



HURLEY REFORMED CHURCH

# THE SPIRE



VOLUME 4, ISSUE 10

DECEMBER 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Joseph and his betrothed, Mary, traveled more than 90 miles over 'hill and vale' to reach Bethlehem because of a Roman census which required everyone to return to their ancestral home (Luke 2:1-3). I've followed their itinerary on two occasions back in the 80's. It was tough going even in a truck. The mountains, Ebal, and Gerazim are huge, and cast giant shadows along serpentine roads. In Jesus' day the pilgrimage was extremely dangerous as human marauders lurked in those valleys of extended darkness. Apart from heightened criminality, the physically taxing nature of the journey itself was a 'crime' even for an able bodied individual. I can't imagine the staggering duress Mary, heavy with child, must have experienced. Nevertheless Joseph and his betrothed completed the journey. That successful pilgrimage was a miracle in itself before the great one, marked by an infant's first gurgle, or cry, the auditory hinge on which history turns. And sadly Joseph and Mary were denied entrance to the inn (Luke 2:7), which would have provided comfort and sustenance for them and a place far more conducive to labor and birth, than the filth of a stable. The inhospitable shuttling

occurred, and Jesus' was born in a manger, aka an animal feeding trough.



Following Jesus is a journey, a pilgrimage which, at times, tests us to the utmost. It is not easy to maintain faith in a faithless world. It is not easy to follow Christ's vision and purpose for our lives in a consumer oriented culture in which secular vision casting often begins and ends with greed and power. Let the lowly stable represent the holy antithesis of what society so often values. Miracles are often hidden in places the world overlooks.

And let the stable also symbolize rejection, the shunting of a peasant family whose vulnerability was etched visibly by an expectant mother's beautiful but ungainly swelling. We discussed rejection at a recent youth group meeting. When I asked if anyone had experienced it at school or play, nearly all hands were raised. When I mentioned bullying as a

form of rejection our young people nodded their assent: Verbal and physical threats are now part and parcel of everyday experience. The holy family wasn't bullied; they obtained the garden variety of disdain. And so do our children. How difficult and lonely it is when one is outside looking in at the favored social circles, and exclusive cliques which Middle, Junior and Senior High schools spawn. How difficult it is to be redirected to a stable whether it is a cafeteria table where no one else sits or a lonely seat in a corner, far removed from the hubbub of a Junior or Senior Prom. Perhaps it's helpful to know that Jesus, too, experienced rejection, and its spectrum encompassed his birth as well as his death. The prophet Isaiah noted that the coming messiah would be one who was scorned by his society (Isaiah 53:3). The prophet described an adult. Could he have imagined possibly a messiah rejected before his birth?

The wonderful news of Christmas is that God never rejects us. And that stables, and a variety of its equivalents, are where real miracles happen. In October my middle daughter, Joanna, gave birth to my first grandson. I'm blessed with two granddaughters, but

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now, in a family dominated numerically by women and girls, I have a companion of my gender. I cradled Beckett Gram Bouthot in my arms eight days after his birth, and saw the fragility and beauty of the Christ child in his delicate and rounded features. He didn't fuss when feeding time arrived, but I fussed internally: It was hard for me to let the wisp go. And I suppose, as parents and grandparents, it is hard to let our children go into a world which, most certainly, will provide degrees of rejection during their winding journey through life. In gazing at my grandson, I was reminded of that first day I climbed

up what seemed to be stairs for giants, my entrance into a yellow school bus, departing for my first day of Kindergarten. My mother's face was blurred by tears. Perhaps she knew what awaited her child as he began his movement into the world. But as a great woman of faith, she also knew that God's unsurpassing love trumps anything the world might throw at her son. She was right. Merry Christmas.

In Christ's service,  
Doc Bob



## *Holiday Open House at the Parsonage*

*Sunday, December 16, 3:00 – 6:00pm*

*Please come and share a bit of eggnog and fellowship.*



### MISSIONS:

Hurricane Sandy Relief  
Linda Dux, Chair

You will be able to help the victims of Hurricane Sandy in the N.Y. City area by a contribution in your Decem-

ber Mission envelope or one in the pew. Our monetary support will be sent to the DeWitt Reformed church, a Reformed church on NYC's East Side, known as "the little church with the BIG heart", and recommended by the RCA as a local resource that offers help to the many still without shelter, food and other necessities.

