

THIRD CHURCH NEWS

ORDINARY TIME 2023

October 12, 2023

Volume IV No. 41



"Hard Truth and Rough Waters"

Rev. Dr. Ryan Boes on Genesis 6
October 8 at 10 AM

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LIFT Next Wednesday!

Join us for tacos and street food - at 5:30, and then the following activities:



- 6:15 PM
 - Activities for Kids 4 - 5th Grade
 - Middle School Youth Group
- 6:30 PM - Classes for Adults
 - **CETI Class:** CETI is an acronym in Spanish—Comunidad de Estudios Teológicos Interdisciplinarios. This curriculum was created in Argentina and speaks to these very real questions about what it means to gather together with a perspective that's new and fresh for us as we continue to grow together as a community that is represented by more than one culture.
 - **Art Activities:** Open Art Studio for High Schoolers & Adults.
 - **Tech Team Meeting:** If you've been interested in what the Tech Team does during our Sunday worship services, or if you'd like to learn all about cameras, switching, and sound boards - please feel free to join us at 6:30 in the Tech Booth in the sanctuary.
 - House.

Coming Soon on October 25!
Two More Weeks!
Dos semanas mas!



September Financial Update: Regression to the Mean and Other Financial News

—Dave Vanderwel, Church Finance Officer

I suspect you know the phrase “regression to the mean.” It’s often used when an athlete or a team, for example, starts the season red hot and for some unknown reason performs much better than history would suggest he or she should, and then has that hot streak come to an end and the athlete’s or team’s performance settles into a more typical pattern. It also happens negatively when a poor performance finally rights itself and a more typical performance pattern develops.

Returning to a more normal financial pic-

ture: Regression to the mean can also happen with a church. We’ve had a couple strong financial months in which our income exceeded expenses (not typical this time of year) and our net revenue was much better than a year ago. September was our regression to the mean month. Revenues dropped well below expenses for the month and we now stand with a net loss for the year-to-date of \$20K. YTD revenues and expenses are now close to last year and the long-term average for this three-month period.

Our YTD revenues of \$269K are \$2K better than the same period last year, and expenses of \$289K are \$6K less than last year. With a budget based on a more challenging financial situation during this year, being even or slightly better than a year ago is positive news.

Assisting Frontera de Gracia: One financial matter worth celebrating is the congregational response to the World Wide Communion special offering for Frontera de Gracia (serving immigrants at the southern border in Juarez, Mexico). This week we were able to wire \$8,220 (the amount received in this offering) to Pastor Samuel to assist in the purchase of a vehicle they desperately need to carry out their ministry (picking up and distributing food and supplies, transporting people, etc.). Thank you for responding in such a positive manner. If you haven’t yet and still wish to participate, just indicate World Wide Communion in your memo line of your contribution and we can add to the total.

Update on the Zadran Family

Illyas and Najeeba Zadran and their four children will be moving to a new home in Hudsonville. This house was built by Habitat for Humanity. Third Church helped the Afghan refugee family when they arrived in 2015. Illyas continues to work at Western Theological Seminary. There will be a house blessing on Saturday, October 14 at noon. This is a big step for the family, and we hope and pray for other families that we have helped in the more recent years to be able to move into their own home someday.

Living Green

—Mark Faga, Head Custodian and Green Team Member

As I sit down to write this month's article it feels a little off to be talking about Fall preparations. But Fall is coming. The weathermen assure us that the temps will be falling and the leaves are changing to

their magnificent fall colors. Apples are ripe for the picking and I just picked up pumpkins for our annual carving with the grandkids. So what's there to talk about as we think about sustainability this time of the year while we pull out our favorite sweaters and prepare for the long winter?

Well, here are 6 tips to lessen your footprint as we find ourselves with less light and colder temperatures...

1. Preserve your garden's bounties. Canning is "cool" again. Freezing and drying are also options that allow you to enjoy your garden throughout the winter months.
2. Check your tires. Yep, you guessed it. Cooler temps tend to deflate your tires as the molecules slow down and under-inflated tires will reduce your fuel efficiency.
3. Clean and test your furnace. Make sure you are changing your filters regularly and now is the best time to have it serviced by a professional to ensure it keeps you warm all winter.
4. Bring in the houseplants. If you have houseplants that enjoy the outdoors during the summer, it's time to bring them in....they won't last the winter outside.
5. Do some yard work. If you still have a lawn go ahead and use some leaves to mulch your landscaping. And if you love Spring flowers, now is the time to plant those bulbs.
6. Hibernate Responsibly. Many of us enjoy cozying up on cold, dark nights by lighting some candles. The ambiance and the smells are part of the seasonal experience. Just choose your candles wisely by buying candles made from beeswax and shop your local farmer's market or craft fair to avoid the carbon costs of shipping.

