

The Reformer

The Reformed Church of Port Ewen
Reverend Brian Steadman—Pastor



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Inside this Issue

<i>Red Throated Loon</i>	2
<i>"Yellow Pages"</i>	3
<i>Prayer List</i>	3
<i>Pie Baking Contest</i>	4
<i>Stewardship Moment</i>	5
<i>Annual Meeting</i>	6
<i>Calendar of Events</i>	6
<i>Mission of the Month</i>	7
<i>Birthdays and Anniversaries</i>	7
<i>Christmas Wishes</i>	7
<i>The Back Pew</i>	8
<i>Movies with Spirit</i>	8
<i>Poinsettia orders</i>	9
<i>Dorcas Society News</i>	9
<i>December Lectionary</i>	10
<i>Nativity scene</i>	10
<i>Dec '25 Calendar</i>	11
<i>Coloring Page</i>	back

"Advent...is a series of events designed not to delay the celebration of Christmas, but to enhance it. It's a kind of delayed gratification that culminates in...a satisfaction that is all the richer for the waiting." - Joan Chittister, Benedictine nun, theologian, author

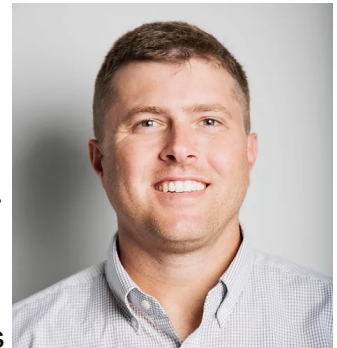
The approximately four-week season of Advent starts the new church year, preparing the people of God for the celebrations of Christmas and Epiphany. The word advent means "coming." This is the season when we remember Jesus' first coming and the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. We also anticipate his coming again. Jesus' resurrection inaugurated a new era in which sin is defeated, but until he returns, this world continues experience the effects of sin. Along with creation, we yearn for the day when Christ comes again to complete his work of redemption once and for all for all time (Romans 8:22-23). Advent teaches us to look forward with hope.

It follows that the mood of the season is of longing, expectation and waiting. The color purple is used because of its association with repentance, preparation and sacrifice. As a season of longing, the cry and prayer of Advent is taken from Revelation 22:20: "Come, Lord Jesus, come!" It is the cry of those who have experienced the tyranny of injustice in a world under the curse of sin. It is the cry of those who still have hope of deliverance because they believe in a God who is faithful to his promise to renew all things by his love. It is the cry that sums up our deepest desires.

Of course, Scripture teaches us that we need redemption from our broken world because we broke it! Advent calls us to wait and prepare for Jesus' return by repenting. We are to turn away from the false hopes and desires that twist our hearts and break our relationships and world. We are to turn toward Jesus, who frees us so that we may serve one another in grace and truth. Just as John the Baptist was born to prepare the way for Jesus' first coming, we are given to each other in the church to encourage each other and challenge the world around us to prepare for his coming again.

So, what do we exactly do during Advent? We wait and prepare by re-committing ourselves to the Christian practices, especially prayer. We learn to pray "Come, Lord Jesus" with new urgency. We offer God our desires, hopes, fears and laments. We enter this time to cultivate patience and new hope. Because Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again. Amen, Alleluia!

Brian's Birding New Additions October and November
Red Throated Loon



The Red-throated Loon

An Overview of One of North America's Most Distinctive Waterbirds

Introduction

The Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*) is a striking waterbird known for its elegant appearance, distinctive call, and unique breeding habits. It is the smallest and most widely distributed member of the loon family, found across the northern parts of North America, Europe, and Asia.



Physical Description

The Red-throated Loon is easily recognized during the breeding season by its slender build, gray head, and a prominent reddish throat patch that gives the species its name. Its back is finely patterned with white spots on a dark background, and the underparts are white. In non-breeding plumage, the bird loses the red throat and becomes more uniformly gray and white.

Habitat and Range

This species breeds in the Arctic and subarctic regions, favoring tundra lakes and ponds. During the winter, Red-throated Loons migrate to coastal waters, often found along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of North America, as well as in northern Europe and Asia. Unlike other loons, it is frequently seen in shallow inshore waters rather than deep inland lakes.

Behavior and Diet

The Red-throated Loon is known for its distinctive wailing or yodeling calls, especially during the breeding season. It is an agile swimmer and diver, feeding primarily on fish, but it also eats crustaceans and aquatic insects. This species is unique among loons in that it can take off from land or water with relative ease, due to its lighter body and more powerful flight.

Breeding and Nesting

Red-throated Loons typically nest close to water, creating simple nests from local vegetation. Both parents share the responsibility of incubating the eggs and caring for the young. The chicks are precocial, able to swim soon after hatching, and are often carried on the adults' backs for safety.

Conservation Status

While the Red-throated Loon is classified as a species of Least Concern by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), its populations are affected by factors such as habitat loss, oil spills, and disturbances from human activities. Conservation efforts focus on protecting breeding and wintering habitats and monitoring population trends.

