



SUSSEX CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

October 2025 Newsletter

A Note From Pastor Kendall:

With All That's Been Going On

"With all that's been going on..." I feel like I've heard that phrase over and over again the past couple weeks. Maybe you've experienced the same. From friends, coworkers, maybe people you haven't spoken to in a long time, that question seems to pop up out of the blue lately. There are some key reasons behind it. Assassination, school shooting, intense political division, and ongoing wars all seem to contribute to deep anxiety about what our world has come to and where we're supposed to go from here. Combine those with whatever someone might be going through personally and it's a recipe for change. Lately I've noticed a big shift in how people are thinking about their lives, what it all means, and what they're supposed to do now. I've heard it again and again the past two weeks--people disconnected from the church and the Christian faith have been asking questions, checking out churches, reading the Bible again, all trying to find direction because of "all that's been going on". What an incredible opportunity!

With this opportunity comes the need for clarity about what matters the most. As a Christian and a church, I think it's so important to know our end goal when we engage with people genuinely seeking faith and meaning. It might be tempting to jump into why "we were right all along and they were wrong". That makes us feel good because we feel vindicated. But the problem is that then we are pointing people to the wrong thing. First and foremost, our goal should be to point to Jesus. What are people genuinely seeking? They're seeking the power of God to direct their lives. When our world is anxious and afraid, seeking direction on what to do and where to go for help, we point them to the king of kings and lord of lords. We show them Jesus. It is Jesus who was there with the Father and the Spirit at the creation of the world and still cares for it today. It was Jesus who was fully God yet became fully human to represent us. It was Jesus who became our "God with us" through the darkest times of life so we know we never suffer alone. It was Jesus who lived righteously when we couldn't. It was Jesus who proclaimed the kingdom of God in the face of injustice and exploitation. It was Jesus who went to the cross to forgive his enemies. It was Jesus who set us free from sin and death. It was Jesus who rose from the dead, and sent out witnesses to show the world the goodness of God and tell of his sacrifice. It was Jesus who ascended to heaven and who still prays for us when we can't even put to words the intense

Pastor's Note Continued

groanings in our heart. It is Jesus who promises to come again and restore all things, gathering his people into his eternal kingdom where there will be no more tears, sadness, pain, injustice or even death. Jesus is the one calling God's people to himself, saying, "trust in my love, receive the forgiveness of God, and come follow me as I put the hurting world back together."

This is the message I want people to hear because it's the story of God's redemptive power for people and our whole world. That's the message we need to remember the most. In the midst of tragedies, personal crises, anxiety about our world and how we fit into it, we look to our Lord Jesus Christ who holds all things together by his mighty hand. So with all that's been going on, let's show them Jesus.

Elders/Deacons & Districts

District 1

Elder: Owen Valkema

Deacon: Bryce GeBauer

District 2

Elder: Troy Yanoff

Deacon: Zack VanderGroef

District 3

Elder: Steve Van Ek

Deacon: Bob Miedema

District 4

Elder: Rick Vander Ploeg

Deacon: Dan Van Wyk

District 5

Elder: Jon Tallamy

Deacon: Matt Kuperus

District 6

Elder: Keith Niedergall

Deacon: Brandon LaBar



August 2025 Financial Statement

	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Benevolent</u>
Beginning Balance:	\$93,075.51	\$22,763.43
Income:	\$36,818.58	\$432.70
Total:	\$129,894.09	\$23,196.13
Disbursed	\$34,339.68	
Ending Balance:	\$95,554.41	\$23,196.13

Special Cause Donations

World Renew - Texas Floods: \$958.03

SCS: \$1,547.01

My Brothers Place: \$25.00

Special Fund Donations

Benevolent: \$777.70

Missions: \$1,638.01

Tuition Assistance: \$2,133.30

Cap Improvement: --

Monthly Budget Needs

Amount Needed: \$35,486.78

Offering Received: \$32,196.23

Difference: \$3,290.55

Previous Month Surplus: \$4,466.82

YTD Surplus: \$1,176.82

Classical Shares Paid through August 2025.

Denominational Shares Paid Through August 2025.

At Sussex CRC

Council Notes from the August Meeting

September 17, 2025 Council Meeting Highlights:

