



Serving Christ and the community since 1731.

rhinebeckreformed.org

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## October 2020 Newsletter

### PASTORAL LETTER

Dear friend,

We live in a strange world.

Our society has been affected by killer hornets, COVID-19, civil unrest resulting from racial tensions involving inequities and police misconduct, a hurricane, and wildfires.

Adding to this strangeness, for the first time in American history, one of the two presidential candidates did not accept his nomination at a live convention, while the other one accepted his nomination at the Rose Garden. In addition to that, professional sports are being played without the excitement that only comes with live fans in the stands booing and cheering. Instead, cutout cardboard fans have been placed in the seats, and fake cheering noise is filling the stadiums. (Someone suggested we start placing cutout worshippers in our church's pews and generating further energy by using familiar church sounds and noises in the background. We could also have a little fun with our video presentations that way.)

Silliness aside; what do we do, as people of faith, when strangeness shakes up our normal routine and disrupts our conventional life?

I have always found the words of Arthur Conan Doyle in *A Case of Identity* worth exploring. Doyle said, "*Life is infinitely stranger than anything which the mind of man could invent.*"

Doyle is correct. We can't think of everything. We can't truly prepare for everything. Not even an imagination as prolific as that of Stephen King could have conceived of an apocalyptic world that suddenly becomes a reality. We are living a previously unimagined existence where behavior that in years past would have been considered bizarre, such as wearing masks, social distancing, and ritual hand sanitizing, is now accepted as the norm. Quirky habits are the acceptable norm.

Jesus was apparently interested in the topic of strangeness. He thought that there are societal events so terrifying, so haunting, and so unusual that we are justified if we think the world is coming to an end.

As a matter of fact, Jesus prophesied that unusual and strange events were going to take place. In Luke 7:25-28, Jesus said:

*"There will be strange things happening to the sun, the moon, and the stars. On earth whole countries will be in despair, afraid of the roar of the sea and the raging tides. People will faint from fear as they wait for what is coming over the whole earth, for the powers in space will be driven from their courses.*

*Then the Son of Man will appear, coming in a cloud with great power and glory. When these things begin to happen, stand up and raise your heads, because your salvation is near.”*

The Gospel of Luke, through the words of Jesus, was addressing the pain that early Jewish Christians felt upon experiencing the destruction of Jerusalem. The Temple, which was believed to be the place where the physical presence God lived, was destroyed. The Jewish community and the Jewish Christians equally believed that as long as God lived in the Temple that Jerusalem was inviolable. When the Temple was toppled by the Roman invaders, the people felt vulnerable, afraid, scared, and strange. It certainly must have felt like the world was coming to an end for the people of Luke’s time, and it certainly has felt like the world was coming to an end for many of us during these strange, apocalyptic times. Here, in our country alone, over 100,000 have died from a plague of biblical proportions.

Amid this strangeness, pain, and suffering, Luke tells us that Jewish Christians of Jerusalem made the decision to spread the gospel outside of their city. By virtue of becoming more missional and inclusive, those early Jewish Jerusalem Christians were able to expand their sphere of influence, attract Gentile Christians to their community, and preserve the Christian community. Let us recall that whatever written Gospel accounts that existed in the Jerusalem Christian community were destroyed when the Romans sacked the city in 70 AD. So, had the Jerusalem Christians not taken a more preventive approach, we probably would not have had a written record of early Christianity preserved for us.

What is fascinating about the Jerusalem Christians is that nowhere in the text does it say that they directed their cries heavenward and asked, *where have you been, God, as we endure these strange and scary times?* Apparently, for them, the question was, *where are we in regard to our faith and commitments during these strange and scary times?*

Similarly, these strange times have challenged us to reimagine what church, business, learning, restaurant, and community can become with some ingenuity and malleability. In our town, traffic barriers now are used to mark off outdoor areas for restaurants to use. Churches now hold worship services for congregants who assemble via internet platforms and digital media. Local universities are

combining online classes with in-person learning. And a grassroots organization known as Rhinebeck Responds is bringing non-profit service organizations, government helpers, civic minded residents, and churches together in order to address the local economic and emotional fallout from the pandemic.

