

THIRD CHURCH NEWS

CONNECTING AND INFORMING THE THIRD CHURCH COMMUNITY

February 14, 2023

Volume IV No. 7

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This Coming Sunday, February 19

At 10 AM we will hear from Reghan Harms about the transfiguration of Jesus, focusing on the text Matthew 17:1-9. Reghan is our Director of Children's Ministries and a student in the Master's of Divinity program at Western Theological Seminary.

At 4 PM we will celebrate the ordination of Hunter Brumels as a minister of Word and Sacrament in the Reformed Church of America. Hunter, currently our Director of Youth Ministries, will then become our Pastor of Youth Ministries. There will be a reception celebrating Hunter's ordination immediately following the service.

Financial Update

2022 was not as good a year as we thought.

Throughout this past year, we felt we were in a very strong financial position—revenues were tracking ahead of both 2021 and our budget, and expenses were well below our budgeted plan. Then

two things happened as we ended the year to change that narrative—

- November giving was disappointing with our giving totals for the month coming in \$44K under the prior year; and
- When closing our books at year-end, we discovered that even though we reconciled with the bank each month, two payroll periods were not posted to our financials. Consequently, this added \$40K to our expenses which resulted in a \$52,951 net loss for the year.

Despite the loss for the year, we are still in a positive financial position.

Third is fortunate to have had strong financial resources over the years that have carried us to this point. At the end of 2022, we had:

- No debt.
- \$166,000 in cash in our operating account. That should be adequate for our cash flow throughout the year as our cash balance declines each month until November when it builds again through year-end.
- \$136,000 in reserve funds which have been set aside for future building and other needs.
- \$1,089,000 in several endowment accounts from which we can draw 5% annually for mis-

sion shares (Mission Memorial Fund), youth mission trips, and other unbudgeted expenses (Future Fund).

We are concerned, however, about this year.

With a six-month transitional budget for January-June 2023, we are planning for a deficit on June 30 as that has been a typical pattern for the church. This comes because giving has been historically weighted toward year-end while expenses occur on a more regular basis throughout the year.

Our income budget for this six-month period was set last October when giving to the general fund was running 5% above the prior year and we anticipated that trend would continue. Then giving dropped in November, December was steady, and now the drop has continued into this year as the \$37K given toward the general fund in January was only 53% of the \$70K budgeted amount for the month.

One month is not enough to establish a trend as gifts can vary month-to-month, particularly early in the year, but what we are experiencing is enough to raise some concern. To sustain the church's ministry, our congregational giving ultimately does need to match our expenses. When we add a fund-raising campaign for the replacement of our HVAC system later this year, that will increase the need for congregational commitment and support. We still have five months to restore our giving patterns and reach our goals for this shortened fiscal year, but we do need congregational members to step up and participate. If you usually make your contributions toward the end of the calendar year, it will be very helpful if you would split your gift this year and make a gift in the first half of the year so it falls within this budget year. Thanks your support.

Lenten Bible Studies and Staytreat '23 Registration and Schedules

2023 TRC LENTEN STUDY & STAYTREAT
SERIES: **UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE**

Members of Third Reformed Church are invited this Lent to refresh, challenge, and help us to grow

in our reading and understanding of God's Holy Word. A variety of small groups will be formed at distinct dates and times which are outlined in the sign up form below, which will also be available physically in the Gathering Place on Sunday. In addition, the teaching and discussion themes at Third's annual all-church Staytreat March 10-12 will continue this theme of deepening our exploration of Scripture, and why it matters. If you wish to sign up for the Staytreat the link is below, or call the church office at (616) 392-1459, or sign up in person in the Gathering Place on Sunday. You may get a copy of the schedule from the church office

This special weekend will be held onsite at church (free of charge), and the church bus will be available. You do not need to sign up for the Staytreat to join the Lenten study group, but are warmly encouraged to do so if you are able!