- Elder & Deacon nominations continue. Nomination letters have been sent out and we are waiting on additional responses. Council continues to covet the prayers of the congregation during this process.
- Pastor Kendall & Elder Rick Vander Ploeg will be attending the next Classis meeting on September 18 at Grace Community Chapel in Teaneck NJ.
- Hayden Calyer, infant son of Hunter & Liz Calyer will be baptized on Sunday, September 21, 2025.
- We will celebrate the Profession of Faith of Pam & Dennis Gonoud, Maddie Hook & Drew Havens on September 28, 2025. Luciana Gonoud, the youngest daughter of Pam & Dennis Gonoud, will also be baptized on this day.
- Holy Communion will be celebrated on November 2, 2025.
- One individual has been interviewed for the Administrative Assistant position. Some others have inquired about the position. If you are still interested in applying for the Administrative Assistant position, please contact Pastor Kendall or any Council member.
- Reformation Sunday will be held at our church on Sunday, October 26, beginning at 6:00 PM. More information to follow.
- The Elders will be teaching catechism to the Junior High class this year. Each Elder has agreed to take a month throughout the school year.
- The Deaconate will be sponsoring Karissa Koopmans (Kuperus, John & Helen's Daughter) who is with YWAM – Youth With A Mission, in Hawaii.
- The Deaconate had presented the 2026 Budget to the full council. After some discussion, the proposed budget was approved. This budget will be handed out prior to the Congregational Meeting.
- The Congregational Meeting has tentatively been set for Monday, October 27, at Church.

ABOUT

SUSSEX CRC

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sussexcrc.org

STAFF

Senior Pastor:

Pastor Kendall Everett

Admin. Assistant:

Cassidy Van Ek

Miscellaneous Announcements

CALLING ALL BAKERS !!!

Reformation Sunday is October 26th and our church is hosting! We are looking for homemade cookies and/or bars to share with attendees after the service. More details to follow. If you have any questions, please speak to Judy Vander Ploeg or Lisa Kuperus.

Baptism

On Sunday, September 21, we witnessed the Baptism of Hayden Arden Calyer, son of Hunter & Liz Calyer. Thanks be to God for His covenant promises!



Happy Birthday!

October Birthdays:

10/1: Kenzie Tallamy

10/2: Sam Dykstra

10/3: Emery Van Ek

10/6: Henrik Talen

10/6: Jonah Kuperus

10/7: Nickolas Vander Groef

10/9: Leanna Sterling

10/10: Dan Tassey

Pete Bast

10/11: Andrew Moore

10/14: Maisey Kuperus

10/16: George Young

10/17: Owen Valkema

10/18: Gwendolyn Gibbins

Travis Tallamy

10/21: Marge Kuperus

10/23: Sarah Moore

10/25: Linda Anderson

Morgan Kuperus

10/26: Amy Boyd

Steven Fox

10/27: Grace Miedema

Pamela Gonoud

10/28: Donna Babich

10/29: Annette Gebauer

“The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you;

The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.”

Numbers 6:24-26

Missionaries

Who We Support

World Renew - <http://worldrenew.net/>
Today's Choice - www.friendsoftodayschoice.org
Prison Ministry - www.cpmministries.org
Resonate Global Mission - www.resonateglobalmission.org

Hope Thru The Valley - hopethruthevalley.org
Perrin and Jodi Werner (Resonate-Japan)
Liam and Jessica Starkenburg (Resonate-Nicaragua)
Sussex Help Center and Family Promise

Update from Perrin and Jodi Werner



2025 September Prayer Requests

Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not his benefits - who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.

- Psalm 103:2-3

I hope you are doing well. I know it's unusual for us to send an email so soon after a newsletter, but I wanted to update you on a couple of prayer requests.

We are immensely grateful to God for your continued love and support.

First, I (Perrin) am scheduled for surgery on Tuesday, Sept. 16. The surgery itself is routine, but I will be in the hospital for a couple of days while I recover.

Please pray:

1. That the surgery goes well, I am able to understand what is going on, and that I feel better afterward.
2. That we are able to navigate the complexities of international insurance with patience, grace, and ease.
3. That I am able to complete most of my work before being hospitalized.
4. That we would all know God's peace throughout the process.

Update from Perrin and Jodi Werner Continued

Second, I am preaching in Japanese at the end of the month (September 28). An English-speaking pastor graciously translated a message for me so that I could join the presbytery's annual pulpit exchange.

Please pray:

1. That I am able to present well enough that the message of Scripture can be heard, and the novelty of the moment can disappear. I don't want to distract from the gospel.
2. That I have the time and energy to prepare so that I can enter the pulpit with confidence.

Thank you for remembering us in prayer.

The Werners



Final Update from Alisha Kuperus

A Goodbye to Berlin

September has arrived, and with the changing of the month, so too my plans have changed. For a variety of reasons, I have decided not to stay in Germany and have instead returned to where my family lives in New Jersey. As I write this, I am keeping busy working at my family's business and planning next steps. I finished my year in Germany working at the Willkommens Gemeinde, the local church, and the Notübernachtung, a homeless shelter.



The Church:

Willkommens Gemeinde and Sprachcafé



The Willkommens Gemeinde, the church I have been a part of for the last year, was a difficult place to say goodbye to. My friends, Kevin and Anastasiya, and I all came to Berlin with Resonate Global Mission for this church.

Every Sunday, we helped prepare for the service, and we became part of the community.

