

The Master's Message

The Newsletter of the Church of the Master

October, 2025

Virtual Adult Bible Study
Wednesday, 7:00 PM
Saturday, 12:00

2783 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx, N.Y. 10465
718-597-6298

Sunday Worship
Sunday 11:00 am

cotm47@verizon.net

WWW.COTMBRONX.ORG

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden, Pastor

Open My Eyes, That I May See

Open my eyes, that I may see
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key,
That shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!

Open my ears, that I may hear
Voices of truth Thou sendest clear;
And while the wave-notes fall on my ear,
Ev'rything false will disappear.
Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
Open my ears, illumine me,
Spirit divine!

Open my mouth, and let it bear
Gladly the warm truth ev'rywhere;
Open my heart, and let me prepare
Love with Thy children thus to share.
Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
Open my heart, illumine me,
Spirit divine!

Clara H. Scott (1841-1897)

GOD CALLS US to employ all our senses as we strive to seek and serve Him. We must keep our entire being—our bodies and our souls—tuned to God's every communication and prompting. In our busy lives we often miss the quiet promptings of God's Spirit. And when we do hear God speak, we often ignore the message. "I'm too busy now," we say. "I have more important things to do." This hymn calls us to watch and listen, and then to act on what we have seen and heard, sharing it with others.

Clara Scott was a music teacher who composed a great deal of instrumental and vocal music. She became known for her book of anthems, *The Royal Anthem Book*, which was published in 1882. Her productive life of composing and teaching at the Women's Seminary in Lyons, Iowa, is evidence that her eyes and ears were open to God's leading and that she was ready to share what God gave her. We should be ready to do the same.



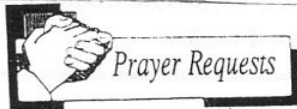
*Do good to your servant, and I will live; I will obey your word.
Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law. I am a
stranger on earth; do not hide your commands from me. My soul is
consumed with longing for your laws at all times. Psalm
119:17-20*



SPECIAL DATES

- Pastor Appreciation Month
- World Communion Sunday, October 5th
- Columbus Day, October 13th
- Reformation Sunday, October 26th
- Reformation Day, October 31st

News From the Pews



Continue praying for:
Allen Ford, Carole Mahon,
Loretta Byrd, John Bruno,
Alice & Alex Rivera

Everyone is invited to join our virtual **"Hour of Prayer Power"** every Friday at 7:00 PM.
The conference call-in number is 605-475-4860,
code: 371231#

Our **Online Bible Study** meets
Wednesday at 7:00 PM and Saturday at 12:00.
Contact Ron Rivera (917-716-8273)
for information on joining




Special
M • E • S • S • A • G • E

FRIENDS & FAMILY DAY CELEBRATION

Sunday, October 26th, 11:00 AM
Worship Service and Luncheon
Please plan to join us!!

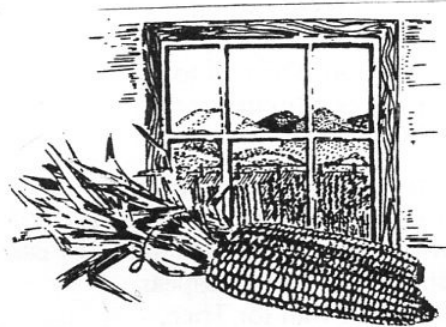
CHURCH CHUCKLES

The bingo players hated when Father Jim called the numbers because he'd throw in things like "B-Holy! I-missed-you-in-church! N-joy-my-sermons! G-sus loves you! O-come-o-come-Emmanue!"

A little-known Bible story tells why the first man stopped sharing every thought and feeling with his wife:

One day in the garden, Eve turned to Adam and asked, "Does this fig leaf make me look fat?" Adam, not knowing any better, gave her an honest answer. Eve got depressed and reached for the nearest available food - an apple - and the rest...well, the rest is history!

A pastor tells about a 2-year-old boy who heard the worship leader say: "The Lord is one..." Tugging at his mother's arm, the child whispered to her, "When will the Lord be two, like I am?"



A colorful lesson

We could learn a lot from crayons:
Some are sharp, some are pretty,
some are dull, some have weird
names, and all are different colors ...
but they all exist very nicely
together in the same box.

—Robert Fulghum



"It is not enough to be busy ... The question is: 'What are we busy about?'"

—Henry David Thoreau

Pastor's Corner

October brings fall weather: pumpkin spiced everything, costumes, and our Annual Friends and Family Day Service and Luncheon on October 26, 2025. The Bible tells us "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24).