Please remember all these folks as you prepare for the gift giving season of Christmas.

Interested in individual spiritual direction? I am willing to see church members free of charge or make a referral to one of the many excellent spiritual directors in our area. No prior experience with spiritual direction is required. For more information, please contact me at [845-430-3348](tel:845-430-3348) or [lindajmiles@yahoo.com](mailto:lindajmiles@yahoo.com)  
Invite God to deepen your faith this Advent.

Linda Miles, Seminary Intern

**eSpire:** In order to save money and reduce our impact on the environment, you may now receive The Spire by Email. Please request electronic distribution by sending your request to

[TheSpire@HurleyReformedChurch.org](mailto:TheSpire@HurleyReformedChurch.org). If you no longer wish to receive the Spire please let us know at the same email address and we will remove you from our mailing list.

## STICKLEY GARDENS

The seasons come and go as we move through Thanksgiving and soon we will be in Advent and the time of preparation to welcome the King born in Bethlehem. I see the changes in Stickley Gardens as well as the leaves turn golden to fall and blanket the ground in the wonder of their colors. Next it will be the soft mantle of snow that will grace the place of rest and serenity. Each season brings it's own beauty to the Gardens and though they come to change, the reality of the Garden is that of constancy in the promise and peace of the God of all seasons.

I go to the Gardens in most of the seasons of the year to simply contemplate the promise that is before me in the niches and the columbarium itself. They speak to me of the changes that come into all of our lives but they also remind me of a God who comes to love us and be with us in the person of His own Son who says, "I am with you always, even to the close of the age." That's the promise and serenity of Stickley Gardens as it stands as an extension of what the church symbolizes in the Good News of God's love. So, the seasons come and the season go but what I find on the bench in quiet solitude never changes and through all that will come, His words remain to give us comfort, hope, new beginnings and the gift of eternal life ... it is always there, whatever the season may be, even in the cold winter days or in the warmth of the summer sun ... the key word in what the Gardens are all about is that one word ... ALWAYS.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE COLUMBARIUM,  
PLEASE CONTACT ANY OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS.**  
LISA LONGTO (331-1438) CHAIRPERSON  
JIM PIRRO (383-0079) TREASURER  
ESTHER STICKLEY (331-2919)  
SANDIE GREGORY (338-7626)  
DIANA CLINE (338-7276) CONSISTORY LIAISON  
REV STICKLEY, SECRETARY

**A SACRED PLACE OF BEAUTY AND CONTEMPLATION.  
(LOCATED ON THE SOUTH LAWN OF THE CHURCH)**

## WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

On October 5th and 6th, the Women of the Hurley Reformed Church held their annual Women's Retreat. The Theme this year was: Extreme Makeover - Heart Edition. Our Inspirational speakers were Sheila Wray Gregorie via 2 DVD's on the subject and our own Deborah Zuill who gave the message: "Change is good; although not always easy". Twenty-six women came together and what a time in the LORD we had! Truly the LORD was in the House. Our thanks go out to the Committee Members, Group Leaders, Prayer Partners, Video Coordinator, Song and Worship Leader (Carmella DeCamillis), Food Coordinator, Registration and Publicity personnel and the ladies who helped us in various ways. Our thanks also to Poland Springs, Adams Fairace Farm and Deisings Bakery. Our thanks to Karen Schiff, our visionary, who saw fit to ask Deb Zuill to lead and bring the dream to fruition. We were truly blessed and inspired to go out and touch the hearts of our communities. Praise God!

Karen Schiff/Deb Zuill

## Women Journeying With Cancer

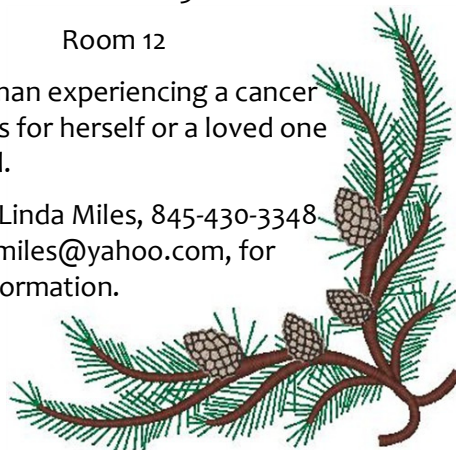
Thursdays, 7:00pm

December 13

Room 12

Any woman experiencing a cancer diagnosis for herself or a loved one is invited.