The Study Series

The 3 lessons we will engage for the group studies come from a teaching series designed by Dr. J. Todd Billings of Western Theological Seminary. From the *Understanding the Bible* website:

"In three engaging and digestible lessons, professor and theologian Dr. J. Todd Billings breaks down how to understand the Bible and wrestle with its complexities as a Christian. You'll learn how you can get more out of reading God's Word, work through differences in biblical interpretation, and ultimately, become more like Christ.

Dr. Billings, who is the Gordon H. Girod research professor of Reformed theology at Western Theological Seminary, first developed this course as a video series that could be used in a church setting. The Faithward team has lightly adapted the video material so that you can read each lesson [as well]."

- <https://www.faithward.org/understanding-the-bible/>

To sign up for the Lenten Bible Studies and

Staytreat visit the church website, sign up in the Gathering Place or call the church office.

toilet paper, kleenex, wet wipes, and hand sanitizer.



What's Ending of the CROP Receipts Program

Thank you for your continued support of the CROP Hunger Walk and its recipient agencies through your collecting of Spartan receipts. Since CROP Hunger Walk began collecting receipts from local churches in 2018, they have received \$22,000 in donations from SpartanNash. We recently learned that SpartanNash will be discontinuing their Direct Your Dollars program. The program will run through the end of this month. Please bring any Family Fare and D & W receipts you have been saving for the Direct Your Dollars program to the church by Sunday, February 19 so they may be used toward another donation to the CROP Hunger Walk. Reminder: for your SpartanNash receipt to be accepted the whole receipt needs to be turned in. They will not accept the receipts with only the Direct Your Dollars portion. They will, however, accept the whole receipt with your payment information blacked out.

pening in Our Spanish Ministry?



Pastor Angel leading the discussion last week in the Wednesday Bilingual Bible Study. The group is currently working through the gospel of Matthew.

A Spanish language new members class has been meeting the last several Saturday mornings for coffee and discussion about faith, Scripture, TRC and the Reformed tradition. It has been so popular that folks bring new friends to hear the talks!

Micro Pantry Needs

Thank you for your continued support of the Micro-Pantry! We are either out or very low on the following items: cereal, soap, shampoo, toothpaste,

Announcements

Upcoming Mosaic Classes

February 19, 2023

When Poets Pray

Jeff Munroe

Jeff Munroe is the author of "Reading Buechner" (IVP, 2019) and an ordained minister in the Reformed Church in America. He blogs regularly for the Reformed Journal's The Twelve, and has had poems and pieces published in The Christian Century, Christianity Today, US Catholic, Think Christian, and also frequently writes devotionals for Words of Hope.

February 26, 2023

Spirituality in Dance

Lindsey Hansen, MFA

An assistant professor of dance at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, Lindsey holds an MFA in dance from Montclair University and a BA in dance from Hope College. She has had an extensive career as a dancer and actress, performing on esteemed stages such as The Kennedy Center, Radio City Music Hall and Broadway's Marriott Marquis. Lindsey will lead us through an interactive class as she unpacks different approaches to the relationship of dance

and worship.

Sunday Morning Bible Study

The Corinthian Correspondence: The Cross Changes Everything.

A study with Rev. Dr. George Hunsberger.

This study takes place in room 22 on the lower level.

Continuous Improvement

Every Sunday your tech team works to make the sanctuary sound, lighting, and Zoom sound and visuals just right so that you might have a great worship experience. These people do amazing things with the sound board, cameras, slide shows, and Zoom broadcasting.

But did you know that they work to constantly improve product and processes? Every Wednesday, and now Saturdays, they meet to go over the coming services, hone their skill sets, and identify where they can make improvements to the experience. On Tuesdays Steve Orlow, David Krieger, or Mike Rannow (or sometimes all three) attend the staff/tech team worship service review meeting for the coming Sunday. During the services and their meetings they monitor decibel levels; they work with gain and compression on microphones; they adjust camera angles and presets for cameras so they can capture the right shot; they monitor the Zoom output so they can ensure the best experience for those joining us remotely.



