

The Bellringer

The Newsletter of The Wyckoff Reformed Church

The Sweetening of the Soul

~ Rev. Jim O'Connell

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If you go into the woods behind the parsonage, you may hear the sound of drips falling into buckets and jugs. It is the music of mid-winter, the harvest of God's sweetness, sap from the maple trees. Flowing from the trees one drop at a time, collected and boiled down to make delicious maple syrup.

When I think of how many drops it takes to fill the buckets and jugs, it seems an amazing thing. One drop seems so small, especially when you realize that it takes about 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup; a ratio of forty to one, or one fortieth of a drop of sap. That's a lot of drops to taste the nectar of the tree.

On a good day, the drops seem to come

one a second, sixty in a minute, about 3600 in an hour. It still seems so small a thing in our world of instant gratification. We have 24 hour a day grocery stores, drug stores and fast-food restaurants. In essence, this says we don't like to wait. We want what we want, and we want it *now*.

Paul takes a different tact on the endurance of the believer. Romans 5:1-5, "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance

produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."

We have in our faith an endurance gene, because we know what is coming and we have the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts. In much the same way I wait patiently for the dripping of the sap to collect into quarts and gallons so as to savor the nectar of the trees.

Faith is collected in the buckets of our hearts one drop at a time, and through the heat of living, is converted over time into a sweetness of soul. Each prayer

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Lenten Study / Discipleship Opportunities Abound

Journey to the Cross

During the season of Lent, Rev. Dave will lead "The Road to Christ's Coronation," a five-week course, which will examine the last weeks of Jesus' life as described in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. What will emerge is a vivid encounter with a King who lived solely to serve rather than to be served—who welcomed outcasts as family, who touched the "unclean," who performed miracles that made astonishing spiritual declarations, and who raised the dead—all the while

challenging and confounding the religious authorities of His day. And finally, five days after Jesus entered Jerusalem, the center of religious and political power at the time, His "coronation" - crucifixion on a cross, took place.

Beginning on March 4 at 10:00 am, this course will meet on five consecutive Thursday mornings in the education building's Conference Room. There will be a nominal material's charge. Please register for the Lenten course by calling the church office at 201-891-1782.

Lenten Devotional to arrive for Ash Wednesday

Yes, Lent begins in a few weeks on Ash Wednesday, February 17. Please watch the mail for our 2010 devotional guide "Where in the World is God?" This daily devotional contains brief, pertinent and penetrating readings for each of the 40 days of Lent.

Please remember the 8:30 a.m., 12 noon and 8:00 p.m. services on Ash Wednesday.

Lenten Luncheons begin February 24

The theme for the 2010 Lenten Luncheons will be five formational concepts of Reformed Church doctrine, which are: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and the perseverance of saints.

You are invited to bring a bag lunch to Heneveld Hall at noon each Wednesday; coffee and cookies will be provided.

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Prayer concerns and celebrations of the congregation

Please remember in your prayers:

Norma Holland, Daniel DeRose, Sr., John Brain, Sr., Cherry Marshall and Elsie Golden.

We offer our congratulations to

Whitney White on being named to the Dean's List at Northwestern University for the fall quarter of the '09-'10 school year.



Wyckoff Offers Children Help, with Love

~ by *Nicholas Loffredo*

The following article was written by the editor of Wyckoff.patch.com Wyckoff's electronic newspaper.

A township-based volunteer organization is looking to spread the love this Valentine's Day to children in need. Residents will soon receive a fundraising appeal in the mail from the Love Fund of Wyckoff, asking for donations to help finance their charitable mission. "There are always people who need help," said the Rev. David Bach of the Wyckoff Reformed Church.

Finding and supporting those who need assistance has been the goal of the nonprofit organization for more than 10 years. The Love Fund of Wyckoff has distributed up to \$50,000 per year to Wyckoff families (and families of those who work in the township) who have children in need of help. Whether it's paying medical bills, funding summer camp, buying clothes or even paying for braces, the Wyckoff Love Fund exists to lift up those who have fallen on hard times. "It's very rewarding," said trustee

Jan Meyer.

Bach, the chairman of the Love Fund, helped establish the group in memory of his son, Robert, who died in 1991 at the age of 18 after battling cancer. Robert Bach was appreciative of the support he received from the Ramapo High School community during his struggle, and Rev. Bach soon wanted to find a way to help care for other children in Wyckoff. The Midland Park Love Fund, which is independent from the Wyckoff group, helped Bach get the local organization running, which found an eager sponsor in the Wyckoff Clergy Association.