Contact Linda Miles, 845-430-3348  
or [lindajmiles@yahoo.com](mailto:lindajmiles@yahoo.com), for  
more information.







## Finance Committee: Jim Mayfield, Chair

### 2013 Offering Envelopes

The 2013 Offering Envelopes are now available for pick up. As you might guess, the Finance Committee really appreciates the envelopes, as they are very helpful in planning the budget, but more importantly we truly appreciate any and all offerings, whether in an envelope or not. However, if you are interested in the envelopes, they are available for your use, so let us know or stop by the office. In addition to providing an easy way to keep your offering up-to-date, the box also contains envelopes designated for specific budget items. These include a Missions Envelope to support our local missions (<http://hurleyreformedchurch.org/?q=node/9>). There is also a monthly Building Fund Envelope, which is slightly misnamed as the money from these envelopes does not go towards new building projects, but instead helps finance the maintenance and repair projects necessary for the church and parsonage, which given their age can be fairly numerous.

The box also contains envelopes for your Classis Dues, also known as our Denominational Financial Responsibility. The Hurley Reformed Church is a member of the Mid-Hudson Classis, which consists of about thirty RCA congregations in this geographic area. The classis

has jurisdiction over all matters relating to the work and welfare of the church within its geographic bounds. The finances to support this work are shared among the member congregations. We are assessed an annual denominational financial responsibility, or Classis Dues, based on the number of church members. For 2013 our classis dues were determined to be \$96.88 per adult member (Note: This is \$96.88 per member, not per family, but students are not included). We must meet this financial obligation, and ask for your assistance in meeting these costs. Your classis dues can be paid in full or in installments. A monthly "Classis Dues" envelope is provided in your box of offering envelopes, so the costs can be spread out over the year if you wish (\$8.07/member/month). If you do not use envelopes, you can simply make your contribution by check (or cash) and designate it for "Classis Dues."

Finally, we would encourage you to consider returning the pledge card included in the box after you decide on your 2013 offering, as this also helps in planning the budget, and we would be most grateful for any increase you might be able to make in your 2013 donations. We thank you for the generous support you provide to our church, both financially and with your time and talents.

### Fundraisers

I would like to clear up a mistake I made in my presentation from last month's Congregational meeting. The reported income from our fundraising dinners for 2012 was not correct, and I don't want to mislead anyone into thinking these are not a very important source of income for our church. The Fish Dinner, the Pork Dinner, and the Election Day Turkey Dinner along with the Big Breakfast and the Founder's Day lunch made a profit of almost \$4,000. The Dr. Gram Gourmet Dinner raffle and the Strawberry Hill Fiddlers added another \$2,500. In total these events made a profit of almost \$6,500 for 2012! When we have to dip into our savings each year to meet the budget, these fundraisers are critical in trying to minimize that transfer of funds. Your help in setting up, cooking, cleaning, and all the other necessary work involved in making these events successful is greatly appreciated, along with the financial support you provide by attending these events and bringing your family and friends. Thanks for a good year and we'll be doing it again in 2013. Your continued support of these events is very important to the financial health of our church.



The **Youth Group** will be caroling in Hurley on December 14th! We would love to have an audience. You may also feel free to join us! We will start at 7:00 p.m. at the church.



## Hurley Reformed Church Sunday School Christmas Pageant

December 23, 2012, 11:15am

There will be rehearsals on Friday, Dec. 21, at 7p.m. for speaking roles and Saturday, Dec. 22 at 10:00am - 12:00pm for the entire cast. Every child is welcome to join the cast and/or crew.

Please contact Christine Henning if your child is interested.

eeyorelovesclouds@yahoo.com or 845-943-0745.

### Giving Tree

This year the Youth Group would like to do-Sandy. We are accepting any donations of gloves, scarves, blankets etc. Feel free to ideas (written on the mittens).



