



# FRONTSTREETER: DECEMBER 2021

The Reformed Church of Canajoharie

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## Pastor's Page

December 2021

One of my favorite comics of yesteryear was *Calvin and Hobbes*. Calvin was a kindergartner who was a walking, talking id. Every kind of misbehavior in a kid that age was bound up in Calvin. He had an imaginary friend named Hobbes who was a tiger. The gag was that everyone else saw Hobbes for what he was, a stuffed animal. To Calvin he was real. They would get themselves into all sorts of misadventures involving Suzie, a girl in his neighborhood, his teacher, Miss Wormwood, and his not always patient parents.

Calvin had a complicated relationship with Christmas. A kid who got into his kind of trouble would always wonder if he could get through the season without coal in his stocking. There was one panel where he was listening to a recording of "Santa Claus is Coming to Town". When it gets to the line, "he sees you when you're sleeping, he knows when you're awake...", Calvin wonders whether Santa is a jolly old elf, or a CIA spook.

Parents have been using Santa Claus, and his lackey, the Elf on the Shelf, to get the kids to behave during the interminable month of December, leading up to Christmas Day when the presents are opened. The temptation to do so is too great to bear for most of us. We need any edge we can get to endure the frenetic excitement of children bouncing off the walls in anticipation of what Santa would bring them. We need some way to keep them under control.

And yet, there is a certain amount of damage done in the use of this expedient. We present our kids with the idea that love is conditional, that those who are well-behaved are rewarded for their good conduct. If we make too close a connection between behavior and the love of God, we cement in the brains of the children that God, too, loves conditionally. Therefore, if they want to go to heaven, they need to impress God with good behavior.

This undercuts perhaps the most important fact about ourselves that every kid, and adult, needs to understand. Heaven is a gift given to us by God through Jesus Christ. It is not a reward for good behavior. In Galatians, Paul tells the church that if we seek to attain the love of God through good works, we will fail, and that to teach people to do so is another gospel than the true one. Salvation is a gift that God hands out to people who don't deserve it. It's grace, not a reward. Trust Jesus rather than your own ability to keep your nose clean.

What about the kids during the month of December, when the anticipatory greed is turning them into banshees. Well, maybe get an elf on the shelf, but make sure that they know he works for Santa, not for God. Merry Christmas.

## **Consistory Corner:** - As from the Nov. 9,2021 Consistory Meeting

**Consistory Nominations** – the committee reported that Alice Hammond would be honored to fulfill the role of Elder. There are no candidates for the 1 Deacon opening. It was decided that nominations from the floor will be solicited. That short congregational meeting will be held after church during Coffee Hour shortly.

**General Synod** – Pastor Matt reported on General Synod. A handout was provided of this report. We will need to begin to provide information to the congregation for their input and make plans moving forward. The Consistory asked if Pastor Matt would provide a side-by-side Comparison of organizations in January.

**Youth Director** – Lucas Draffen informed the board of his decision to take a fulltime job in Iowa. He thanked everyone for having him restart the Youth Program. His last workday was November 21, 2021. Lucas suggested contacting Hannah Gis as a replacement or resource for the Youth Program. Mark & Sarah Davidson have also been working with Lucas.

**Budget** – The Proposed budget was distributed, and items were discussed. Any changes decided on will be made. The final version will be presented to the Congregation in January.

**Berean Bean** – We have been busy at the Bean. Price Chopper has increased their donations of products to twice a week. We need volunteers to pick these up on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We are in the process of collecting for Thanksgiving Baskets for needy families to be distributed on November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Property** – Front Steps were again discussed. The protective windows bid of \$22,000 seemed prohibitive and the project will be tabled for now. The front columns have been removed and are being replicated by the Amish. More info to come.

**Mission of the Month** – It was decided to reinstate the Mission of the Month Collection.

## **In Our Thoughts and Prayers:**



**Prayers for those in need of Comfort and Healing:** The Family & Friends of Charles (Chuck) Jones – who passed away Wed., Dec. 1, 2021; Family & Friends of Kevin Hall – who also passed away on Dec.1, 2021; Family & Friends of Kathy Dopp – who continue to mourn her passing; Tom Jenks – struggling with pancreatic cancer; John & Janet Rocas - health concerns; Bob Dievendorf – slowly recovering, however he is still hospitalized at Albany Med.; Karen Konik (KK) – recovering from hernia surgery; Barbara Bowden – health issues; Jim Evans – (*Father of Sarah Davidson*) - health issues; Bob Wells – health issues; Patty Gorman, who is receiving treatment for kidney cancer, Patty is a cousin of Nancy Robinson; Clara & Bob Mount – health concerns; Charles & Nancy Jones – health concerns; Jane Hawkins – health concerns; Pat Sowizdral – health concerns; Frank & Chubby - for good health.

