

MESSENGER

Niskayuna Reformed Church

February 2022

Musings in the Interim

A Forgotten Festival

We are spending February in the Festival of the Christian Year which is the most important one for people like us and which is virtually unknown by people like us - Epiphany. It is entirely possible that there are folks in this congregation who do not even know the word, much less what is being celebrated. The Congregationalists in colonial New England made the observance of anything not in the bible, such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost (Whitsuntide) ***illegal***, punishable by fine and/or imprisonment. That began to change around 1850, but only slowly. Most Protestants eventually recovered the three, along with Advent and Lent during the 20th c., but Epiphany has languished among us to this day.

It is the most important festival for us because without it we would not be here to celebrate any of the others. The word epiphany is simply a transliteration of two Greek words, *phanos*, which means to light up or shine, and *epi* which means outward or all around. So Epiphany is “shining light all over the place.” The formal definition is, “The Manifestation of the Christ to the Gentiles”. For us gentiles, that is most important as it is us gentiles for whom Epiphany exists.

Other parts of the Church make much more of Epiphany. If you have any Orthodox friends, you may know they celebrate Christmas from the 25th to January 6 - the Feast of Epiphany. The Twelve Days of Christmas end on Epiphany, January 6, twelve days after December 25. Many European cultures offer worship services for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Second Christmas Day, and Epiphany. I intended to attend them all this year, but covid cancelled the local Danish Epiphany service. As Luke’s telling of Jesus birth is always the main story Christmas Eve, so Matthew’s account of the adventures of the Wise Men from the East is the Epiphany story.

In our age when Christian faith is being tolerated at best and often, even in the USA, actively opposed, the festivals of the Church are helpful reminders of both who we are and why we are. Whatever gift was received by you and yours, no matter how wonderful or important, it pales beside the gift of God - himself, Emmanuel, God with us. All our giving and all our receiving come into being directly from God’s gift of God’s own life, the promise that life with God will last, and the daily presence of God with us and with all humankind to nurture and sustain.

Within that larger picture, we give gifts to one another out of thankfulness, joy, and delight. Epiphany celebrates that gift giving is not an occasional occurrence but a way of life. And that way of life is nourished each Sunday morning by our gathered community, sharing gifts of God and one another to delight our common life. I look forward to sharing with each one of you there.

Rett Zabriskie

Birthdays

	14	Barbara Kamm	23	Nina Doss	
2	Michael Cerone	17	Jennifer Hall	26	Buddy Wyman
3	Valentina Gonzalez	20	Benjamin Groudine	28	Hannah Kreig
3	Lauren Van Buren	20	Tom Henery	28	Keith Munro
5	Joanne Goodwin	22	Jill Ennis	28	Jack Faddegon
7	Mel Burger	22	George		
8	Mary Counsell		Buhrmaster		
8	Nick Persons	22	Donna Stewart		
9	Suzan Tuttle				
10	Charles Goddard				
12	Alan Connelly				
12	Glenn Kreig				
13	Joseph Cook				



Anniversaries

Ralph & Lori Lembo
11th

Tom & Donna Nappi
19th

Women's Fellowship Group (WFG)

The WFG will meet on Wednesday, February 9 from 2-4 pm. TBD whether in person in the lounge, or by Zoom. Stay tuned for more info or call the church office.

Women's Book Group (WBG)

The Women's Book Group will meet on Saturday, February 12, from 10:00 am until about noon. TBD whether at Ann Duncan's home, or by Zoom. Stay tuned for more info or call the

February Ushers Schedule

February 6 Bob & Tracy Sacca
February 13 Brian Maclutsky & Scott Haefner
February 20 Lizbeth Amorelli & Joan Peebles
February 27 John & Lynn DeSignore



To the community of Niskayuna Reformed Church-

I have been blessed by my time in your midst. I had some wonderful visits with your consistory, staff members and those not always able to attend church. Your Congregational Care network is a wonderful resource.