We hosted Sprachcafé here in the summer -->

On Fridays, the church hosted a Sprachcafé, which is where people learning German will go to practice speaking. The tables were divided by language levels, so as you progressed in German you would move to different tables. As Anastasia and I were both beginning to learn German when we had arrived in Berlin, it was here we were able to really practice speaking.



The Homeless Shelter: Notübernachtung



<-- A blurry photo I took of the NÜ as I left it after my shift

I worked in the Notübernachtung, which is in a tent, since May. In a previous newsletter, I mentioned the tent is pressurized, meaning we have to be careful about opening doors. One day, we heard a generator turn on, and the ceiling lights started getting closer and closer to us on the

Final Update from Alisha Kuperus Continued

ground. The supervisors ran to the emergency door, where a guest had opened it looking for the bathroom, inadvertently beginning to collapse the tent.

As I was there for three evenings a week, I grew to know both the volunteers and the different guests well. When I walked up to the shelter, many of the guests waiting outside would wave when they saw me. There was one who would show up sporadically, but when she did, she would run up and hug me.

There was one guest who would point to the food he wanted, since we both spoke different languages. When he tried speaking his native language, I would smile and shrug to show I had no idea what he was saying. Once, I had accidentally put pasta on his plate, he came back and pointed to his teeth, to show he was missing so many that he could not chew the food that had been served.

The other volunteers I worked with were incredible. They worked to make the shelter the best it could be. One told me how he had purchased socks in bulk for the clothing bin for the guests. He was shocked when they were gone within the week. Another put on their music playlist, and throughout the evening, we saw multiple guests dancing to it. She told me, "I'm so glad people like my music."

I was sad to say goodbye.

Where have I seen God?

In my previous newsletter, I left you all with the question, "Where have you seen God in the last year?" and I promised to answer the question in this newsletter.

Last June, before I left for Germany, I was listening to someone speak, and they asked the question, "If Jesus were sitting across from you, how would he see you?" I looked at myself and saw a mental image of myself, broken. When I envisioned how Jesus saw me, it was like light was pouring from the cracks where I felt broken. It felt like Jesus, regardless of how broken I saw myself, made me whole.

I talked with someone after I had written the question, "Where have you seen God in the last year?" They responded that they did not like the question, as "God is all around us at all times, so where is God not?" The person I was speaking to is an artist, so they talked about how, for them, they see God in art and in beauty. The beauty in art of Creation for them was in how God created order out of chaos, and they strove to do the same in their own creations.

Sometime in February, I was working in the shelter, helping to check the guests in, and I looked up and every guest that had entered the room either had a black eye, or a nose facing the wrong direction. It struck me in that moment how I was surrounded by pain. And as I began answering the question, "Where have I seen God this year?" it led me to ask the question: "Where is God in pain?"

I know this is a question asked by philosophers. It is a question that leads people away from the church. I am aware that I will never be able to answer this question completely or stop wrestling with it.

I don't have an answer to this question. I don't know where God is when pain feels like it's too much. Often, I find God in the times when someone can speak through pain and give comfort. I watched my colleagues this year go out of their way to make the guests feel comfortable and safe. I watched volunteers give their time every week to work in a shelter. While I may not know where precisely God is in pain, I believe that when we comfort those in pain, we are showing God's love to them. I believe that as we live our lives, we show God to others through our actions and through our words.



In my last week in Europe, I went to an art museum. In the first room I walked into, there was a statue of Jesus on the cross. I was struck in that moment by something I had heard once. Our God understands our suffering, as He also suffered. We pray to a God who has experienced pain. When we cry out in pain, he feels our pain.



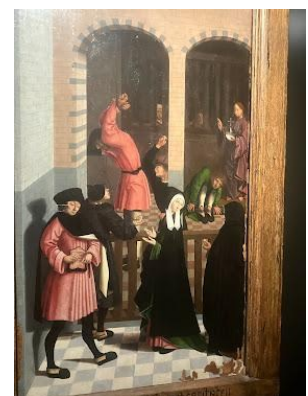
I walked into the next room, and there was an art piece consisting of seven paintings, in which Jesus stood among the crowd. Jesus stood among those waiting for food as they begged. Jesus among the sick. Jesus in prison. Jesus among us.



Feeding the Hungry



Comforting the Sick



Ransoming the Captive

So, in conclusion, throughout the year, I saw God within the grace and kindness shown in the words and actions of others, and I, too, saw God within the artwork.

Lastly,

Thank you to everyone who has reached out throughout this year. I am incredibly grateful for all your prayers and support, as well as for all the people who responded to the emails. It was pretty cool knowing people read them.

I plan to post my emails on the Kuperus Family Blog within the next month.

Back in August, DoJustice, a blog within the CRC, published an article I wrote on missions, which you can check out here:

<https://www.resonateglobalmission.org/stories-more/notubernachtung>.

As I sign off from my last newsletter, may God bless you and lead you to unexpected people and places. When pain comes to you, may you find comfort in a God who understands our suffering. May you see God's hands working in your life.

Alisha Kuperus