Most recently, a couple of individual Rhinebeckers have shared with me that this period of strangeness has brought upon them unexpected blessings. One of them told me that he has had meaningful conversations and special moments with his teenage boys who were sent back home from college. *“We haven’t talked as long and as freely in years. What teenage boy really wants to hang out with their dad?”* he said. While another person said to me that he and his family have gone exploring together and discovered natural swimming holes and other natural sanctuaries in the Hudson Valley. How ironic that the deadly virus also comes with blessings and positive family experiences, creating fresh and lasting memories. *“We haven’t spent as much time together as a family in years,”* he said.

I sincerely hope that we embrace the strangeness of our times and come to see it as an opportunity to grow together, reimagine together, to purposely serve together, and reinvent together who we are and what we can become as an individual, a church, and a community. Because the Jerusalem Christians did that, they were able to leave for us the Gospel of Luke as part of their enduring legacy. What will be our legacy after we muddle through these strange times?

Blessings,

Pastor Luis

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## UPDATES

**CHILDREN’S/YOUTH MINISTRY:** We have a new page on our website! Check out [www.rhinebeckreformed.org/childrenyouthministry](http://www.rhinebeckreformed.org/childrenyouthministry) for video resources. We plan to continue building a library of such videos as a means of providing support for our young ones’ spiritual growth.

If you’re interested in providing such a video, email Ruth Nelson: [connect@rhinebeckreformed.org](mailto:connect@rhinebeckreformed.org)!



**FURNACE:** The boiler/furnace replacement of the education building and hall is now complete! Our 65-year-old units are gone, and a much more efficient heating system is in place before the cold weather. ~ Kevin Snyder

#### BEFORE

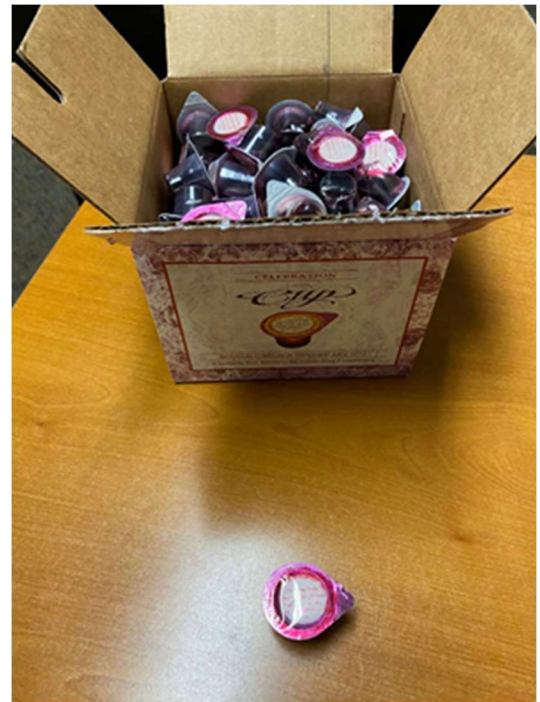


#### AFTER



**MEAL OUTREACH:** In August, Del's Roadside celebrated handing out their 5000<sup>th</sup> meal to local families! **They continue to serve an average of 42 meals weekly.** We are grateful for their ministry and honored to participate with them in this outreach. If you are in need of a meal or know someone who could benefit from this ministry, please contact Ros Geuss: [geussros@gmail.com](mailto:geussros@gmail.com).

**THE LORD'S SUPPER:** Our church's disposal communion kits have arrived! Many thanks to Eleanor Williamson for this idea. A kit is made up of grape juice with a sealed wafer on top of the grape juice's lid.



For services in which we will partake of the Lord's Supper, the kits will be assembled on a tray by a worship usher wearing disposable gloves. As worshippers enter the church through South Street, we ask that you please take a kit prior to taking a seat on a pew. (One kit per person.) Once the service is over, please discard your used kit in a basket which will be located on the church's narthex.