On our Friends and Family Day, we invite our friends and family members to ask them to join us on this special occasion! If we find a lost item of great value to us, we can't wait to tell our loved ones, friends and family about our good fortune. When we meet that special someone and get engaged to marry, we can't wait to tell our loved ones, friends and family the good news! Likewise, we shouldn't hesitate to share the good news that Jesus saves with our loved ones, friends and family!

When Jesus comes into our life we should shout and tell everyone that we have found a Savior in Jesus and he has made a wonderful change in our life. But you don't have to wait for any special occasion to share Jesus with your loved ones, friends and family. Hopefully, they will see the difference knowing Jesus has made in your life. Now, let us run and tell everyone we meet that Jesus is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother! Happy Fall and Happy Friends and Family Day!

Shalom to you now,

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden, Pastor



The heart of the Reformation

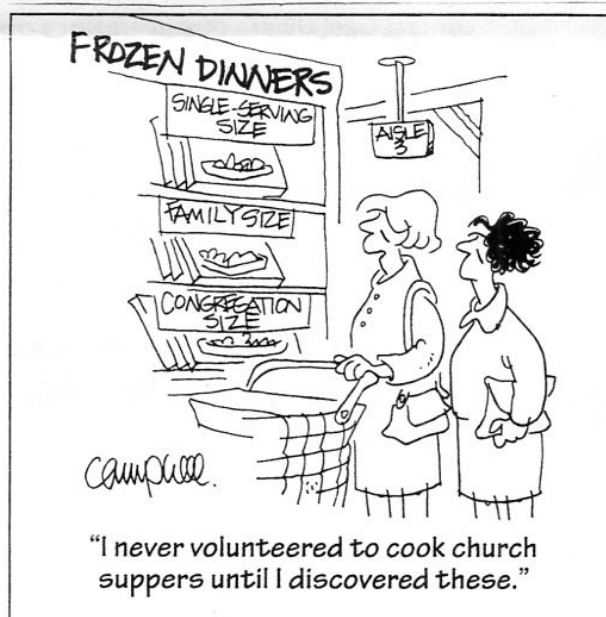
During October, Protestants celebrate the work of the Reformers — Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin and others — who brought about much needed change in the Christian church. Basically, these four teachings were at the heart of their contributions:

Word alone — The supremacy of the Bible as the surest guide for faith and life.

Grace alone — The supremacy of undeserved love from God. We are counted as being right with God when we accept God's love given to us freely, without any human achievement.

Faith alone — The supremacy of faith. It is only by believing and trusting in God's promises, and through no works of our own, that we find salvation through Christ.

The priesthood of all believers — Christians are "members of one another" (Ephesians 4:25, NRSV). In the eyes of God, we Christians are all on the same level. We each have a ministry to fulfill to one another and to those outside the faith. Luther said that we are "reciprocally and mutually one."





September 2025

Dear Church of the Master,

It is with sadness and joy that I share with you that RCA missionary Rev. Mark Vellinga has officially retired from mission service. I was able to be with Mark and the church community in Mescalero just a week before his departure, and he reflected on the time he and Miriam have spent with Mescalero Reformed Church with deep love and great joy.



Through your financial support and your prayers for Mark's ministry, God used you to impact the Native American community at Mescalero Reformed Church. We want to recognize that you and your congregation's faithful support helped make Mark and Miriam's ministry possible.

In the same way, I **hope you will still consider joining RCA Global Mission in a new chapter of mission and ministry for Mescalero Reformed Church.** The consistory of Mescalero Reformed Church, supervised by the Southwest Classis, is undergoing a search process to call a new pastor to lead this important ministry. I request that you continue to give your support as the process unfolds. While in the interim, the church's consistory members will guide the church. Before his retirement, Mark was able to mentor a lay leader in the community, Jeff Botella, who will be a key leader in many of the church's ministry areas. Please keep Jeff and the consistory in your prayers.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at ssoderstrom@rca.org, or 616-541-0899. To make changes or to renew your Partnership-in-Mission share(s), please contact Gael Uwera at guwera@rca.org, or 616-541-0882.

Thanks again,

Rev. Stephanie Soderstrom

Mescalero is the mission
we have supported for many
years!

Why be a missionary?

Cynthia Sundman, a missionary to a rural village in Peru, had this to say during a talk before a church group in Snohomish, Washington:

"I have struggled to learn Spanish, spent countless weeks sleeping on dirt floors surrounded by rats and bats. In an effort to assimilate into the Peruvian culture, I have had to like and eat tons of rice, fried guinea pigs and roasted ants.

"I get asked a lot about why I chose to be a missionary. I have only one answer, 'God called me to serve there and so I must obey.'"

—From her sermon
"Where Can I Serve You, Lord?"



In our newsletters, we are sharing our financial reports with our readers so everyone is aware of our situation.