You will remain in my prayers as you continue your journey in this challenging time. There is still a great deal of work to be done during this transition. You have so much to offer as a congregation, I hope you can find it in your hearts to assist consistory and other leaders in the tasks of interim work that adds to their usual tasks. The more varied and thoughtful the input by leaders and congregational members, the better the call that can be extended to your next pastor.

You have already shown your ability to adapt in difficult situations. That is a valuable strength. I hope that when there is more ease in your life together as a church and in our pandemic riddled world, you will be able to celebrate the unique ways that you have exercised your faith and your compassion.

~Go with God, Viki

COVID Safety Committee

While there has been a great deal of confusion regarding the NYS mask mandate, your COVID safety committee continues to follow the guidance and recommendations of the CDC and the NYS DOH. While cases and hospitalizations are decreasing, Schenectady, Albany and Saratoga counties remain high transmission areas. Therefore, we will continue to ask that you wear a mask during indoor services and when not actively eating during coffee hours. We pray that all of the indicators continue to go in the right direction.

New Interim Pastor

This past Sunday we welcomed back Reverend Rett Zabriskie, who will now be acting as our interim minister. Rev. Zabriskie will be in the office on Wednesday & Thursday mornings. **You can reach him by calling his cell at 201.819.7629.** To help Rev. Zabriskie learn our names, we ask that you wear your name tags on Sundays. If you need a name tag, please contact Ellen.

Consistory will be sponsoring a "Welcome back Rev. Zabriskie" coffee hour this **Sunday, February 6th**. We hope you can join us in welcoming Rett!

Christian Education

The NRC Sunday School has continued to meet for the last several months, in spite of the challenges that the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic present. Here's what we've been up to in the last few months:

We enjoyed a successful advent wreath making event in early December. Our continued thanks to Jack Faddegon for the donation of our beautiful greens. Thanks also to the Kreig family, who donated some of their greens to us as well!

We celebrated the birth of the savior on Christmas Eve with a lovely Children's Service. The kids were engaged and adorable, and put on a very nice show for those in attendance and those who made it to

the virtual show. We appreciate the help from our kid's parents with this event, and this year, we'd like to give a special thanks to the tech team for helping us with microphones and running the virtual show. We appreciate your work!

January brought us a few Sundays off to spend with family, as well as a return to virtual Sunday School sessions. In the month of January, we offered several Sundays of virtual Sunday School only, in an effort to protect our families from the Omicron variant that surged here in NY state. Virtual lessons will continue through Jan. 30th, and a decision will be made about February's sessions during that week. As always, the continued flexibility of the congregation is appreciated as we navigate Sunday School.

We are still looking for teachers and assistants for our winter and spring sessions. If you have any interest in joining the team, please reach out to Sabrina at christianed@niskayunareformed.org. We offer a number of methods by which to contribute, and we'd love to have you share your gifts with our kids.

Pillows for the YWCA Women's Shelter

The YWCA of NorthEastern New York's (Schenectady) domestic violence program offers safe shelter and other related services to victims of domestic violence. NRC's **Women's Fellowship Group** is once again sewing pillowcases and providing pillows to the shelter for these women.

If you would like to help, we would welcome your contribution of standard-sized pillowcases (self-made or purchased in a finished size of 20x26") and/or new standard-sized pillows. You will find a drop-off bin in the foyer on the lower level of the Education Building. End date for collection will be Sunday, February 27, after which the items will be delivered to the YWCA on Washington Ave. in Schenectady.

Mission & Service Committee

February Mission of the Month:

Our Mission of the Month Collection will benefit the Schenectady City Mission. The City Mission exists to meet the needs of the hungry and homeless in our community. The Mission's ongoing goal is to provide "not only HELP for today, HOPE for tomorrow. In 2021, the City Mission provided 27,223 nights of shelter, 159,343 meals, 1,200 weekend backpack meals, job training through the Schenectady Works Programs, free medial clinics and well as community picnics. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Looking ahead: March— NRC History & Archives Committee

Communion Collections

Saratoga War Horse -

collected \$505, donated \$550

Pets for Patriots—

collected \$624, donated \$700

Once again, we appreciate the generosity of our congregation.