It's the little things that count and we can ALL do the little things and enjoy the season at the same time.

And this month I will leave you with a quote...*"Live in each season as it passes; breathe in the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit and resign yourself to the influence of the earth."*—Henry David Thoreau

Global Connections

—John Hubers

Once a month we will be highlighting the ministries of the various missionaries Third supports around the world – helping you understand who they are and what God is doing through their ministries. This will include excerpts from letters they have sent to us, as well as prayer concerns they have shared with us.

This month we introduce you to most of the Reformed Church missionaries we support. Third supports one more RCA funded missionary whose activities and identity need to be handled with care for security purposes, and one other other who is not with the RCA. Information about them will follow in later newsletters. Please take some time to read through these short introductory blurbs to get to know where they are, who they are, and what they are doing.

Albino & Sandra Rodriguez

EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

A bus trundles by, wheezing exhaust into the street.

Crowds of people

push past. To a teenager from the nearby valley, the city of Cusco, Peru, can be overwhelming. But because most rural households lack electricity and many more are without running water, young people often migrate to the city seeking opportunity.

Relocating from rural to urban areas leaves many young people vulnerable to exploitation, but La Casa del Maestro strives to combat that with discipleship. The organization, led with Albino and



Sandy, prepares indigenous youth in Cusco to face the challenges of modern city life by empowering them with vocational training, equipping them with biblical truth, and helping them discern their calling in the world.

Martha & Jaime Amaro

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING
EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

A child's laughter peals through the air as her teacher uses wooden figurines to show the story of Daniel. For-



ty small hands raise and move as a worship song fills the room. The pungent smell of glue hangs in the air as a child squirts another glob onto his paper and covers it with cotton balls. His class is learning about the Israelites. The Children and Worship program shares God's truths through a multi-sensory experience.

In Mexico, there is a lack of trained leadership to guide young children into a strong relationship with God. Martha and Jaime Amaro partner with the National Presbyterian Church in Mexico to train leaders in seminaries and presbyteries across Mexico. They teach the skills leaders need to put a thriving Children and Worship program in place

Cheryl Barnes

EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

It's the first day of school. You don't have new clothes, new shoes, or new school supplies. School is one room with 100 students of all ages and one teacher. This has been the reality in the nearly 1,200 primary schools that make up the

five synods of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). But there has to be a better way.



As education facilitator for CCAP, Cheryl Barnes works with the education secretaries and education department personnel to improve the quality of education in Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. She is working to implement the best teaching methods, resources, and programs. Cheryl is establishing ongoing teacher education training to improve education in targeted CCAP schools. In addition, she is creating programs to mainstream children with special needs and is advocating for the education and empowerment of girls.

Mission Partners India

Third supports a person in a key leadership role in this organization that partners with the Church of South India to "work together in social



outreach to the poorest of the poor, irrespective of cast or creed based upon income level. This is done through education, empowerment, and multipurpose community halls."

Learn more on their website: [Mission Partners India](http://MissionPartnersIndia.org).

John Hubers EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Mekane Yesus Seminary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is a sea of tropical green vegetation nestled among dusty city streets bustling with 3.3 million people. Equally beautiful is the diversity of God's sons and daughters who populate the seminary's campus daily. As the church in Africa rapidly grows, these seminary students are preparing to lead missional ministries among their Muslim neighbors.

John serves as a professor and consultant for the Christian-Muslim relations program at the seminary. Originally started by RCA missionary Peter Ford, John is helping revitalize and restructure this critical leadership development program to equip pastors, evangelists, and church planters for a sensitive, Christ-centered witness among and dialogue with their non-Christian neighbors.

Wayne & Miho Jansen EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Papers rustling, voices whispering, pages turning. These are the sounds of anticipation and dedication in a typical freshman seminary



class. But the air hangs heavier in seminary classrooms in Japan, for less than one percent of the country's population claims the religion these students are studying.

Wayne Jansen provides theological and practical training for seminary students and church leaders through the United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ). With a shortage of trained clergy, Wayne is building up the next generation of local church leadership and is preparing them for various challenges within the ministry of a church.

José Angel Lopez COMPASSION AND JUSTICE

Seven minutes from the El Paso, Texas, and Mexico border, there is a place where strangers look each other



in the eye, share a smile, and recognize the other's identity as a child of God. At Frontera de Gracia (Border of Grace), guests find refuge and a place of worship on their migration journey. It's also here that U.S. churches have an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus for sisters and brothers on the move.

Angel Lopez grew up in Chiapas, Mexico, where RCA missionaries shared the gospel and cared for those in need. Now, Angel collaborates with Frontera de Gracia. Angel educates people about the border situation and provides advocacy resources for immigrants. He also works with congregations to develop Christian witnesses who embrace and build relationships with migrants in their sojourner process.