Donate items to the victims of Hurricane Sandy. Items that will provide warmth: hats, look at the tree on the landing for



### *O Come, Let Us Adore Him*

*You and Your family are invited to join us to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in our **Christmas Eve Services, December 24:***

**7:00pm** - *A service of Carols and Candles to welcome the Light that comes in the Christ Child*

**9:30pm** - *We celebrate His birth with a service of Carols, Candles, and Celebration of the Lord's Supper*

*Experience the Wonder in the beauty of the season as we join together in the sanctuary to welcome Him as the Babe of Bethlehem who comes to give us joy and peace, this night and all year long.*

## Women's Guild

Thank you to everyone who purchased pecans. If you placed an order and haven't picked yours up yet please do so as soon as possible. If you didn't place an order but would like pecans please see the ladies during coffee hour as we have a few left.

To those who supported our bake sale held during the turkey dinner, thank you! With your help we raised \$213. Hope you enjoy your baked goods.

The sanctuary altar was adorned with harvest vegetables for our Thanksgiving Eve Service and the following Sunday in honor and memory of our past Guild members. It looked wonderful. All of the fresh vegetables were donated to Queens Galley to help feed the hundreds of people during this holiday season. Thank you ladies for another lovely altar.

The Cookie Walk is fast approaching. This will be held on 12/16 right after church. When you come into Schadewald Hall during coffee hour just pick up an empty cookie box & go down the tables & let the ladies fill your box with whatever type of cookies you like. We have hundreds of cookies and we always sell out. This fund raiser wouldn't

### Our calendar of events:

1/13/13 Annual Birthday Party  
1/20/13 Soup Sale  
3/10/13 Meeting & Butterfly Exchange

be possible without all of our bakers. Thank you to everyone who bakes year after year for us. We appreciate everyone's support.

Last month the Executive Committee of the Guild met to discuss our annual benevolence giving. Below is a list of the wonderful organizations that we were able to donate to this year:

\$200 Family of Woodstock-Domestic Violence  
\$200 Salvation Army  
\$200 Hurley Rescue Squad  
\$100 Queens Galley  
\$100 People's Place  
\$100 Boys & Girls Club of Kingston  
\$100 Clinton Ave Soup Kitchen  
~~\$100~~ Hospice of Ulster Count  
\$1,100 Total donated

Once again we will be holding our Annual Birthday Party on 1/13/13 during coffee hour. Please go to the table that has the month that you were born in & see who else shares your same month. It is fun to see who is the oldest/youngest at your table. Please stay so we can sing Happy Birthday to each other!!

We welcome & invite all women of the church to be a part of the Women's Guild. You don't have to be a member of the church to be a part of the Women's Guild. We meet right after church in the Dutch Room. So, come & see what we are all about!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year,

Sandy Emrich-President

## BIRTHDAYS

### December

Micaela Ryan	5, '96
Brent Jordan	11, '94
Lauren Rubino	16, '97
Delaney Cox	17, '97
Brian Rafferty	22, '95
Avery Herzog	24, '95
Jada Nekos	30, '08
Daniel Waligurski	31, '97
Toni Hedges	2
Pat Baker	4
Mary O'Dell	5
Thomas Horvers	5
Hal Hauck	6
Caitlin Decker	7
Joyce Ann Leverenz	7
Christine Lemus	9
Calvin Lemus	9
William Rockwell	11
Renee Nekos	11
Rich Little	11
Jennifer Mayfield	14
Linda Moon	16
Jamie Hopper	20
Mary Lou Vogt	20
Kathleen Pfeiffer	23
Don Kent	25
Jim Prentice	27
Bill Baldinger	28
Lia Sumerano	28
Frieda Constant	29
Dawn O'Brien	29
Florence Prehn	29
Judy Horvers	30
Alyson Rafferty	31



### December

Nancy & Rick Salzmann	15
Barbara & Jim Mayfield	19
Steve & Kristen Helm	21
Clarence & Faye Jansen	27

