

HOPE and HAPPENINGS

Old North Reformed Church
February, 2018 Newsletter



Dear Members and Friends of Old North,

Freezing rain. Slushy snow. Two more Christmas decorations to put away at home, and I am surrounded by Lent and Easter resources. What an odd system of dating for our Easter celebration we have inherited: Easter Sunday is always the first Sunday after the full moon that falls on or after March 21. It cannot occur before March 22 or after April 25, so this year Easter will be on April 1 (April Fools! Hmm... I feel a sermon in there...), with Lent beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 14.

Yes, Lent—our season traditionally set aside for thoughtful consideration of our lives, repentance, and turning our hearts back to God-- begins on Valentine's Day this year!

At first, I confess I was very dismayed by that, but our Consistory gracefully pulled us right back on task by declaring that Ash Wednesday trumps the secular Valentine's Day... and pointed out that in our relationships, *every day* should be special!

So this year, we are Trying Something New on Ash Wednesday—you can read all about it in the pages herein—building on the learnings from the old bus stop ministry at Old North, from our very successful Thrift Shoppe Saturday, and from the amazing Souper Sunday just experienced: First, our location is a blessing to enable us to minister outside of our walls to commuters and passers-by. Second, signage makes all the difference in having a good community response to a program. Third, good use of social media spreads the word about missions faster and wider these days than print advertising. But back to God and Old North! The Holy Spirit has been moving miraculously among us, blessing new ideas and opening doors for ministry and sharing the gospel in concrete ways among us. We are fortunate to offer space to many other groups to make good use of the lovely buildings we have inherited and are now temporary caretakers of. The weeks of Lent offer opportunities to reflect and renew ourselves and our church through prayer, conversation, fellowship, hope and faith. There's a lot of Good happening!

See you in church!

Pastor Susan

FINALLY—A CHURCH WEBSITE IN THE WORKS!

We are working on launching a church website. WHY??? Read on:

1. **A church website brings people to your church.** If someone wants to find a church in your area, how are they going to find it? If your first answer is, “check the Yellow Pages” you’re wrong. Most people go straight to Google.
2. **A church website connects people.** Fellowship takes place even when people aren’t physically together. Church websites give members a way to interact and fellowship throughout the week. This kind of interaction helps build unity.
3. **A church website organizes church events.** Church websites help people stay up to date with your church’s events—from current mission drives to Sunday services.
4. **A church website answers questions about the church.** People have all kinds of questions about churches. Music? Nursery? Denomination? Bible version? How can you answer all these questions? Two words: church website.
5. **A church website is the church’s testimony.** Within seconds of accessing your church website, a person forms opinions about your church—for better or worse. A good website is a great way to communicate a good testimony.
6. **A church website broadcasts your message globally.** Instantly—without buying a ticket, experiencing jet lag, or eating airline food, your church can reach as far as Europe, Asia, or Africa. Regardless of its size, your church can spread its message worldwide.
7. **A church website saves you money on advertising.** Any pastor wants the biggest bang for the buck when it comes to church marketing. Church websites are way more visible and far less expensive than any other form of church advertising.
8. **A church website stores your media.** A church website gives you a digital media library. Storing sermon recordings online is a great way to increase the longevity and reach of sermons.
9. **A church website increases your church’s income.** People pay their bills online, invest their money online, and read their bank statements online. Can they also give to their church online? With a church website, yes.
10. **A church website gives your church the relevance necessary to communicate today.** This generation has witnessed the launch of the digital age. Creating a church website is the primary means of jumping on the information superhighway and reaching our generation for Christ.

ASH WEDNESDAY: BEGINNING ANEW

Pastor Susan, along with church volunteers, will be stationed in our parking lot near the bus stop from 6-9 a.m. on February 14, Ash Wednesday, where they will join other churches in a national trend to distribute ashes among the public.

"Ashes to Go" is about bringing beliefs and symbols of our faith out into the places where people who may treasure them no longer prioritize them as part of their everyday lives and to offer an opportunity to reconnect to God where they are, in the tradition of Jesus, who traveled outside the synagogues to bring the gospel to the people. As people get busier and busier, we need the church in new and non-traditional ways, especially reminders of forgiveness in the tough places of our daily lives.

