

**Welcome to Niskayuna Reformed Church
November 19, 2023
Twenty-Fifth Sunday After Pentecost
Rev. Dr. Sherri & Rev. Michael Meyer-Veen**

The Approach to God

The Lord be with you. **And also, with you.**

Welcome and announcements

Prelude Like the First Bird (Buinessan) Alfred V. Fedak

Introit

Votum John Moak
Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Amen

The Call to Worship: by Sara Speed

God gave us starry nights and sunsets that take our breath away.

God gave us summer rainstorms and the crunch of fall leaves.

God gave us friendly waiters and waitresses who gladly serve us and bring us extra napkins and refill our drinks before we think to ask.

God gave us the sound of music—choirs singing in harmony, the holiness of an organ, the soft strum of a guitar.

God gave us blueberry pancakes, New York maple syrup, and coffee—that holy bean water that wakes our bones.

God gave us feather down blankets, fall scented candles, and sacred worn-down slippers that slide onto weary feet.

God gave us grandmothers that slip candy into our hands and grandfathers that smell like peppermint and books.

God gave us toddlers that bounce up and down to music and smash food into their open mouths like baby birds- with palms flat.

God gave us new years of life, marked by embarrassing renditions of “happy birthday” in restaurants and the extinguishing of a candle on a glorified pastry.

God gave us nurses and doctors, who cover shots with colorful band aids and keep lollipops in their scrub pockets.

God gave us welcome mats and nametags and all manner of things that help us feel at home in a place.

God gave us cats that curl up next to us to lend their warmth and dogs that run and slide to the front door to welcome us home.

God gave us old familiar blue jeans that feel like home, and sweaters pulled over hands that feel like security.

God gave us church—this imperfect clump of humanity that gathers week after week, striving to be better, striving to do good in the world.

God gave and gave, and gives and gives;
and how do we respond?

We say thank you.

We give what we can.

We let it feel like a joy, not an obligation.

We let it feel like a gift, not a burden.

We show up in this space.

**We believe these gifts can somehow make a difference,
and we refuse to give up on this world.**

Thank goodness for a God that forever outgives.

Thank goodness for the opportunity to say thank you for it all.

Amen.

*Hymn of Worship “Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”

The Hymnbook, 21

*The Salutation and People's Amen: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Call to Confession:

The Psalmist reminds us that,

The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.

Nor does God treat us as our sins deserve,
or repay us according to our iniquities.

For as far as the east is from the west,

so far has God removed our transgressions from us. (*Psalms 103*)

In this abundance of love and grace, let us confess our sins to God.

Prayer of Confession (Responsive): by Sara Speed

I am more and more convinced
every day
that the world is spinning faster;
do you feel it?

**There are a million and one
things that pull on my attention,
that distract and discourage;**

so in the fast moving blur of it all
my mother tells me to take a deep breath.
My father tells me to remember who I am.
My gut tells me there is something more here,
and they are right. They are all right.

So on Sundays, I reorient myself.

I pull prayers from my pockets and give them to God,
because fear cannot stand when it's standing in the light.

I pull money from my pockets and give it to God
because cynicism cannot grow when it is met with hopeful action.

I pull doubt from my pockets and give it to God
because doubt met with love cannot stay where it started.

And bit by bit, I move to holy ground.

The world is spinning slower now.

**This ritual of giving reorients me,
in an off-kilter world, it helps me see.**

I give and am returned to the center of me,
to the center of God, to a place that is free.

Thanks be to God for the reorienting.

Thanks be to God, again, on repeat. Amen.

Kyrie Eleison:

**Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us; Lord, have
mercy upon us.**

Words of Assurance: Colossians 3:12-13

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe
yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.
Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance

against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

*Gloria Patri:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Anthem A Hymn for Thanksgiving

H. Williams

The Word of God

Junior Sermon

Prayer for Illumination

Epistle Reading:

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

This is the Word of the Lord. ***Thanks be to God.***

Gospel Reading

Matthew 14:13-21

This is the Gospel of the Lord. ***Praise to you, O Christ.***

Sermon “Thickly Settled: Subversive Stewardship”

Pastor Mike

A Prayer for Blessing Upon the Word

*Hymn of Worship “God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending”

Lift Up Your Hearts, 876

The Response of God's People

The Offering

Offertory In Thee Alone

Hassler

*The Doxology 544 and Prayer of Consecration

The Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Prayers of the people and The Lord's Prayer

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.

*Hymn of Worship “Take My Life and Let It Be Consecrated”
The Hymnbook, 310

*The Benediction

Benediction Response

*The Postlude Now Thank We All Our God Arr. by Lloyd Larson

*Please stand if you are able.

Cover art: [Jesus Feeds the 5000](#) by Melani Pyke
Call to Worship & Prayer of Confession written by Sara Are Speed from:
<https://faithlead.org/>



Announcements

We will be ordering poinsettias for Christmas this year. If you would like to take one home, please mail or put in the collection plate a check for \$7 each made payable to **NRC** and note that you would like to take one home. Donations will also be greatly appreciated to the Christmas flower fund. We will be doing a Memorial bulletin working off last year's bulletin. If you have NO changes, there is no need to contact the office. If you have any changes/additions, contact Ellen at 518-785-5575 or office@niskayunareformed.org by **December 11th**. The bulletins will be included in the December 17th & December 24 bulletins.

Our Mission of the Month Collection will benefit the Capital District Region of Patriot Flight. This all-volunteer not-for-profit organization was created to honor America's Veterans for all their sacrifices. They fly local veterans to Washington, DC to visit and reflect at their memorials for their service, sacrifices and memories. The day trip from Albany, NY to Washington D.C., is provided at no cost to the veteran. The Veterans are flown back to Albany, NY the same day, where they receive a warm welcome home from the community. The next flight is in April 2024. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

The 2024 offering envelopes are in!!! They are on a table right outside the church offices. You can pick them up on Sunday or any time during the week that Ellen is in the office. She is usually in on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30-3. If for some reason you don't have your envelopes, let Ellen know and she can make some up for you!

For those of you who do not receive envelopes, the denominational fee for 2024 is **\$104/pp for the year/\$26 quarterly**.

We have the opportunity once again to help the Schenectady City Mission serve dinner. Our church has committed to providing 8 volunteers on Friday evening, December 1st. Volunteers work from 4:30-6:30, reviewing instructions, setting up, taking orders, serving tables and cleaning up. Dinner hour is from 5-6. Comfortable walking shoes, head (ex-baseball cap) are required. Gloves and aprons are provided. Children 10 or older are welcome to help, provided they are accompanied by a parent/adult. The City Mission has the following sign-up link.
<http://nrc.citymissionofscheneectady.volunteerhub.com/>

Please text Michele Kopp at (518)424-3825 if you have any questions.

Scripture

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written: “They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.” ¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. ¹² This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. ¹³ Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. ¹⁴ And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Matthew 14:13-21

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.” ¹⁶ Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.” ¹⁷ “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered. ¹⁸ “Bring them here to me,” he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave

them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.