If you have an organization that's near and dear to your heart and could benefit from a Mission of the Month Collection, please let us know as we are putting the list together for 2022. Please email Lizbeth Amorelli at htebzil@gmail.com with suggestions.

Special Note: Our Communion Collections run for the entire month. If you are unable to attend church on the 1st Sunday of the month, you may 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.

Did you know that you can make Mission of the Month Collections through the Church's Web Site? There is now a dedicated Mission donation selection for the

Pay Pal contributions.

SICM Emergency Food Pantry

For the month of February we will be collecting individual packages of fruits, nuts and seeds. The Food Pantry is now accepting volunteers - call the pantry at 518-346-4445 for more information or email volunteer@sicm.us

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.

SiCM's Annual "SouperBowl " Fundraiser will be in full swing for 2022. Our past participation has been stellar-many more meals have been available to local families due to our generosity. Let's continue this winning streak and win the game against hunger. Contributions can be made via NRC PayPal or checks made out to SiCM can be mailed to Michele Kopp 2149 Orchard Park Dr, Niskayuna, NY 12309 by **Sunday February 13.**

2022 Volunteer Opportunities

Schenectady City Mission-

Volunteer opportunities are beginning to resume pursuant to Covid-19 safety guidelines. Please see the following to learn more

<https://citymission.com/get-involved/>

Salvation Army Soup Kitchen-

2022 dates are pending and will be published as soon as possible.

UPCOMING M & SC Events

Brooks BBQ 2022—4/20/22 & 8/17/22

Next Meeting: February 7th @ 6pm via Zoom

All are welcome

2021 Mission & Service Committee (M & SC) Annual Report

The M & SC has continued to serve during the COVID Pandemic due to your generosity. With heartfelt gratitude, we are thankful for your support. As we look forward to 2022, we invite you to support the M & SC. Your kindness and generosity enables us to carry out our mission. We would like to share with the congregation how you helped us to support numerous not-for-profit organizations during 2021. It is with **YOUR continued support** that we are able to reach out to others and make a difference. We thank you for your generosity.

The need goes on...the work goes on...and the gifts go on...Thank you.

2021 Donations	Collected	Donated
Communion Donations	\$4,594	\$6,966.39
SICM "Souper- Bowl"	\$80	\$80
Schenectady Community Hub Dedication		\$75
SiCM Food Pantry (green box)	\$25	\$25
SICM Food Pantry	approx. 300 lbs of food	
City Mission of Schenectady	Backpacks & school supplies	
NRC/Mortgage Pay Down		\$3000
NRC/ History & Archives		\$1000
RISSE/Refugee & Immigrant Support		\$300
RCA/Haiti Disaster Relief		\$500
Lions Club	Glasses & Hearing aids	
Northern Rivers	Hats, Mittens, etc.	
Things of My Very Own	Christmas gifts	\$368.82
Fundraising		
April Brooks BBQ	\$3,373.25	
August Brooks BBQ	\$6,941.10	
TOTALS		
Expenses	Collections/Fundraising	Donations
\$1,895.08	\$15,013.35	\$12,315.21

FINANCE COMMITTEE

For the first time in at least five years, we completed the year in a positive position; i.e. the operations budget had a larger income than the expenses we incurred. Most all our expenses were less than we had budgeted, the largest of which was salaries due to the lack of a full time minister. Throughout the year we continued to be blessed by the dedicated “volunteers and church mice” who have kept vital programs and operations alive, in spite of the cloud of Covid 19. This is critical to our ability to achieve a welcoming community return, once we can fully reopen. We continue to prove that we have a great church.

1. To minimize a projected deficit operations budget for 2022; our ability to increase our present giving, along with attracting additional new “church mice” will be very important.
2. For those in the retirement ranks, most IRA programs allow church contributions directly from your IRA account, which do not incur taxes (important since the NYS deductible thresholds have changed.). Depending upon your age, the contribution can count towards your RMD (Required Minimum Distribution). Your Financial Advisor can guide you, and a Finance Committee member can help point you in the right direction.