We plan to celebrate communion sometime this month during Sunday worship. An email notification will go out once we have a fixed date. Starting in November, we hope to celebrate communion on the first Sunday of the month.

If you know of someone who wishes to have a communion kit dropped off, let us know: [rhinebeckreformed@frontiernet.net](mailto:rhinebeckreformed@frontiernet.net).

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## FOOD PANTRY

*The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others."*

~ Albert Schweitzer

Since the first Executive Order in March, the pantry relocated upstairs in Cordes Hall and used the patio to welcome area residents, including many new Spanish-speaking families, and to help allay food insecurity. We continued to serve our expanded geographic area from Hyde Park to Red Hook to Germantown and Pine Plains, including all towns in between. Our pantry suspended the required registration and IDs. Everyone is welcome.

Since April 2, 2020, our pantry has ordered 26,089 pounds of food from the Regional Food Bank of NE NY. We pick up these orders in Kingston with the assistance of Bill Schaefer, who has generously shared his Rhinebeck Kitchen and Bath store truck for this demanding task, and Chris Nedden, who delivers the food orders. (This does not include the supplemental milk, eggs, and many other basic products that are purchased weekly between orders.) The outpouring of volunteers from the community to assist in unloading these orders, packing bags, and staffing Tuesdays has blessed our pantry, as has the Rotary-Interact Club Students who deliver food bags to Wells Manor residents.

Without generous donations from the Frost Foundation and many area residents, as well as a grant awarded through the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley, our pantry could not have provided food and hygiene items for the last six months to:

- **356 children** (average of 60 children per month)
- **1,146 adults** (average of 191 per month)
- **477 families** (average 80 families per month)

**This is approximately a  
300% increase  
in our outreach.**

As the unemployment rate climbs, reduced supplemental benefits wait for state distribution, and agriculture jobs are limited during winter, food pantry usage can be expected to increase. Our pantry needs your continued support through donations to:

## Rhinebeck Reformed Church Food Pantry (memo line: Food Pantry)

OR

**Regional Food Bank of NE NY  
ATTN: Adopt a Program  
965 Albany Shaker RD  
Latham, NY 12110.**

(Enclose a brief note stating that the funds are designated for the Rhinebeck Reformed Church Food Pantry.)

See the church website  
**[www.RhinebeckReformed.org](http://www.RhinebeckReformed.org)**  
for food donations that are most needed.

**NOTE: The Regional Food Bank of NE NY restricts pantries from using any opened, repackaged, or undated/expired food.**

If you are interested in packing food bags on Mondays, serving clients on Tuesdays, or unloading orders on Wednesdays, please contact the church office at 845-876-3727 OR send a message through the website.

Thank you to everyone who has so generously supported the pantry's outreach.

Brenda J. Brockett, Pantry Director

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## CARING FOR CREATION COMMITTEE

Hallelujah, the church is lighting up with solar energy! Beginning last March, just before the lockdown, the Caring for Creation Committee was instrumental in signing up the church for Community Solar, wherein we receive our electricity from solar panels in a remote installation provided by the Nexamp Corporation. This is achieved at no cost to the church, with the electricity provided as usual via Central Hudson.

Using solar panels to generate our electricity eliminates the need for Central Hudson to burn fossil fuel, which disperses carbon dioxide into the atmosphere—a contributor to climate change. **So far, over these six months, the church has avoided**



the release of over 10,000 pounds of co2. *That's the equivalent of planting 78 trees!*

Signing up through the Community Solar program also encourages companies to invest in building more solar arrays, which other homes and businesses could utilize. What the church has done is a model of what our congregants could do as well for their homes. You can contact Dave Baldauf (dadbaldauf@gmail.com) for general information on how to get started.

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## CHURCH IN ACTION



The Rhinebeck Reformed Church, the Rhinebeck Reformed Church's Food Pantry, and Rhinebeck Responds recently partnered up to provide needed school supplies to over 100 local families! Brenda Brockett, left, and Sarah (Rosie) Rosenthal of Rhinebeck Responds are seen here delivering supplies at the Chancellor Livingston School. Special thanks to the Consistory for supporting this initiative, the volunteers who organized the purchases, and the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley for providing us with a grant to make this possible.