The people who accept ashes on the street are often people seeking a connection between their faith and the difficulties of daily life, as well as a special opportunity to be in touch with our Creator.

The Reformed Church in America has included this information on our denomination's website—

"Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent. The biblical witness is found in the opening epic of the human story: "you are dust and to dust you shall return" (Gen 3:19). In the tenth century the use of ashes was employed in visibly reminding worshippers of their mortality as they began their Lenten "watch by the cross."

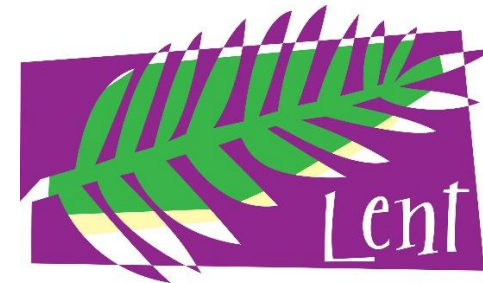
This first day of Lent reminds us (in the words of the Heidelberg Catechism, question and answer #88) that two things are involved in genuine repentance: "the dying of the old self and the coming to life of the new." The way to Easter is the way of the cross. "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). New life with Christ involves a daily surrendering of the old life. The first step of this Lenten journey invites us to acknowledge our mortality and our sinfulness by the imposition of ashes.

Traditionally, the ashes for the service are prepared by burning the palm branches from the previous year's Palm Sunday. As each worshiper comes forward the ashes are imposed on the forehead in the sign of a cross and the words of Genesis 3:19 are repeated each time: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." The imposition of ashes is often preceded by a call to confession and followed by a prayer of confession.

Imposition of ashes can be a deeply moving, though sobering experience. If imposition of ashes is new and unfamiliar to you, you should not feel compelled to come forward to receive ashes, nor should the practice be seen as a way of displaying one's piety before others. It is simply a vivid and tangible reminder of our sinfulness and mortality and of our utter dependence upon the grace of God and the power of Christ's resurrection.

DID YOU KNOW

We are in Year B of the Revised Common Lectionary which means that we are reading from the Gospel of Mark, with some additions from Luke and John, and that the Old Testament readings are from the first five books of the Bible (the Pentateuch), and the books of Joshua and Judges. In this cycle the Old Testament readings serve as a framework for understanding the Gospel readings, but should not be read as "predicting" the New Testament.



SHARE YOUR FAITH

The first Sunday in Lent is February 18. It is the perfect time to Invite and bring a friend, neighbor, or family member to church!



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE AT 7 P.M.

Old North will be joining with Calvary UMC, Demarest UMC, and the UMC of the Good Shepherd (Bergenfield) for a joint worship service on Ash Wednesday, February 14 beginning at 7:00 PM at Old North. This wonderful time of shared worship features three stations to individually remember and experience the meaning of Lent, and will include a blended choir anthem. Plan on attending this meaningful way to begin the season of Lent with your friends and family!

SOUPER SUNDAY

Thank you to Elder Scott Benell for once again coordinating an amazing, successful collection of donations of soup and non-perishable food items to be distributed to The Center for Food Action and the Dumont Senior Center food pantries. Our heartfelt thanks goes to everyone from the congregation and community who took the time and effort to share their contributions!



YE OLD THRIFT SHOPPE IN NEED OF DONATIONS

The downstairs Thrift Shoppe at Old North is in need of donations! Gently used clothing, housewares, tools and yard equipment, small household appliances, toys, and children's furnishings are gladly accepted. (Please ask before bringing in furniture as it is subject to shop space).

Volunteers to sort and sell are also needed! Please check the sign up sheet in the Church House hallway.

If you have any questions, do check in with the office. Thank you!