**Prayers for those Homebound or in Healthcare Facilities:** Paul Flint – St. Johnsville Nursing Home, 7 Timmerman Ave., St. Johnsville, NY 13452; Barbara Draffen (*Pastor Matt's Mother*) Glendale Home, 59 Hetcheltown Rd., Schenectady, NY 12302; Ruby Tufts, Room #5 First Floor, Wells House, 201 W. Madison Ave, Johnstown, NY 12095.

**Prayers for our Missionaries:** Felipe & Janelle Silva – serving in Romania; Mark, Deb & Zach Wilson – serving in Cambodia.

## Prayers – continued

**Prayers for those incarcerated:** Scott Cole – DIN# 15B2351, Great Meadow Correctional Facility Box 51, Comstock, NY 12821-0051.

**Prayers for:** Dan Cauwenberghs – (*Bobbi Cauwenberghs son*) who is temporarily stationed at Fort Pickett in Virginia.

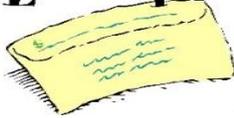
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**Cookies are Needed** for the December 20<sup>th</sup> *Christmas Comfort Zone*. Your donations can be left here at the church on **Sunday December 19<sup>th</sup>**. Holly Blacker will be including these cookies with the children's Comfort Zone gift bags on December 20<sup>th</sup>.

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## Offering Envelopes



**2022 Offering Envelopes:** The 2022 Offering/Tithing Envelopes are in and are on the table in back of the Sanctuary. If you have not used pre-printed envelopes in the past but would like to start, contact the church office at 518-673-2816.

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Dear Family at Canajoharie Reformed,

Thank you so much for the beautiful basket dish garden you sent. We all so appreciate all the thoughts and expressions of sympathy you have given us.

Growing up in Marshville with your pastor, Rev. Van Leeuwen, as our minister too, I've always felt at home in the Reformed Church. Now serving as your organist you continue to be my "other" (though equally loved) church family.

With much appreciation and gratitude,  
*Carol Cechnicki & Family*



## December Birthdays & Anniversaries

|    |                                            |    |                                           |
|----|--------------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------------|
| 8  | Emory Luck                                 | 21 | Charles Bloomingdale                      |
| 12 | Michael Mallett                            | 23 | Clara Mount                               |
| 15 | Robert Wells                               | 24 | <i>Michael &amp; Maria Mallett (2010)</i> |
| 17 | Dorothy Morrison                           | 25 | <i>Bob &amp; Clara Mount (1962)</i>       |
| 18 | Hannah Rockwell                            | 29 | Richard Trzaskos (Day Hab.)               |
| 19 | *Debbie Cleveland<br>*(Church St. Day Hab) |    |                                           |

Dorothy Morrison will be celebrating her 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday on December 17<sup>th</sup>. You are invited to a reception in honor of Dorothy's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday on Sunday December 19<sup>th</sup> following worship in Fellowship Hall. Everyone is Invited!





## December Dates to Remember:

Tues. December 14<sup>th</sup> – Consistory Meeting; 7PM (CH)

Sun., December 19<sup>th</sup> – Reception for Dorothy Morrison (FH)

Mon. December 20<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Comfort Zone; 6PM (S)

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

*The True Meaning Of Christmas*

In todays' day and time,  
it's easy to lose sight,  
of the true meaning of Christmas  
and one special night.

When we go shopping,  
We say "How much will it cost?"  
Then the true meaning of Christmas,  
Somehow becomes lost.

Amidst the tinsel, glitter  
And ribbons of gold,  
We forget about the child,  
born on a night so cold.

The children look for Santa  
In his big, red sleigh  
Never thinking of the child  
Whose bed was made of hay.

In reality,  
When we look into the night sky,  
We don't see a sleigh  
But a star, burning bright and high.

A faithful reminder,  
Of that night so long ago,  
And of the child we call Jesus,  
Whose love, the world would know.

~ Written by Brian K. Walters

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Nubia\\_group/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Nubia_group/)

*“May you rejoice in the miracle, the gift  
and the promise of Christmas.”*

**Merry Christmas**