As of December 31, 2021

	Income		
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Offerings	\$ 208,437	\$ 222,000	\$ (13,564)
Use of Facilities	\$ 47,362	\$ 50,000	\$ (2,638)
Nursery School	\$ 30,961	\$ 22,000	\$ 8,961
Rental Income	\$ 19,800	\$ 19,600	\$ 200
Fundraising	\$ 3,577	\$ 5,500	\$ (1,923)
Other	\$ 1	\$ -	\$ 1
Operational Income	\$ 310,138	\$ 319,100	\$ (8,962)
	Expenses		
Payroll	\$ 148,359	\$ 210,000	\$ 61,641
Property	\$ 73,739	\$ 82,000	\$ 8,261
Mortgage (Principal & Interest)	\$ 36,660	\$ 37,320	\$ 660
Denominational Assessment	\$ 12,533	\$ 14,000	\$ 1,467
Office	\$ 9,680	\$ 10,400	\$ 720
Other	\$ 16,836	\$ 12,850	\$ (3,986)
Operational Expenses	\$ 297,808	\$ 366,570	\$ 68,762
Gain from Operations	\$ 12,330		
Budgeted Loss	\$ (47,470)		
Performance Vs Budget 12/31/2021	\$ 59,800		

Warm their hearts
this winter.

Give blood.



American
Red Cross



Blood Drive

Niskayuna Reformed Church

3041 Troy Schenectady Road, Niskayuna, NY 12309
Fellowship Hall

Saturday, February 12, 2022

8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

To schedule an appointment call
1-800-RED CROSS or visit redcrossblood.org
and enter sponsor code: NiskayunaReformedChurch

Download the Blood Donor App | RedCrossBlood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767

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FEBRUARY 2022

Niskayuna Senior Center
 2682 Aqueduct Rd., Niskayuna, New York 12309
 518-372-4969

Transportation is available
 for Niskayuna Seniors age
 60+. Please call 495-6202
 by noon the day before

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	S
<p><i>Stop by and socialize! Bring friends, activities, interests or just pop over for coffee and conversation.</i></p>	<p>1 LUNCH: Gershon's, BYOL, coffee svc 9:00-12 Tom's Computer Clinic 10:00 Tai Chi-UL 11:00 Pickleball-UL 1:00 MVP Chair Moves-UL</p>	<p>2 11am SS Zumba Gold-ZOOM only 6:30 *Gentle Flow Yoga w/ Susan UL</p>	<p>3 LUNCH: Gershon's, BYOL, coffee svc 10:00 Tai Chi-UL 11:00 Pickleball-UL 11:00 Book Club 12:30 Birthday Celebration 1:00 The Eddy Chair Yoga In House & Zoom</p> 	<p>4 11am Chair Pilates-ZOOM only</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>7 11am CDPHP Zumba Gold-UL & ZOOM</p>	<p>8 LUNCH: Gershon's, BYOL, coffee svc 10:00 Tai Chi-UL 11:00 Pickleball-UL 11:00 Blood Pressure Clinic by St. Peters Health Partners 12:30 Potato Lovers Day—trivia 1:00 MVP Chair Moves-UL</p>	<p>9 11am SS Zumba Gold-ZOOM only 6:30 *Gentle Flow Yoga w/ Susan UL</p>	<p>10 LUNCH: Gershon's, BYOL, coffee svc 10:00 Tai Chi-UL 11:00 Pickleball-UL 12:30 Make a Friend Day Discussion 1:00 Arts & Crafts w/ Edie</p>	<p>11 11am Chair Pilates-ZOOM only</p>	<p>12</p>
<p>14 11am CDPHP Zumba Gold-UL & ZOOM</p> 	<p>15 LUNCH: Gershon's, BYOL, coffee svc 9:00-12 Tom's Computer Clinic 10:00 Tai Chi-UL 11:00 Pickleball-UL 12:30 Gumdrop Day 1:00 MVP Chair Moves-UL</p>	<p>16 11am SS Zumba Gold-ZOOM only 6:30 *Gentle Flow Yoga w/ Susan UL</p>	<p>17 LUNCH: Gershon's, BYOL, coffee svc 10:00 Tai Chi-UL 11:00 Pickleball-UL 1:00 The Eddy Chair Yoga In House & Zoom</p>	<p>18 11am Chair Pilates-ZOOM only</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>21 NO CDPHP Zumba Gold</p>	<p>22 LUNCH: Gershon's, BYOL, coffee svc 10:00 Tai Chi-UL 11:00 Pickleball-UL 12:30 Dimestore Day trivia 1:00 MVP Chair Moves-UL</p>	<p>23 11am SS Zumba Gold-ZOOM only 6:30 *Gentle Flow Yoga w/ Susan UL</p>	<p>24 LUNCH: Gershon's, BYOL, coffee svc 10:00 Tai Chi-UL 11:00 Pickleball-UL 1:00 BINGO</p> 	<p>25 11am Chair Pilates-ZOOM only</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>28 11am CDPHP Zumba Gold-UL & ZOOM</p>	<p>The Niskayuna Senior Center will close for inclement weather when the Niskayuna School District is closed.</p>		<p>*Denotes Fee may be required. All Meals and Programs subject to change.</p>	<p>UL-Upper Level LL-Lower Level TH-Town Hall</p>	