Rowland Jr. & Jane Van Es

EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Students and faculty cluster in conversation, warm cups of chai and mandazi pastries in



hand after the morning's energetic chapel service. Their tea comes from the fields surrounding St. Paul's University in the misty, cool town of Limuru, Kenya, a short drive up into the hills northwest of Nairobi. Soon, students and professors alike will bustle along to class where they strive to be "servants of God and humanity," as the university's motto says.

It's here that Rowland and Jane Van Es spend their days instructing young adults in theology, business, and social sciences, seeking to equip their students for lives of service in the world. Some may go into vocational ministry while others may start businesses, pursue higher degrees in counseling, or teach like the Van Eses do. Rowland and Jane's goal is to mentor them to walk in the steps of Christ, whatever their path.

Announcements

Special Adult Education Hour on October 15

We are delighted to welcome members of the Mosaic and Corinthian Correspondence Class to experience worship in Spanish in El Encuentro on October 15! We are praying that Third will find much in which to rejoice as we worship with brothers and sisters from many other places, and in a different language. And we trust that any unease from newness will help us all to grow our in-

stincts in hospitality for guests and new members. Your presence, your prayers, your open hearts, and your posture of sharing life together in Christ will be a great gift, even where words or language run short. To God be the glory! ¡A Dios la gloria!

Combined Worship Service and All-Church Lunch on Nov. 5

On November 5 we will worship together, both Spanish-speaking and English-speaking, at 10 AM. Pastor Angel will deliver the message, and we will celebrate communion. Following the service we will have an all-church meal. There will be no Sunday education that day.

No More Pew Cards...

You most likely have noticed we no longer have sign-in cards in the pews. This week you'll see we have a QR code in our bulletin for guests to follow (and directions for those who don't use QR codes). Additionally, we will have sign-in books available in the back. We'd love for you to sign in when you come to let us know you were here. Thanks!

Mosaic Class

October 15: The Mosaic class will be attending the El Encuentro Service

Corinthian Correspondence, Part Deux

This class will be joining the Mosaic class in attending the El Encuentro service.

Church Office Hours

Just a reminder that the church office will close at noon on Fridays for the rest of the calendar year.

Third Church Family News

New Address

LaVerne Lievense
2885 10 Mile Road, Apartment 205
Rockford Mi 49341

CORRECTION

Harley & Phyllis Brown
400 Parkside Dr. #201
Zeeland, MI 49464
616-600-2884

Thank You

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Third Reformed Church,

I wanted to take time to thank you for all of your sweet prayers. It is so uplifting to know you are all praying for my recovery. I truly do not know why I decided to have surgery on my left foot because instead of making walking easier it has made it harder and I have more pain and I am dealing with all the arthritis in my left ankle now. Please continue to pray for arthritis pain relief and continued improvement of my balance now that I am back in physical therapy. I know with your prayers and God's faithfulness this whole situation can turn around.

Always,
Reno Lamanía, Sr.

Prayer Requests

Condolences:

Larry and Carla Sue on the death of Larry's father in Hawaii.

Pray for the following:

- Tim DuMez and his doctors as he has a total shoulder replacement today. The surgery is outpatient. Pray for surgery success and less pain

and more range of motion in the future.

- Charles and Judy Hunt who are traveling to Florida to be with Charles' daughter who is seriously ill.
- Janelle Sievert who has been diagnosed with cancer, surgery has been scheduled.
- Jonathan McMullen who will be going to Mayo Clinic for testing of his kidneys next week.
- Carl Folkert as he continues with treatments.
- For all migrants and refugee throughout the world. Pray for the new families that have arrived in Holland. Pray for housing for all migrants and refugees.
- For the people in countries where there is war and earthquakes and other disasters.
- For first year college students adjusting to new academic expectations and finding a church to attend.
- Congratulations to the Zadran family who will be moving into their new Habitat for Humanity house in Hudsonville.
 - Hospice Care:
 - Margaret Doorenbos
 - Mike Rannow's mother in Racine, Wisconsin.
 -

Prayer Spotlight

Hospice: Margaret Doorenbos. Appledorn: Bob Kuiper, Donna Prins. Vista Springs: Barb Piaget. Maple Woods: Beth DuMez. American House: Mary Boersen.

Remember in Our Prayers

Reno Lamanía, Joanne and Jack Kuiper, Larry Loss, Dennis and Nancy Gebben, Mary and Harry Boersen, Bob and Elle Kuiper, Barb and Gordon Mummert, Tom Norman, Linda Parchert, and all others who find themselves in difficult and lonely situations.

Missionaries

John & Lynne Hubers (Ethiopia), Angel Lopez (Mexico)