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## SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE: *"Embracing One Another"*

The committee is planning a series of monthly Zoom conversations with local youth on the following topics:

- Race, Society, and Sports
- Anti-Semitism
- American Dream for an Undocumented College Graduate (led by Rural Migrant Ministries)
- Stresses of Community Policing

A keynote speaker will lead the first half of each conversation, and then the participants will have time to respond, ask questions, and discuss the material.

We look forward to engaging with and empowering our youth in faithful navigation of these complicated, important issues as we all learn to embrace one another through Christ.

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## NEW LECTURE SERIES: LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Beginning in South and Central America after the Second Vatican Council, Liberation became a major movement within theology, contributing to efforts of national and class revolution in several parts of the world. Despite enduring systematic attempts to silence them, liberation theologians have persisted, and their approach has been embraced on an interfaith basis. Led by **Dr. Bruce Chilton of Bard College**, this series will engage both the thought and the practice of Liberation Theology.

You can watch each lecture via Facebook Live at 1:00 PM on the given dates, or you can watch the videos on the LUNCH AND LEARN page of our website.

- **September 20: Exodus and the Demand for Liberation**—If you missed it, the video is available on our website:  
[www.rhinebeckreformed.org/lunchandlearn](http://www.rhinebeckreformed.org/lunchandlearn)
- **October 18: Crucifixion, Resurrection, and the Power of Liberation**
- **November 15: FDR's Vision of Liberation**
- **January 14: Practical Liberation\***  
\*(contingent on funding)

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## ADULT BIBLE STUDY

In these unusual times, we are going to study what the Bible might tell us about how to think and react to the Covid-19 crisis. We will be studying a new book:

***God and the Pandemic: A Christian Reflection on the Coronavirus and its Aftermath***

by the outstanding theologian N.T. Wright. Here's some more information on the book, taken from [www.christianbook.com](http://www.christianbook.com):

*Discover a different way of seeing and responding to the Coronavirus pandemic, an approach drawing on Scripture, Christian history, and the way of living, thinking, and praying revealed to us by Jesus.*

*What are we supposed to think about the Coronavirus crisis?*

*Some people think they know: "This is a sign of the End," they say. "It's all predicted in the book of Revelation." Others disagree but are equally clear: "This is a call to repent. God is judging the world and through this disease he's telling us to change."*

*Some join in the chorus of blame and condemnation: "It's the fault of the Chinese, the government, the World Health Organization..."*

*N.T. Wright examines these reactions to the virus and finds them wanting. Instead, he shows that a careful reading of the Bible and Christian history offers simple though profound answers to our many questions, including:*

- *What should be the Christian response?*
- *How should we think about God?*
- *How do we live in the present?*
- *Why should we lament?*
- *What should we learn about ourselves?*
- *How do we recover?*

*Written by one of the world's foremost New Testament scholars, God and the Pandemic will serve as your guide to read the events of today through the light of Jesus' death and resurrection.*

We plan to conduct discussion sessions via Zoom, Mondays at 7:30 PM, starting October 12<sup>th</sup> and ending November 9<sup>th</sup>. Let **David Baldauf** know if you are interested in joining this timely and relevant study:

**dadbaldau@gmail.com OR 845-876-2153.**

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**FUNDRAISER:** Congregants Brenda Klaproth and Ros Geuss are coordinating a "Pop-Up Artisan and Antique Sale" to benefit the church! This event will include a church bake sale, organized by Pam Hoffman. (Look below this flyer for more bake sale details.)

