



SUSSEX CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

February 2024 Newsletter

A Note from Pastor Kendall: Ministry of Generations

We had a Classis meeting again last week! If you're not familiar with the term, every church in our denomination belongs to a classis--a regional body of churches. We belong to Classis Hudson with other Christian Reformed Churches in Northern NJ, New York City and Long Island. We meet together a few times a year at each other's churches. H.R. Byrna, Don Kievit, Eric Thiessen and myself went down to Midland Park CRC.

Among other business, we were blessed to have Hanna Na, director of one of our supporting ministries called Mid-Atlantic Ministries, give a presentation on how churches can minister to and understand the generations of millennials (born 1981-1996) and Gen. Z (born 1997-2012), particularly as it pertains to mental health. We heard how every generation is unique and what makes these two distinct. Millennials were age 5-20 for 9/11. They were part of the massive cultural shift to the internet. They have regularly known our nation to be involved in war, they entered the workforce during an economic recession and struggled despite being more educated than prior generations. They are an ethnically diverse generation, and have learned to adapt and embrace certain technologies to accomplish important tasks and connect with others.

Gen. Z grew up in a post-9/11 world and see a world dominated by constant anxiety, insecurities and fear. They have never known a world without the internet and social media. For many of them, important life stages and transitional events were heavily impacted by COVID. They are much more skeptical of institutions in general, and churches in particular. They can tell when someone isn't being real with them and see through the "production" of church. They crave authenticity and deep and meaningful relationships.

Hearing some of those things that mark these generations might help us understand why we face a massive mental health crisis. Many of the constants in life that prior generations took for granted simply aren't there for the next generations. Living in a world dominated by insecurities and fear, coupled with many other challenges like a recession or pandemic can create anxiety and isolation. 1 in 5 Americans actively live with a mental health illness. That means we can expect that includes lots of our church members.

So what can we do about it? I think perspective is key. Sometimes we look down on other generations because they aren't like our own. Sometimes we blame those who came before us for our world's problems (okay, boomer!), or get frustrated with those who are coming along behind us for not having the same values or ideas (kids these days don't know how to...). When we make time to connect with each other, the walls of disconnect begins to break down. Hanna recommended creating "unreligious spaces" for people just to connect intergenerationally. Sometimes we just need to have fun together in order to grow together. I resonate with that. Some of my most important relationships were forged playing games, eating around a table, or working together on something. It doesn't need to look like a production. It just needs to be real.

We know our world is hurting and people are disconnected. But the church can be different. We can be the people who connect. We can be the ones who genuinely care. We can be the ones who love like Jesus. Then more will know we are not alone.

ABOUT SUSSEX CRC

49 Unionville Ave.
Sussex, NJ 07461
973-875-5591
sussexcrc.org

STAFF

Senior Pastor:
Pastor Kendall Everett

Admin. Assistant:
Rachael Klein

February Birthdays

2: Helen Kuperus
4: Rosina Byma
5: Tina Brands, Felicia Mann
7: Zachary Caton, Tucker Moore, Melissa Niedergall
8: Patrick Lobban, Tyler Niedergall
10: Sloan Van Wyk
12: Amy Caton
14: Joan Aukema, Charlene Westra
16: Cheryl Brands, Rena Kuperus, Stephen Sullivan, Madison Tallamy, Chelsea Westra
17: Rita Yanoff
18: Minnie Fox, Brian Van Den Broek, Rick Vander Ploeg
20: Grant Fox, Maeve Fox, Joshua Kuperus, Lisa Van Wyk
21: June Sytsema, Wyatt Valkema
25: Samuel Olinger, Luke Vander Groef
27: Dale Meyer
28: Christine Byma
29: Josiah Thiessen

At Sussex CRC

Council Notes from the January Meeting

- Holy Communion is scheduled for Sunday February 25, 2024.
- The Deaconate reports that the year-to-date budget surplus is \$5,656.34. The Council is very appreciative of everyone's year end contributions to meet our budget needs. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!"
- The Council and Pastor have started working with Eric Thiessen as he begins his internship at our Church.
- Owen Valkema was appointed the Elder Liaison for the Next-Gen Committee.
- The Vision Team reported that there is still a need for a director for the Next-Gen & Discipleship ministries. Also, additional leaders are still needed for the Junior High Youth Group. Please speak with Pastor or an Elder if you would like more information on where you may be able to serve.
- The Deaconate also reported that they have been speaking with a contractor about updating the locks & Key pads.
- An Elder sub-committee has been meeting in regards to the Worship Leader position. More to come.
- Review & Updates of the Church's Policy Manual are almost complete.
- Classis Hudson meeting occurred on January 18, at the Midland Park Christian Reformed Church. Pastor Kendall, Elder HR Byma, Deacon Don Kievit and Eric Thiessen attended meeting.
- Eric & Lisa Thiessen have created a non-profit mission called "Hope Thru The Valley." This is an expansion to their GriefShare Program.
- Congratulations to John Vander Goot & Elinor Halma Frech who were married on January 5, 2024, which was also John's 90th birthday.

