

**NISKAYUNA REFORMED CHURCH**

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

FEBRUARY 21, 2021

THE REV. JONATHAN VANDERBECK

As we gather together for worship, may you be reminded that you are loved and cared for by God, and called to spread that love to the world. May God quiet your heart so that you may hear his voice and sense the power of his almighty presence.

**THE APPROACH TO GOD**

The Lord be with you.

**And also, with you.**

Announcements

Prelude        There is a Fountain Near the Cross - Rouse

Votum

Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and earth!

Call to Worship

As darkness gives way to light  
and winter sleep to fresh beginnings,

**We come today to be reminded of God's love for us.**

Like the green shoots of renewed life,  
stirring beneath the soil,

**We welcome an awakening of God's word in our lives.**

In this time of reflection and repentance,

**We affirm our identity, we claim our security,  
as children of God.**

Hymn        O God, Our Help in Ages Past

Tune: ST ANNE

111

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

**Everloving and merciful God. In this journey into Lent, we are reminded again of the brokenness of the world around us. We confess our need for you in these uncertain times, acknowledging when we've gone astray. Help us not be given over to despair, but help us cling to hope. In the name of Jesus Christ, the light of the world, we pray. AMEN**

## Words of Assurance

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Call to New Life

And in response to God's covenant love for us, we respond to God's continual call on our lives as echoed in the words of the prophet Micah who asks: What does the Lord require of us?

**To seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.**

Special Music Here I am Lord

## THE WORD OF GOD

Junior Sermon

Prayer for Illumination (in unison)

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. **Amen.**

First reading Joel 2:12-17

Second Reading Isaiah 58:1-9

Sermon "Rend Your Hearts"

## THE RESPONSE OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Hymn Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah 339

Prayer of Consecration, Thanksgiving, and Intercession

Lord's Prayer (in unison)

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Benediction

Go out into the world in peace.

Give no person evil for evil.

Strengthen the fainthearted;

support the weak;  
honor all people.  
May the blessings of God:  
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,  
be with you now and always.

Postlude

Lenten Meditation - Richolson

### Announcements

The Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck will be our guest preacher for the next three Sundays. Jonathan Vanderbeck, LMSW is the Interim Associate Minister at Messiah Lutheran Church in Rotterdam. Prior to this, he served for four years at Trinity Reformed Church and helped facilitate a merger between the two congregations. Jonathan currently serves as the President of the Classis of Schenectady (the local judicatory that oversees all Reformed Churches in the area) and the chairperson of the Church Oversight and Supervision Committee. He is also a licensed clinical psychotherapist working at the Samaritan Counseling Center of the Capital Region in Scotia. Jonathan loves helping people navigate change in their lives, preferably over a cup of coffee. Welcome Jonathan!

Today's service will be uploaded to the NRC channel later today. Please subscribe to Niskayuna Reformed Church on YouTube to see all our services. You can also access the service on the front page of the church website. Just click "watch the 9:30 am service" and it will automatically come up. This will be posted by Monday morning and will stay up for the entire week.

"CAN" YOU HELP? SiCM's newest campaign for collecting all types of canned food to replenish their Food Pantry. NRC will have two blue bins in Education Building for this purpose. You can drop off your canned goods Monday-Friday, after 1:30 pm. **This drive will run till March 31, 2020.**

Here are a couple SiCM announcements. The Crop Walk Team Leader Rally will be via zoom on **February 24**, 7 PM. Please see SiCM website for sign up. The CROP WALK (virtual) is scheduled for Sunday May 2. Secondly, please welcome to Rev. Dr. Amaury Tanon-Santos, SiCM's new Executive Director.

We love appreciating the musical talents of our congregation and zoom allows us to enjoy the gifts that others have to offer! If you are interested in recording and sharing a musical contribution, please contact Ellen at [office@niskayunareformed.org](mailto:office@niskayunareformed.org) and we will get you scheduled for one of our services! You can share music by recording a video of your piece, or you could perform live if you want (but please set up a sound check with us in advance to make sure this goes smoothly)! If you would like piano accompaniment, Rebecca is happy to make a recording and send you a track to use, as long as you send her sheet music.

One of our church members, Janel Mirel, is starting a new group called **Walking Wednesdays!** Meet up at Lions Park at 9:30 am and get some fresh air! She will be there rain or shine, masked, and socially-distant. The first session begins March 3rd. "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well" (3 John 1:2)." Hope to see you there!