church please provide your name to Jane in the church office. Cost is \$50 per person and reservations are due by March 15.*



Barbara Fuduli

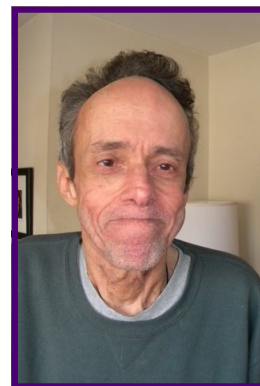
Barbara "Bobbie" is a "Go To" person at Ponds Reformed Church. When someone needs help, go to Bobbie. When leadership is needed, go to Bobbie. When the children need a teacher, go to Bobbie. When there would be ample reason for Bobbie to decline a request for help, that is not who Bobbie is because Bobbie is a committed servant of Jesus Christ.

Bobbie provided leadership in the Women's Ministry in organizing retreats. She taught Sunday School, and remains active in the women's guild and children's Christmas pageant. Bobbie understood the value of relationships and oversaw a weekly Coffee Hour that was second-to-none.

Karl Scheiner

For the past 10 years, Karl has been a champion for the annual Oakland-area CROP Walk. Through his tireless efforts Karl brings the Walk to people's attention and encourages their participation. His passion for CROP Walk has helped raise over \$60,000 for Church World Service.

Karl is also a faithful weekly volunteer who gets to church early each Sunday to unlock the doors, turn on the lights and prepare the building and sanctuary for worship. Even while dealing with health issues, he makes sure that the building is ready to welcome and engage in worship its members and visitors.



Early Response Training

How to Effectively Help our Neighbors After a Disaster

Saturday, March 3 9am-4pm Franklin Lakes United Methodist Church

One of the Goals of the deacons is to develop an Emergency Response Team to respond immediately and effectively to disasters. **Basic Early Response Training will be held on March 3rd at Franklin Lakes UMC.** The mission of an Early Response Team is to provide a caring presence in the aftermath of a disaster, under very specific guidelines that enable a team to be productive and caring while causing no further harm or being a burden to the affected community. Classes are taught by "authorized" UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) trainers, and team members are given ID badges as evidence of training, after background

checks. Topics covered in the class include the who, what, when, where and how of doing ministry, as well as hands-on experience in the specific tasks that early responders are expected to accomplish. Franklin Lakes United Methodist Church will host a training day on **Saturday, March 3 from 9AM – 4PM.** Space is limited.

Please sign up by either calling Pastor Nathan or go to www.gnjumc.org click "Ministries" then "Disaster Response" then click "training." Scroll to the bottom and choose "Click to Register On-Line". The \$25 per person registration fee is being covered by The Ponds Reformed Church Foundation.

The Newsletter of Ponds Reformed Church



341 Ramapo Valley
Road
Oakland, NJ 07436

Girl Scout
Sunday
March 4



We will celebrate Girl Scout Sunday with dedicating the Ponds Urgent Need Food Pantry, a Girl Scout Gold Award project by Victoria.

All Girl Scouts are encouraged to contact Pastor Nathan for a role in worship.

March Newsletter Deadline:
Monday, February 13

Ponds Talent Show/Coffee House

Friday evening, February 10
7:30 – 10:00 PM

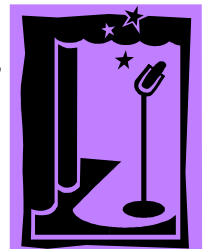


**Ponds Church
is filled
with talent!
Want to see?**

Join us for the fun,
eclectic night of showing off
a bit of our
God-given gifts!
Everyone is welcome,
Bring your friends
and neighbors!

Refreshments

Needed
Set up help
Baked goods
Clean up help



If you are involved in the show or are coming to see it, please consider how you might be able to help.

Contact Pastor Nathan.