

MESSENGER

Niskayuna Reformed Church

July 2020

Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus – Philippians 2:4-5

The sermon from Sunday, June 28 was focused on practicing humility as a way to emulate Christ in our lives. I believe that another part of emulating Christ is also practicing empathy.

em·pa·thy /'empəTHē/

noun

the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Just like humility, empathy is difficult to practice. Empathy differs from sympathy in that we actually step into the feelings of another. As the definition states, we **understand** and **share** the feelings of another. Sympathy is generally just feeling bad for someone else's predicament. There is nothing wrong with sympathy, but I want to acknowledge that it doesn't go as deep as empathy.

As Brene Brown writes, "In order to empathize with someone's experience you must be willing to believe them as they see it and not how you imagine their experience to be." Read that again. Take a moment to ponder what that really means. I think one of the most damaging things we do on a regular basis is negate the feelings and experiences of others with phrases "Don't be so sensitive"... "Oh, you don't really feel that way"... "C'mon, it's not that bad". We've either heard that from someone or said that to someone. When we do this, we put our own interests above others. We hijack the feelings of someone else mainly because we are uncomfortable sitting with discomfort or we are unable/unwilling to acknowledge that we have hurt someone else.

Empathy is hard because it requires us to sit in the feelings of despair, loneliness, anger, hurt, pain. We have a hard enough time doing that for ourselves, let alone doing that for someone else. Empathy allows us to sincerely listen to the experience and viewpoint of someone else. Empathy helps us to not alter their experience to fit our own understanding. We accept someone else as they are.

I am growing in my belief that the current climate of polarization in our country stems from our inability to empathize. Our own viewpoints, our own experiences are a safe place for us. We cozy up to our long-held beliefs and traditions like a child with their favorite stuffed animal. Looking at something through the eyes of someone else or trying to feel like someone else feels is scary. We tend to run from these experiences.

We also have an inability to hold tension. Validating someone else's experience or feelings may come into conflict with our own experience and feelings. In those moments we do not know what to do. Most of us resort to winning the argument, making our experience more valid, debating better, speaking louder, using intimidation, being manipulative. Empathy along with humility enable us to hold someone else's experience as true in tension with our own experience. Empathy equips us to say, "I see you. I hear you.", without a "but" at the end. Our relationships with others would grow tremendously if we all grew in our capacity to empathize.

~Pastor Jason

Birthdays



3	Barbara Valenti
5	Marianne Hustedt
5	Pat Zink
6	Alex Farrell
7	Linda Guzzo
7	Jacqueline Albanese
8	Joan Buhrmaster
8	John Lehner
9	Donna Gaunay

10	Everett Dillon
14	Stephen Groudine
16	Carol Carr
20	Jackie Maclutsky
20	Ron Ricard
22	Sara Dranichak
26	Mary Flanders
26	Natalie Persons
26	Vivian Persons
27	Jennifer Fulkerson
29	Mary Ivey
31	Kara LaBella

Jeff & Sandy Rivenburg	18
Jack & Nancy Faddegon	20
George & Sarah Nagy	22
Steve & Lynne Avveduti	23
Gary & Dorilee Male	28

Anniversaries

Bill & Kathy Dzamba	3
Charles Del Signore & Mary Ivey	12
David & Deana Perlee	14



Office News

Ellen will be on vacation July 13-17. Please contact Pastor Jason if you are in need of assistance. Rick will be on vacation July 21st and returning on August 9th. Please contact Ron Ricard if you are in need of assistance while Rick is out.



COVID Update

Pastor Jason and the consistory have been researching possibilities for live streaming worship to complement in-person worship in the sanctuary. We are still following the guidance of the Classis to not worship in person at this time. We are working with Sound Solutions NY (they installed our current sound system) to determine the appropriate equipment and streaming platforms for our congregation. They recently installed a camera for live streaming, and have begun training members on the use of the computer controls for the system. Some more testing needs to occur before we go "live". We will keep you updated on any pertinent information regarding the live stream and in-person worship. We are grateful for the gift of technology that will allow us to worship

Property Committee

The congregation wants to thank Jack Faddegon this month for providing and installing the beautiful flowers in front of our Sanctuary. It will certainly be great for the congregation to see as we begin to reopen.