Today, nine trustees administer the Love Fund, which operates year-round. Township clergy are well-represented on the board, with the Rev. Jim Knol of the Christian Health Care Center, the Rev. David Wiley of Grace United Methodist Church, Rabbi Kenneth Emert of Temple Beth Rishon and the Rev. Norm Brown of Cedar Hill Christian Reformed Church joining Bach. Residents Susan Yudin, Jan Meyer, Pat Khanjian and Lynn Clark round out the board of trustees, which meets monthly.

The trustees said that some residents have a hard time asking for help during tough times. In response, the fund's recipients are not made public, and the trustees promise confidentiality. Someone looking for Love Fund assistance would meet with at least two trustees, who would take the case back to the full board, which would then decide how to help, based on need and available funds. The Love Fund doesn't provide a family with a check; rather, the organization pays directly to providers.

Currently, trustees are looking at several cases of families with children who could use assistance, and the Love Fund is available whenever someone needs help. The group disbursed aid to more families last year than in any other year, and often reviews new cases monthly.

"Each one is different," Yudin said. As long as a child has a true need, the Love Fund can help. Of course, the organization can't operate without the good will of the community, which Bach called the "backbone" of the nonprofit organization. The Wyckoff Chamber of Commerce,
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Sweetening, continued

prayed, act of kindness done, word of encouragement offered, chapter of scripture read, and gathering for shared worship are little drops in the bucket that eventually become the nectar of an ever-deepening well of relationship with God and God's people.

Love Fund, continued

Lions Club, individual businesses and houses of worship all have been great supporters of the Love Fund, trustees said, and the organization is greatly helped by residents' donations.

Traditionally, the Love Fund conducts a fundraising appeal timed for Valentine's Day, but the organization will gladly accept assistance year-round. No donation is too small. If you'd like to help, send a (tax-deductible) donation to The Love Fund of Wyckoff, 580 Wyckoff Ave., Wyckoff, NJ 07481. If you're a parent with a child in need, or know of a family that could use Love Fund assistance, write the group at the aforementioned address or contact Rev. Bach at 201-891-1782. All discussions are confidential.

"Odd Sundays for Out of Sync Disciples"

Will meet from 10:30—12:00 in the Memorial Room. Join us on any of the following Sundays you are available. Our study and discussion through March will be on the subject of prayer. On January 31, we will study The Lord's Prayer. Questions may be addressed to Phyllis at 201-891-0808 or by email oconnfam@verizon.net.

Free Walk-In Health Program for Wyckoff Residents

Open to all adults residing in Wyckoff every Thursday, except the 5th Thursday, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Cedar Hill Christian Reformed Church, 525 Cedar Hill Avenue. Residents can receive blood pressure monitoring, cardiac, osteoporosis, and diabetes risk factor identification, diet and weight consultation, medical consultations and initial health referrals from a registered nurse. Questions, please contact Denise Romano at 201-891-7000, ext. 304 during business hours.

Whether it's paying medical bills, funding summer camp, buying clothes or even paying for braces, the Wyckoff Love Fund exists to lift up those who have fallen on hard times.



Christian Employment Support Network Needs Your Support

The CESN group includes church members and friends of the church who are looking for employment opportunities and need your support. Brief summaries of their needs are listed below.

Executive with a broad skill set across all aspects of international business leadership, finance and operations. Seeking a **leadership or general management position** in any industry. I have a B.A. in Accounting and M.B.A. in Management. Tom Zitelli - tomzitelli@yahoo.com

Seasoned Human Resources leader in multiple industries seeking full time work in a small or medium sized company. Start up, compliance, and people solutions experience.

Seasoned Office and Project Manager seeking part-time position in a small or medium sized company. Experience spans a range of industries.

Person seeking work as an **Assembly Mechanic**. Has tools and precision instruments.
g.melignano@verizon.net

Person seeking a position that will utilize administrative and technical skills. A dedicated and technically **skilled professional with an administrative background** developed through 18 years of experience as an office manager and admin assistant.
Jeane17623@aol.com / 201-790-4473

Communications and public relations professional, will help you create and execute your consumer and employee communications strategies. Keen expertise in speaking to ethnic and international audiences.