### January

Rev & Esther Stickley	2
Renee & George Nekos	4
Tom & Ruth Harkin	6

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10am - Worship @ 11am - Prayer Chain 1pm - Private @ Hall 6pm - AA @ Dutch 7pm - ACA @ Room 7pm - Youth Group	10am - Badminton @ 12:30pm - Basket 6pm - Dog Training 7pm - Little League 7:30pm - 1st Capitol 7:30pm - Al-Anon @	10am - Funeral 4:30pm - PC 101 @ 7pm - Bible Study @ 7pm - Boy Scouts	8am - Bible Study @ 10am - Badminton @ 6:30pm - Dog 6pm - Wolf Den @ 6:30pm - Girl Scout 7pm - ACA @ Room	1:30pm - Hurley 3pm - Quilting @ 4:45pm - Dog 6:30pm - Girl Scouts 7pm - Little League 7:30pm - Choir @	10am - Badminton @ 7pm - Youth Group	10am - Genealogy @
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
10am - Worship @ 11:30am - Parent 6pm - AA @ Dutch 7pm - ACA @ Room	10am - Badminton @ 11am - Basket 11am - VFW @ 6pm - Dog Training 7pm - Consistory @ 7:30pm - Al-Anon @	8:30am - Hillside 7pm - Bible Study @ 7pm - Boy Scouts	8am - Bible Study @ 10am - Badminton @ 6:30pm - Dog 6pm - Wolf Den @ 7pm - ACA @ Room 7pm - Men's Group	3pm - Quilting @ 4:45pm - Dog 6:30pm - Order of 7pm - Order of the 7pm - Women's 7:30pm - Choir @	10am - Badminton @ 6pm - Yo Caroling	9am - Cookie Walk
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
10am - Worship @ 11am - Cookie Walk 3pm - Open House 6pm - AA @ Dutch 7pm - ACA @ Room 7pm - Youth Group	10am - Badminton @ 10am - Genealogy @ 6pm - Dog Training 7:30pm - Al-Anon @	7pm - Bible Study @ 7pm - Boy Scouts	8am - Bible Study @ 10am - Badminton @ 5:30pm - Dog 6pm - Wolf Den @ 7pm - ACA @ Room 7pm - Hurley Lions	3pm - Quilting @ 4:45pm - Dog 7pm - NE 7:30pm - Choir @	10am - Badminton @ 7pm - Pageant	10am - Pageant
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
10am - Worship @ 11am - Pageant @ 6pm - AA @ Dutch 7pm - ACA @ Room	Christmas Eve 7pm - Candlelight 9:30pm - Communion	Christmas	8am - Bible Study @ 10am - Badminton @ 5:30pm - Dog 6pm - Wolf Den @ 7pm - ACA @ Room 7pm - Men's Group	3pm - Quilting @ 4:45pm - Dog 7pm - Hurley 7:30pm - Choir @	10am - Badminton @	9am - Set-up @ Hall
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
10am - Worship @ 12pm - Eagle Scout 6pm - AA @ Dutch 7pm - ACA @ Room	New Year's Eve					

December 2012

HURLEY REFORMED  
CHURCH

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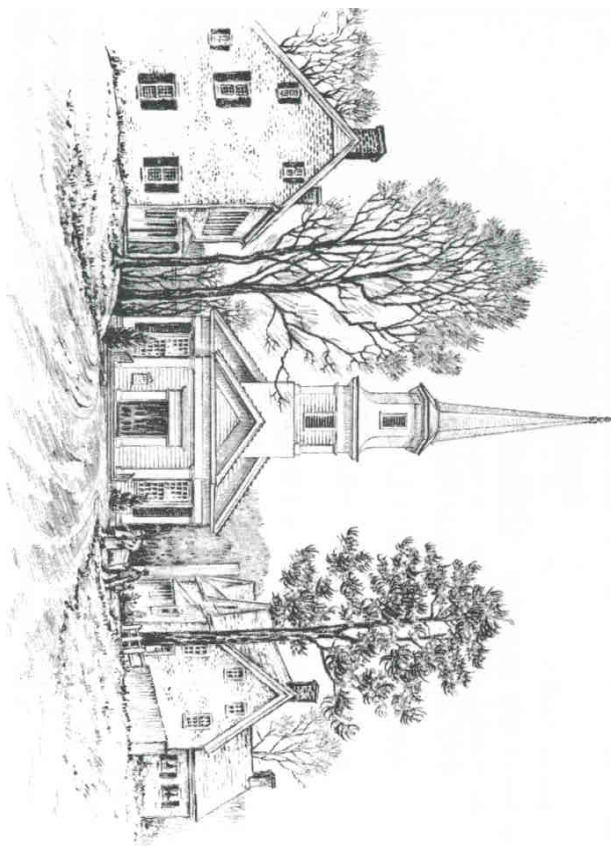
The Rev. Dr. Robert L. Gram, LCSW  
Pastor

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