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## ARTISANS & ANTIQUES



**Saturday and Sunday  
OCTOBER 17 & 18  
9am–5pm**



**HEART HILL BARN  
235 Route 308, Rhinebeck, NY  
845.663.4308**

### ***Pop-Up Sale Includes:***



#### **Rhinebeck Reformed Church Bake Sale**



#### **Artisans :**

Handcrafted Die- Cut Paper, Jewelry, Knitwear, Leather Goods, Natural Skin Care, Painting, Pottery, Wood Products



#### **Antiques :**

Furniture, Lighting, Deco, Linens, Art, Books, Vintage Clothing, and Vintage Equestrian Dressage Pins

### **HELD RAIN OR SHINE**



### **MASKS REQUIRED**

**CALLING ALL BAKERS:** In lieu of the Apple Festival fundraiser this year, we are participating in a pop-up sale! We need a variety of baked goods to sell on October 17-18. If you want to contribute, please bring your home-baked goods (**already packaged for individual sale, and labeled**) to Heart Hill Barn (address on flyer) on Friday afternoon (10/16) or early Saturday morning (10/17). **Questions? Please contact Pam Hoffman: 845-876-4767.**



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## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

**In September, one of our congregants celebrated a milestone. Happy 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Bud Rogers!**



### OCTOBER BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS:

- 2 – Keith Murray, Louis Turpin, Sabrina Sherow
- 6 – Meghan Walker
- 9 – Elizabeth Walker, Beth McKnight
- 10 – Kristine Mulpeter, Evan Finley,
- 14 – Judy Parker, Kaleigh Mulpeter
- 15 – Richard Walker, Robert Byrum
- 16 – Miriam Palastra
- 17 – Donna Trimboli
- 19 – Lois Cox
- 26 – Russell Fox, Ellen Hubbert
- 27 – Martha Strever

Did we miss you?  
If you are celebrating a birthday in October,  
contact us:  
[connect@rhinebeckreformed.org](mailto:connect@rhinebeckreformed.org).  
We want to celebrate with you!

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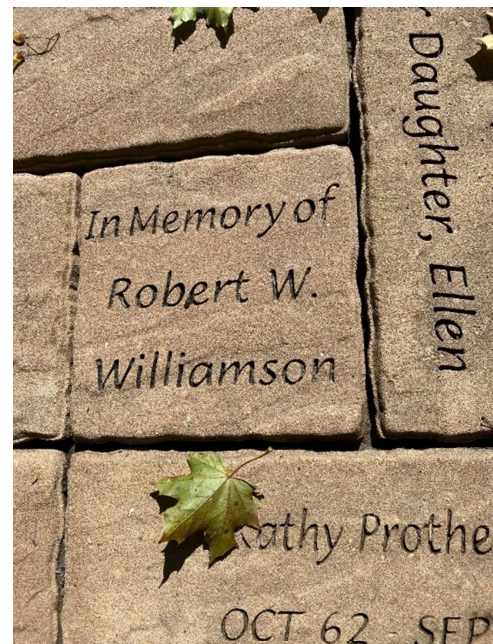
## CONTINUED PRAYERS

~ **Catherine Hall**, a lifelong member of our church, passed away at Northern Dutchess Hospital on September 13, 2020. The family held a private

committal service for Catherine in Freedom Plains, New York, as a result of the limitations created by our current health crisis.

Catherine's family is planning to hold a thoughtful celebration of her life at our church in the spring of 2021. Please continue to pray for Catherine's daughter, Marsha Piacente, and, son, Lester Hall, and her entire family.

May God's peace abound in our hearts and give us strength and comfort! We were truly blessed by Catherine's dedication to her faith and our beloved church community.



~ Pastor Luis officiated at the annual blessing of the Northern Dutchess Hospital's memorial garden on the hospital's campus. One of the memorial stones that was dedicated this year was in honor of **Robert Williamson**, who was a fellow congregant. We miss Bob. May God continue to bless Eleanor Williamson and Thomas Williamson and their family.

***"The LORD is close to the brokenhearted  
and saves those who are crushed in spirit."***

**NOTE:** Submissions to the website/newsletter for church-approved events and standing ministries can be sent directly to Ruth Nelson at [connect@rhinebeckreformed.org](mailto:connect@rhinebeckreformed.org). Please note that your announcement may be edited for stylistic, size, and content purposes. No event that has not been approved will be published.