Here are the monthly totals:

May: -\$197.49

June: -\$4,145.87

June's deficit is, in part, due to paying our Classis assessment, Quarterly insurance payment & Missionary donation, combined with a very low income from our weekly donations.

Our 3rd quarter Classis Assessment was paid in September. If you are a member and haven't contributed your share (\$133 yearly per member, \$33.25 if you pay quarterly), please consider sending your payment to help us. We thank those who have already sent in their donation.

We're trying to cut corners as much as possible but we need the help of our members, former members and friends. **As a member, if you miss a week or two, please put your weekly offering in your envelope for that week and then bring those envelopes with you the next time you come to church. You may not be here for those weeks, but our expenses don't skip a week.**

Again, we continue to thank our generous former members and friends who send us a donation, whether it's on a regular basis, occasionally during the year or during the holiday season. We really appreciate the donations, as well as hearing from you.

At what cost?

A woman complained to her friend, "Our church costs too much! They're always asking for money!"

"Look at it this way," her friend replied. "When my son was born many years ago, he cost us quite a bit of money. He continued to cost us money as he grew older — money for clothes, shoes, food, bicycles, doctors, college and more. But we didn't mind, because he gave us so much joy and more in return. Then in his senior year at college, he died, and since his funeral he hasn't cost us a penny. Which situation do you think I prefer?"

"As long as our church lives," she concluded, "it will cost us. When it dies from lack of support, it will no longer cost us a thing. But what will we have? I'm going to give and pray with everything I've got to keep it alive and well."

The beauty of stewardship

Stewardship has to do with how we manage our time, talent, resources — basically our entire lives. It's a beautiful concept when properly understood. Here are the basics of good stewardship:

God is the source of all creation, including our lives. God is the primary owner of all that exists.

We are blessed by being given the task of managing well all that we have influence over: our lives, our abilities, our minds and bodies, our time, our part of the earth, our finances, our children, our church buildings, our automobiles, etc.

Although we can make decisions regarding each of the above, ultimately we are responsible to God. Sooner or later, we must give an account of our management of God's creation and of God's gifts.

When we properly use the talents, resources and property that God allows us to manage, we find great joy. Think of planting a garden which soon overflows with colorful flowers, wonderful vegetables and flavorful herbs, etc. God gave us the plot of ground, God gave us the seed, God gave us the wisdom and strength to bring forth such beauty, such good things to see or eat, or smell. Yet we did the work, with God's help, to make it a reality. Like Adam we tilled it and kept it. But God gave the increase. God's provisions and our labor brought the garden to its fulfillment.

Good stewardship enables us to do something positive and wonderful with the money God has allowed us to have. What feels better than knowing one has managed money well? Our bank account, our checkbook and our portfolio tell the story. When money is handled well, we have enough for ourselves and are still able to give to God's work.

That is the beauty of stewardship.



A PUMPKIN TALE

Sarah and Jacob stood by the window, watching. They could hardly wait for Daddy to get home from work. Today was the day he promised to help them make a jack-o-lantern. At 5:30 on the dot, Daddy's car pulled into the driveway. "Are you guys ready to go pick out a pumpkin?" he called.

"Hooray!" yelled Jacob.

"Let's go!" cried Sarah, running out to the car.

In a few minutes they arrived at the biggest pumpkin patch the children had ever seen. There were hundreds and hundreds of pumpkins. Big ones, small ones, round ones, long ones. Yellow and green and orange. Sarah and Jacob walked up and down every row, searching for just the right pumpkin for their jack-o-lantern. "There - look at that one!" Sarah pointed. It was the roundest, largest, brightest orange pumpkin in the patch. Jacob could hardly get his arms around it.

"I think you found the perfect pumpkin," Daddy smiled. They carried it back to the car. When they got home, Daddy placed the pumpkin on the kitchen table. As he began to carve the jack-o-lantern, he said, "Do you know that being a Christian is a lot like being a pumpkin?"

"It is?" asked Sarah.

Jacob looked puzzled. "What do you mean?"

"Well," said Daddy, "first God picks each one of us out of the patch. He chooses us to be His very own. Next, He cleans us from the inside out. He scoops all the yucky stuff out of our hearts - the sin - the bad things we say or do. After that, He puts a great big smile on our faces. His light shines in our hearts. Then everyone can see His love in us!"

"Ohhh." Sarah thought about this for a moment. "Daddy, I want God's light to shine in my heart."

"Me, too. Me, too," said Jacob.

"I'm glad," Daddy replied. "You know, the Bible says that our sin separates us from God. It keeps His light from shining in us. So God sent His Son Jesus to take away our sins by dying on the cross. Three days later, He rose to life again, and now He lives in heaven. If we ask Him to, He will come and live in our hearts, Then His light will shine in us."

"Let's ask Him right now," said Sarah.