The video wall frame under construction in the Orlow workshop.

In this they pin-that cal im-and -crew Team by Ste- and er, get mak- im-



Steve Orlow and David Krieger moving the lowered video wall into the Fellowship Hall storage room.

practice occasionally point areas need physi- improvements, then our sub of Tech Techies, led ve Orlow David Krieg- to work ing these pvements.



The video wall up and ready to go.

If ship ser- will ticed ob- ies long the the



The video wall in the Gathering Place without the lower skirting.

you wor- in the El Encuentro vice, you have no- some very vious Tech Team Tech- handiwork. While it has been known that overhead projector in Fellowship

Hall was underpowered, finding an affordable solution to this problem took a lot of technical thought and research. An ultra-short-throw projector was tested and was determined not to be bright enough. Then the current solution was considered, researched, fleshed out, and designed and built from the ground up (many thanks to Steve Orlow for the design and engineering of the apparatus).



David Krieger going all out (and under) for the sound quality in the sanctuary.



The organ protected while Steve Orlow and David Krieger work on switching out the microphones that pick up the choir.

We now have a mobile video wall that provides the same amount of visual screen space as our projector and screen, but in a much sharper, easier to see product. This provides graphics that are sharper than those from a new projector, at a price tag **one quarter** of what a new projector would cost. Additionally, even though it weighs nearly 600 pounds, the engineering makes the whole thing mobile, meaning we can bring it into the Gathering Place, outdoors, the chapel or library.

To go along with this, we have new speakers that are mobile as well. In replacing old Sony tower speakers and the old amplifier (both previously used to allow the choir, in the balcony, to hear the service prior to our AV upgrade there) with two Bose L1 Pro16 Line Array PA Systems we now have a sound system that is equal to the size of the Fellowship Hall.

If you worship online, you may have noticed that the organ could sometimes drown out the choir (which makes sense – the microphones were right up in front of the pipes, most of which are at least twice the height of the average human singer). So the Tech Team Techies went to work again, identifying the proper equipment that should be used, and installing three overhead microphones to receive the choir sound with partial exclusion of the organ.

None of this would be possible without our dedicated Tech Team volunteers. From the initial team that scraped together a Zoom broadcast on March 15, 2020 - Scott Millen and Steve Orlow along with Amy Lunn from staff, and soon after David Krieger; to the team that inaugurated our new tech booth and AV equipment in the sanctuary – Steve Orlow, David Krieger, Mike Rannow, Sam Lunn (from staff), Aspen Boes, and Jack Bolt; to the current group of volunteers – Steve Orlow, David Krieger, Mike Rannow, Aspen Boes, Jack Bolt, Curtis Pierce, Marj Hoekstra, and Will Remenschneider; with help along the way from Ben Lichtenwalner and Ken Porter – these people work tirelessly behind the scenes to make every Sunday work for all in attendance – both in person and online. If you see them, let them know how much they're appreciated!

Third Church Family News

Sympathy

to Tom Ten Hoeve on the passing of his wife, Sue, yesterday, February 13, and to their children and families.

Thank You

Dear Third Church family,

Thank you so much for all of your prayers, kind words, cards, messages and meals in the days following Alan's passing away as we've grieved his loss. Your support and love have meant so much to our family. We give thanks to God for a church community with whom we are blessed to share our lives in times like this.

Jeanette Beagley, and Janelle, Angel, Miriam and Lorena Lopez-Koolhaas

Prayer Requests

Please pray for the following:

- Condolences to Tom Ten Hoeve and family on the death of Sue Ten Hoeve on February 13.
- Condolences to Steve and Dawn Vander Ark and their grandson, Gabriel, in the death of their son, Adam, on February 8.
- Condolences to the Harley and Phyllis Brown on the death of their daughter-in-law Kelly Brown.