December 2023 Financial Statement

	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Benevolent</u>	<u>Special Cause Donations</u>	
Beginning Balance	\$15,245.75	\$24,799.73	Starkenbug's-Nicaragua	\$14,585.01
Income	\$82,439.86	\$983.00	Christmas	\$8,162.04
Total	\$97,685.61	\$25,782.73	Bibles for Nicaragua	\$2,840.00
Disbursed	\$37,340.20	\$208.00	Sussex Christian School	\$60.00
Ending Balance	\$60,345.41	\$25,574.73	World Hunger	\$35.00
			Market Street Mission	\$25.00
			My Brother's Place	\$45.00
			Today's Choice	\$20.00
			Capital Improvement	\$150.00
			Griefshare	\$30.00
				<u>Special Fund Donations</u>
			Benevolent	\$705.00
			Missions	\$830.51
			Tuition Assistance	\$7,613.00
Classical Shares Paid through December 2023				
Denominational Shares Paid through December 2023				

Jr High Youth Group Report from the Yanoffs

January. New Year, New beginnings. When the Jr High Youth Groupers met for the first time in 2024 they knew the theme of the night was socks. Yes, socks - - those things you put on your feet. Each child arrived wearing their favorite socks and had a wrapped pair of socks to exchange. Mr. Yanoff began to list various types of socks, and together we came up with over 30 types: Men's socks, Women's socks, Children's socks, ankle socks, mid calf socks, invisible/ no show socks, tube socks, different lengths such as crew, mid calf, and knee high, athletic socks, soccer socks, baseball socks, compression socks, knitted socks, split toe socks, trouser socks, dress socks, ski socks, hiking socks, thermal socks, bobby socks, cotton socks, synthetic socks, silk socks, wool socks, plain white socks, patterned socks, silly socks, argyle socks, striped socks and novelty socks, clean socks, and of course dirty socks!! Maybe you can think of even more!! All this talk of socks led to a discussion on walking and a look into various Biblical characters who walked for important reasons, as well as those who are recorded as "walking with God." We focused on the Israelites as they left Egypt. Leaving behind a life of slavery and looking forward to a new life, there must have been optimism mixed with fear of the unknown. Certainly a reason to put complete trust in God! As a group, we read the 10 commandments which were given to Moses to help his people at that time have guidance and law on how to live together and love and serve their God. The students agreed that the commands are still valid for our lives today, in 2024. Their paraphrase of the 10 commandments, for modern day was:



- 1) Love God more than anything else
- 2) Don't let anything else be more important to you than God
- 3) Always respect God's name
- 4) Take a break from working on Sundays, go to church and honor the Lord
- 5) Respect your Mom and Dad
- 6) Don't hurt anyone
- 7) Be devoted and love your husband or wife
- 8) Don't take anything that doesn't belong to you
- 9) Never tell a lie
- 10) Don't be jealous of what others have. Be happy with what you do have!

One thing we are very happy to have is the help of RJ and Taylor Vander Ploeg. They visited the Jr High Youth Group meeting and experienced our wonderful group of 7th and 8th graders. On average, we have 18 students attending, but sometimes 24! We are thankful for all the parents who have helped at various meetings and events too! In the year ahead, we look forward to having the Vander Ploegs work alongside us and especially to experiencing all God has in store for the Jr High Youth Group.

The winning socks categories were:

Most STRIPES: Allison Sytsema
FUNNIEST: Zackary Cassase
LONGEST: Regan O'Connor
SHORTEST: Olivia Paola
LOUDEST: Aiden Westpy
CUTEST: Nathan Schneider

MOST PATTERNED: Alexandra Jeltema
MOST UNIQUE: Selah Klotz
BEST POLKA DOTS: Shelby Van Ek
MOST FUZZY: Faith Bennett
MOST HISTORICAL: Walker Kuperus
MOST BASIC: Dean Byma



Missionary Updates

Update from World Renew About Ukraine

“While the media has not focused as much attention on the ongoing conflict in Ukraine as they did when tensions first escalated, the struggles of the people caught in the crossfire continue. But through the generosity of World Renew donors like you, amidst the rubble of bombed buildings, hope is renewed in the Kherson region which had been heavily affected by the conflict and was occupied by Russia almost completely for 8 months. In one village, Liubymivka, only 400 people out of the 1,500 who lived there before the escalation of violence remained. Houses, farms, and the civil infrastructure in this area were severely damaged or destroyed. Through gifts like yours, World Renew has supported a network peer's efforts to rebuild the community now that it is no longer occupied. After hearing about the restoration of the damaged houses, people began to return and currently about 800 people are living in the village. The project created a positive economic and social impact for the region.

“World Renew's contribution to this project enabled 107 households—including 29 people with disabilities—to repair their homes. Repairs included replacing windows, doors, and roof plates which helps ensure that people are protected against tough winter conditions. Additionally, 999 vulnerable people were provided with cash assistance which allows them to meet their most urgent needs.

“Thank you for sharing Christ's love with families in crisis, so they can look to the future with hope.”
-This article is from World Renew's “Renewing Hope: Changing Stories of Poverty, Responding to the Ukraine Crisis. Your Gifts Are Helping Renew Hope.” This article was sent via email from Andrew Rienstra-Ehlers on January 4, 2024.

Field Notes from World Renew

If you'd like to learn more about World Renew's work, you can check out their *Fall 2023 Fieldnotes* on issuu.com. The Fall edition has stories about their work in Asia, Latin America, East Africa, West Africa, and Southern Africa. [Click Here to read Fieldnotes Fall 2023](#).

Have Something for the Newsletter?

The next newsletter will come out **Feb. 23** Stories are due by **Feb. 16**.

Newsletter articles can promote upcoming or recap recent events, highlight a Bible study, youth program, or small group, or give an update on a missionary or organization we support. If you have any questions about or something for the newsletter, contact the church office.

Who We Support

World Renew - <http://worldrenew.net/>
Today's Choice - www.friendsoftodayschoice.org
Prison Ministry– www.cpministries.org
Campus Ministry - Mike Mun, InterVarsity at Drew University

Johnny and Kim Gryglewicz (Resonate-Haiti)
Larry and Ruth Spalink (Resonate-Japan)
Liam and Jessica Starkenburg (Resonate-Nicaragua)
Sussex Help Center and Family Promise