A COFFEE HOUSE FOR MISSION INVITATION

The River Mission Homeless Ministry of Hackensack will be having a "Coffee house" on Sunday, February 25, from 2-5 p.m., featuring live music, refreshments and a free will offering to support the ministry, at the English Neighborhood Reformed Church, located at 1040 Edgewater Ave., Ridgefield, NJ. For more information visit--
www.englishneighborhoodreformed.org

ANNUAL COMMUNITY LENTEN SUPPER SERIES:

EMBRACING THE UNCERTAIN

Our annual Lenten Bible Study begins on Wednesday, February 21st from 6:15 PM to 8:30 p.m. Books are available in the Library or from the church office at a requested donation of \$12. Sign up sheets to participate in the Study and for supper service are in the Church House hallway.

Our Agapé Supper will begin at 6:15 p.m. in the Auditorium; Bible Study will be in the Lounge from 7 – 8:30 p.m.

FIVE SESSIONS:

Wed. Feb. 21, 28, Mar. 7; **Tue.** Mar. 13; **Wed.** Mar. 21.

Join us as we learn to engage and wrestle with life's uncertainties this Lenten season!

NEW MEMBER GROUP TO MEET WITH YOUTH

On Sunday, February 11th from 11 a.m. – noon, Pastor Susan will lead a new member group informational meeting in the Lounge along with our Learn & Discern Youth group. Come learn all the Basics of the Reformed Church in America together, and ask all the questions you always wondered about! All are welcome.



PURCHASING FLOWERS FOR WORSHIP

Members and friends of ONRC are invited to purchase flowers in honor, or in memory, of loved ones throughout the church year. Simply sign up on the chart in the Church House hallway, or call the office to make arrangements. Requested donation to cover the cost of fresh flowers is \$45. If you wish to contribute to purchasing a seasonal artificial floral arrangement, that is also welcome! The Consistory decided last Fall to invest in good quality artificial flowers in order to economize on those Sundays that no one has signed up for. The estimated saving to our budget is in excess of \$1000 per year.



GRATITUDE CORNER

“Thank you so much for the moving welcome on Sunday and the good fellowship that followed at the potluck luncheon. It was a wonderful day for me and I am touched (and humbled) that Old North has taken me on as a very neophyte elder.” -- *Elder Leslie Maro*

Note: Leslie was ordained and installed to the Consistory on Sunday, February 4, along with Carol Sushko, who has formerly served as Deacon and remains our Consistory Clerk. We are grateful for their willingness to serve, and thank God for their gifts and talents.

We also recognized and honored Elder Jack Erhard, who at the end of 2017 faithfully completed multiple terms of service on the Consistory. Old North and the Body of Christ have been well served by Jack’s professionalism, wisdom, kind heart, and good council, for many decades. We look forward to continuing to work and worship with him in his new capacity as “Emeritus.”



Prayer Chain: If you have a celebration or concern that you would like to have included in our prayer chain, please call Pat Hooey, 201-843-4456.

OLD NORTH HISTORY CORNER

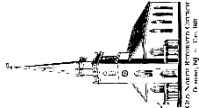
From “The Story of the Old North Reformed Church”: “The “Gay Nineties” witnessed quiet a few changes: in 1894 the town of Schraalenburgh was incorporated, and in 1895 a chapel was built on the northeast corner of Washington and Madison Avenues to house the Sunday School and serve the congregation’s need for a place to hold meetings and social activities. 1898 saw the change of the town’s name to Dumont, after its first mayor, Dumont Clarke. As the century drew peacefully to a close, the congregation that one hundred years ago had been a small group, struggling to establish itself after many years of conflict, found itself a vital and thriving center of community and spiritual activity, looking forward to a new century and new opportunities for growth.” (pg. 31)



Lent into Easter 2018

- 2/14** 6:0
6 – 9 a.m. Bus Stop Ashes Ministry
7 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship
- 2/21** “Embracing the Uncertain”
Lenten Bible Study begins
- 3/11** Daylight Savings – Spring Ahead
- 3/11** Fish Fry for Lent – Following worship
- 3/25** Palm Sunday - Pancake Breakfast
- 3/29** 6:15 p.m. - Maundy Thursday
Soup Supper with Communion
- 3/30** 2 p.m. Good Friday
Community Reading of “The Passion”
- 4/1** 6:30 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service
9:30 a.m. Family Easter Service





OLD NORTH REFORMED CHURCH
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• PRAY • FAST • GIVE •