Crossroad XXVI A Retreat for Women

Friday – Saturday,
April 16 – 17, at the Harvey
Cedars Conference Center, on
Long Beach Island, NJ.

“Hot Topics” include: End of Life, Bad Girls of the Bible, Helping Your Church Go Green, Forgiveness, and Spiritual Journaling.

Watch for more information and registration forms.

If you can help, please contact the person listed above or Karen Riether @ kriether@gmail.com to make the connections. Your support would be greatly appreciated.

Fellowship Events for all Ages Scheduled

Family Movie Night

On Saturday, February 13, join us at 5:00 p.m. for pizza, popcorn and the story of "Pony" a young and over-eager goldfish who wishes she were human. An RSVP to Kat Naumann, katn@wyckoffreformed.org, for this family-friendly event would be very helpful.

Il Riformaré Dinner will be held on Thursday, February 11.

Please join us for an evening of fine, Italian dining, entertainment and fellowship. Reservations are required. We encourage you to get together with family and friends to make a group reservation. Tables will be set for parties of 8-10; small groups will be combined for seating as appropriate. Please see Billy during coffee hour for more info.

Chili Cook-Off and Super Bowl Party

Sunday February 7th will be our annual chili cook-off and Super Bowl party. The cook-off will begin at 5:00 PM with both an adult and youth division. The coveted "Bent Fork" trophies (seen at right) will again be awarded to the winners. The money raised will go to our youth program. There is no charge, but you will vote for your favorite chili by putting money in a cup in front of each contestant's chili.

Come and let the food and the fellowship warm you. If you're staying for the Super Bowl, please bring snacks and a beverage to share for the party to follow.



Beware of Terrorist Groups in Church

Latest news reports are that five terrorist cell groups have been operating in many of our churches. They have been identified as: Bin Sleepin, Bin Arguin, Bin Fightin, Bin Complainin, and Bin Missin.

Their leader, Lucifer Bin Workin, trained these groups to destroy the Body of Christ. The plan is to come into the church disguised as Christians and to work within the church to discourage, disrupt, and destroy.

However, there have been reports of a sixth group. A tiny cell known by the name Bin Prayin is actually the only effective counter terrorism force in the church. Unlike other terrorist cells, the Bin Prayin team does not blend in with whoever and whatever comes along.

Bin Prayin does whatever is needed to uplift and encourage the Body of Christ. We have noticed

that the Bin Prayin cell group has different characteristics than the others. They have Bin Watchin, Bin Waitin, Bin Fastin, and Bin Longin for their Master, Jesus Christ, to return.

NO CHURCH IS EXEMPT! However, you can spot them if you bin lookin and bin goin.

Review of the Life and Spiritual Health of WRC

Each year the Elders of the church are asked to review the life and spiritual health of the congregation. What follows are their answers to the questions asked in the Annual Consistorial Report to Classis.

- a. How have our commitments to discipleship, leadership and mission contributed to our congregational health and vitality?
- Our commitment to hands-on ministry as seen in our involvement with: North Side Food Pantry, Habitat for Humanity, Youth Mission Trip, Confirmation mentoring, small groups and adult education classes, Vacation Bible School, Bethlehem Village, Variety Show, Fashion Show, town-wide Christmas Caroling, "Dinner with Dickens," the Holiday Fair, and other activities that engage the congregation in shared fellowship and tasks.

- b. What other commitments and processes have helped us become more vital this year?
 - We have been working at being intentionally outward focused through: Genesis, Nursery School, Youth Fellowship events, community forums, "Churches on the Grow," and surviving our budget cuts.

- c. What two or three specific goals might we set this year to help us more intentionally live

out the call to discipleship, leadership and mission?

1. Intentionally embracing technology to improve our communication to the congregation and the community. In particular;
 - a. setting up an automated phone message system to inform the congregation of important news
 - b. setting up the nursery so that the attendants can hear or even see the worship services.
 - c. Work on making our worship spaces and education building more technologically advanced to improve and enhance communication.
2. Implementing the wisdom and ideas that emerge from involvement with "Churches on the Grow" and through Pastor Jim's Missional Journey group.
3. Deepening our commitment to discipleship and adjusting to the needs of the congregation, especially our young adults.
 - d. At the present moment, what are two or three concerns of our church?
 1. That our finances will meet our goals.
 2. Keeping in touch with and honoring our older members.
 3. Determining the best times and places for our worship services.

How have our commitments to discipleship, leadership and mission contributed to our congregational health and vitality?