Mission and Service Committee

July 5th Communion Collection: Our Communion Collection for July will benefit Rotterdam Challengers Tri-County Baseball League. The league is devoted to bringing the sport of baseball and its feeling of team camaraderie to mentally and physically challenges people, regardless of their age or ability. Each player receives a shirt, hat and trophy at the end of the year. Each game lasts 3 innings and there are no strikes and no outs—every plays until they hit the ball! Thank you!

Looking ahead:

August 2nd- RCA African Orphanage

Communion Collections

May: Camp Fowler

\$785 collected, \$1,000 donated

June: Wildwood Programs: \$195

Once again, we appreciate the generosity of our congregation.

Special Note: Our Communion Collections run for the entire month. You can mail your donation to the church. All checks should be made payable to NRC and specify on the memo line the name of the organization that you wish to support.

SICM Emergency Food Pantry We are collecting food items (boxed and canned, no glass) to help those during this time.

Monetary donations are also welcome and can often purchase more food per dollar than we often realize. There is a green collection box in the narthex.

Every donation impacts lives.

Happy Packs Project at Ellis Hospital

Meredith Rutsky is a registered nurse at Ellis Hospital and she has initiated a campaign called Happy Packs which provides patients with activity bags to help them pass the time when they are not able to

have visits from loved ones. We would like to collect the following NEW items to help her efforts: coloring/puzzle books, colored pencils, stress balls, etc.. Which we will provide to her to fill the bags for the patients. A collection box will be in the Education building for any donations. Alternatively, the Facebook Page for Ellis Hospital Happy Packs has links to Wish Lists to purchase items that will be shipped directly to Meredith.

2020 Volunteer Opportunities

Schenectady City Mission-7/13, 9/14 - tentative pending updates to volunteer safety. Please contact Michele Kopp at mishcata@gmail.com ,if you are interested in volunteering. Sign-ups to volunteer must be done on-line at <https://citymissionofscheneectady.volunteerhub.com/lp/allevnts/events/index>

Salvation Army Soup Kitchen

2020/2021 dates pending

Time: 10:30 am-1:30 pm

SICM Summer Lunch Program Volunteers needed to help with SICM summer lunch program August 17-21 at Mont Pleasant Middle School in Schenectady.

Time: 12:15-12:45

We will function as a mobile site, with meals already bagged by SICM and ready to go. We will be responsible for handing out daily lunch and breakfasts for the following day. Additionally, we will help monitor social distancing within waiting lines. Please contact Michele Kopp at mishcata@gmail.com if you are interested in helping out.

2020 Brooks BBQs: 8/19

Look for information coming out soon!

UPCOMING M & SC Events

**Next Meeting: August 10, 2020 @ 6:30pm
All are welcome**

Salvation Army Soup Kitchen

Because of COVID-19, the Salvation Army dining hall has not been open for eat-in lunches. On May 19th and June 16th, NRC volunteers prepared bag lunches for those still in need of food. We delivered the take-out bag lunches to the Salvation Army facility for distribution. With many people taking advantage of the regional food banks for their food supplies, the amount of lunches delivered was less than half of the 150 we normally prepare.

NRC volunteers gathered in our Fellowship Hall to prepare the bag lunches which consisted of a turkey and cheese sandwich, veggies/dip, chips, fruit, pudding and apple juice. Thanks to Alice Harbour, Joan Peebles, Sue Lichtig, Unuroo (Sue's friend from Mongolia) and Barbara Valenti who prepared the lunches.

The May and June dates complete NRC's 2019/2020 commitment to provide a monthly lunch for the soup kitchen. We will continue following the same procedure with bag lunches until the dining room re-opens and the July-June 2020/21 is made available. The next date we will be providing a bag lunch is July 21st. Please watch the Messenger for information on future dates.



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