

CROSS and GIFTS COMMENTARIES

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*The Gifts of God
for the People of God*

The following is the third in a series of articles meant to assist us in prayerful contemplation as we drew closer to Consecration Sunday in late April. Due to Covid-19 Consecration Sunday was postponed and a new date has not yet been set.

June 2020

The Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and by a pillar of fire by night to give them light, so that they may travel by day and by night. Neither the pillar of clouds by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. Exodus, 13:17-22

As we approach a time when we consider how we will return some of our gifts back to God, we are focusing our minds on the gifts of God for the People of God.

God gives the gift of the Holy Spirit who travels with us. When, by the light of the Risen Christ, and in silent communion with God, we begin to open ourselves to more and more of God's gifts, we see a way—a way to follow, a way to live, a way to give. As the way becomes clearer, we are offered the gift of the Holy Spirit as our companion, guide, and strength.

In the excerpt from Exodus, above, the Children of Israel were guided through the wilderness, even when they believed they were lost and forgotten by God. We may never experience a cloud or a pillar of fire, but we may have known those frequent, sometimes irritating, nudges that are God's way of asking us to pay attention.

Stewardship is about paying attention to God's nudges. God helps us to respond with a generosity that surprises and delights us with its simplicity and joy.

We cannot do everything. God's reign is not only beyond our efforts, it is beyond our seeing and knowing.

But we can take the first steps of generosity, knowing that we may never meet the recipients of our giving.

What decision have you made to pass on the gifts that God has given you?

Lord, just as you led the Children of Israel through the wilderness, open us a path for me to follow. Holy Spirit, travel with me along that path. God, help me to feel your nudges and respond in generosity for the good of your church and the needs of the people of your world. Amen

****Just a reminder:**

Weekly offerings can be submitted via PayPal or checks via the mail. Visit www.communityreformedchurch.com for the link to our PayPal account.



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Community Reformed Church of Colonie is committed to keeping our families safe during this time of trial. Please continue to join us on Zoom for meetings and services until we can all gather together again safely.



Quilt Group News

Community Reformed's Quilt Group, despite not meeting since mid-February, finished the season by making an amazing 75 baby quilts for the Children's Hospital at Albany Med.

The group completed 53 small quilts for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, and 22 larger ones for the Pediatric Unit.

All materials for the quilts were donated by group members. Ideas, patterns, and encouragement were freely shared too.

The group normally meets twice a month from September through May, but this year's pandemic and the necessary New York PAUSE made it impossible to gather. Nevertheless, the 15 regular members did not give up. Working on their own from home they completed the quilts and then went on to make even more.

Thank you to all the group members for generously and tirelessly working to create the "comforters" that will truly bring comfort to sick babies and their families.



Prayer for the Sick

Father of goodness and love,

Hear our prayers for the sick members of our community and for all who are in need.

Amid mental and physical suffering may they find consolation in your healing presence.

Show your mercy as you close wounds, cure illness, make broken bodies whole and free downcast spirits.

May these special people find lasting health and deliverance, and so join us in thanking you for all your gifts.

We ask this through the Lord Jesus who healed those who believed.

Amen.

**Community
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of Colonie**

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Worship Hours

We invite you to
join us for worship
and fellowship every
Sunday at 10 AM

Outdoor Services
are also available in
the Summer every
Sunday at 8 AM

Holiday and Special
Services will be
announced on our
website and this
newsletter

**Colonie
Community
Day Care
Center**

701 Sand Creek Rd
Albany, NY 12205-2432

Carol Grasso, Director

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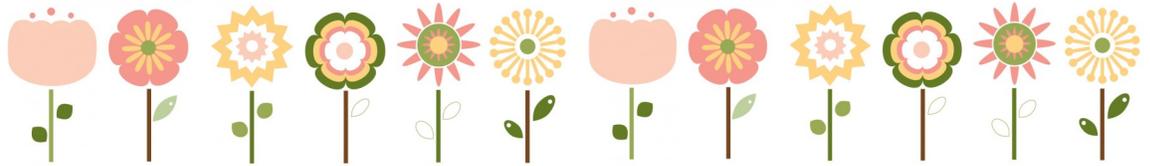
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Break Bread, Share Bread

The Community Outreach team has come up with a way to help fill our food pantry basket with items that are in high demand.