February 2022

Tuesday, February 1

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Flute (102)
6:30-Women's Bible Study
7 pm-Boy Scouts (FH)

Wednesday, February 2

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)

Thursday, February 3

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Violin (102)

Friday, February 4

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
7 pm-AA

Saturday, February 5

No events

Sunday, February 6

Communion

Mission-Schenectady City
Mission
9:30 am-Worship Service (S)
9:45 am-Sunday School (PO)
10:30 am-Coffee Hour (FH)
10:45 am-Coffee Hour

Monday, February 7

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Violin (102)

Tuesday, February 8

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Flute (102)
6:30-Women's Bible Study
7 pm-Boy Scouts (FH)

Wednesday, February 9

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
2 pm-WFG (TBD)
6:30 pm-Cub Scouts (FH)
7 pm-Consistory (L)

Thursday, February 10

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Violin (102)

Friday, February 11

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
7 pm-AA

Saturday, February 12

8 am-Blood Drive (FH)
10 am-WBG (TBD)

Sunday, February 13

9:30 am-Worship Service (S)
9:45 am-Sunday School (PO)
10:30 am-Coffee Hour (FH)

Monday, February 14

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Violin (102)

Tuesday, February 15

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Flute (102)
7 pm-Boy Scouts (FH)

Wednesday, February 16

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)

Thursday, February 17

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Violin (102)

Friday, February 18

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
7 pm-AA

Saturday, February 19

No events

Sunday, February 20

9:30 am-Worship Service (S)
10:30 am-Coffee Hour (FH)
10:45 am-Coffee Hour

Monday, February 21

Winter Break

7:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Violin (102)

Tuesday, February 22

Winter Break

7:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Flute (102)
7 pm-Boy Scouts (FH)

Wednesday, February 23

Winter Break

7:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)

Thursday, February 24

Winter Break

7:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Violin (102)

Friday, February 25

Winter Break

7:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
7 pm-AA

Saturday, February 26

No events

Sunday, February 27

9:30 am-Worship Service (S)
10:30 am-Coffee Hour (FH)
10:45 am-Coffee Hour

Monday, February 28

9:15-12 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Violin (102)

Please Note:

When no room is included after an event, it will take place on Zoom
Contact the church office if you have not been receiving the online information and wish to join us remotely.

CCC- Congregational Care

CM- City Mission

H & A- History & Archives

M & SC- Mission & Service

SA- Salvation Army

WFG- Women's Fellowship Group

WBG- Women's Book Group