Please bring your donations with you to Sunday Worship.
Thank you in advance for helping those in need.

June	Individual packaged snacks (fruit snacks, cheese & crackers, peanut butter crackers, pop tarts, pretzels, chips, granola bars) microwave popcorn
July	Instant or canned potatoes
August	Microwave rice – all different kinds/varieties



Over Flow Shelter help overwhelming!

Originally we started putting together an article we were asking for help to cook meals for the over flow shelter. Since then we have filled all the dates for dinners for all 7 dates! We would like to extend a BIG Thank you to all that signed up. After the last date was filled we had others who responded they were interested. In the event the shelter were to stay open past June, we will let you know if additional opportunities become available. If not, there is always next season. Again thank you all for your interest and generosity.

Tina Bottini

NOTICES AND GRATITUDE

Drive in Service - Stay tuned....there are discussions currently taking place surrounding the commencement of the Drive In/Outdoor Service. More to follow.

Food Pantry - Don't forget about the food pantry bin for nonperishable food items. it is located on the outdoor pulpit. There is also a bucket with **Clynk bags**. Thank you for your continued support of these very meaningful ministries.

Masks - Thank you to all those who made masks. Many of us do not have the gift of sewing.



New Church Office Email for Lori Cote, Church Administrator

crcclori@gmail.com

Editor: **Beth Colbert**

Layout Designer: **Bob Becker**

Articles are due by the 15th of the month and can be submitted to
jimandbethcolbert@gmail.com or given to Beth Colbert.



We, the officers and staff of the Regional Synod of Albany, stand with those who mourn and protest the deaths of Black people in America. Especially on this Pentecost, we lament with the family, friends and communities that loved George Floyd and now grieve his violent death. We decry acts of police brutality that result in innocent lives lost.

We stand against the sinful systems of racism and white supremacy which have no place in God's coming Kingdom. We admit that we too play a part in holding these unjust systems in place. We ask God's forgiveness and we pray for God to overturn the tables of prejudice in our own hearts.

We remember that the Holy Spirit breaks down barriers and invites us to listen to those who speak in other tongues. God calls us to carry Jesus' message of love, peace, healing and justice to both those who oppress, and those who struggle to breathe under the weight of oppression.

We invite the rest of the synod to join us in self-reflection, prayer, and advocacy, so that justice might "roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." (Amos 5:24) We offer this Prayer of Lament in Divided Times for use in personal prayer and in corporate worship.

Abby Norton-Levering, Synod Ministries Coordinator

Bob Hoffman, Synod Administrator

Sandy Cornwell, School of Ministry Coordinator

Lindsey DeKruif, Albany Synod Fellowship Program Coordinator

AC Reilly, Communications Coordinator

Paige Convis, Regional Synod President

Patti Vargas, Regional Synod Vice-President

Jason Fulkerson, Regional Synod Past President

Prayer of Lament in Divided Times

God of All Time,

Your scriptures tell me that weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning. Yet how long is this night, O Lord? How long must people live in deep racial separation, how long must violence pervade our lives, how long must we fear each other? How long, O Lord!

I lift my eyes to the hills which is where my help comes from. Lord, when the names of people who have been choked, shot and assaulted are too many to count, I know that not one soul has been forgotten by mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, cousins and friends.

They remember...

...laughs and smiles,
...dreams and struggles,
...talents and personalities.

How long must we listen to the cries and screams as blood stains the sidewalk? How many videos must we watch before we begin to see a change?

The church seems to have no real explanations for what brings us to this place today. It is with real sorrow in our hearts that we need to ask you to teach us again your ways of love and justice.

Help our nation. Help us examine ourselves. Help those of us who are sad and angry to not let these deaths be in vain. We do not pray for vengeance, but we do thirst for justice. We hope for healing between neighbors and officers called to protect and serve. We long for the day when young people will live long enough to be old and parents will not have to say 'good-bye' too soon.

Push us to speak up and to step out of our comfort zones. Change our hearts that we might deeply long for justice to roll down, that we might invest our lives in changing this devastating, hate-filled story, because every time a person encounters violence it is a violation of our faith.

Deliver us, O God.

Deliver us from our fear, come quickly to help us, come quickly to save us. Open our mouths to speak out against prejudice and injustice. Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the one who came that we all might have life and have life more abundantly. Amen.