Interesting Facts

The Red-throated Loon is sometimes called the "Red-throated Diver" in Europe.

It is the only loon species that regularly carries out short flights between feeding and nesting sites during the breeding season.

This loon's call is often described as haunting and is a signature sound of northern wilderness areas.

Conclusion

The Red-throated Loon is a remarkable bird that plays an important role in northern aquatic ecosystems. Its adaptability, striking appearance, and unique behaviors make it a favorite among birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts alike.

R.C.P.E. Yellow Pages

Data at your fingertips

Prayer Chain

Proverbs 15:29

"The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous."

We amplify this power of prayer when we pray together.

To activate the chain for you or someone else, call Katherine Kinsch at 338-6378. That day, a team will be praying for you. Confidentiality pledged.

Consistory Meets

*The 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM
Meetings open--call 331-2782 for agenda space.*

ELDERS

Matt Van Aken

Ray Wells

Linda McCarthy

DEACONS

Colleen Sutton

Tom Gallagher

Monica Kelbaugh



(Prayers will stay on for one month unless notified otherwise)

World — Prayers for our country, troubled areas of our world, Israel's conflict, the Middle East, the innocent Palestinians, all of the people attacked in Israel, people of Ukraine, world peace, political leaders, a solution for the refugee crisis, for all the homeless.

Church Worldwide — Religious persecution in Bangladesh, the persecuted Church (China, Nigeria, North Korea).

RCA — Sudan Mission, Oman Protestant Church and Bode family, Al-Amada Ctr.

Mid-Hudson Classis — Rev. Ann & Ron Rost, Bob Vanderlaan.

Petitions of healing, protection, and deliverance — Angelica Falcinelli, Charlie Morgan, Cindy Raftery, Gary Van Aken, Sr., David Wise, Matthias Lamb, Jeb Saracino.

Church Family — Irma, Charlie Harries, Harry McCarthy, Jim Hadley, Shannon Goodrich, Beverly Sickler, Rev. Linda & Nick Miles.

Homebound/nursing homes/institutions — Bea Hogan.

Grieving — Family & friends of: Carol Spahn.



First Ever RCPE Pie Bake-Off!



The Pies



Winner! Bev Gallagher



Set Up



Judging



Enjoying



Repeat? Absolutely!

Stewardship Moment

Day 22 – Being rich toward God.

Luke 12:16-21

And He told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop.

He thought to himself. “What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.”

Then he said, “This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of good things

laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and ne merry.”

But, God said to him, “You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?” This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things.

for himself, but, is not rich toward God.”

In Luke Chapter 12:16-21, Jesus teaches this parable about a prosperous rich man. This man was so well off that he had to figure out where he was going to be able to fit all his crops and goods. So, he says to himself, “I have so much food that the barns I have can’t hold it all. I guess I’ll just have to tear down my barns and build new ones.” The rich man thought that once he stored up enough wealth that he would be able to depend on that wealth and live an easy and carefree life. You know how God responded? He answered, “You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?” And Jesus sums it all up by saying that this is how it will happen for the person who stores up things for themselves; but is not rich toward God.

Now I don’t know about you; but that story really hits me. We so often forget all about God because we’re thinking so much about how to take care of ourselves. The way we handle our treasure, our energy and our time really reflect this.

Be honest, now – do you find yourself (as I do, more often than not) trying to figure out how much you “have to” give to God to just get by?

But that’s not what God made us for. You see; He gave His own Son to save us. The more we dwell on that, the more our hearts will overflow with gratitude. God has been so rich to us in the Gospel and while we can’t repay Him for what He did, we can live gratefully in response. Whatever it is you have, go ahead, live richly toward God.

Today’s Generosity Challenge:

In today’s vernacular we don’t build bigger barns, we “move up” to a bigger house, a nicer car, more extravagant vacations. But is that what God wants you to do? How can you stop the upward trend in the big things and small things? After all, if we are striving to a Generous Life, we need to be scaling down to bless others. Please journal your ideas for scaling down here at <http://GenerousLife.net/Day22>.

* Michael L. Stickler, *A Journey to Generosity (41 Days to a Generous Life)* the Visiongrouppltd. 2013. Pages 55-56

• "Christmas, my child, is love in action." — Dale Evans

Annual Congregational Meeting- And Luncheon!

Join us after worship **Dec. 21** for our annual luncheon and meeting. We'll hear what has been happening in our church life as well as what is planned for the future.

Lunch will be a spiral ham, but we need sides and desserts from our amazing RCPE cooks. There will be a sign up sheet in Fairbrother Hall, or you can contact Cheri in the office @ 845-331-2782 or office@rcpe.info.

Thank you- *Linda and Colleen*



The Popularity of Nativity Scenes in the United States

Nativity scenes, which depict the birth of Jesus Christ, became popular in the United States during the 19th century. The tradition was brought to America by European immigrants, particularly those from Italy, Germany, and other predominantly Catholic countries, who had long celebrated Christmas with these displays. By the mid-to-late 1800s, nativity scenes started appearing in American churches, homes, and public spaces, especially as Christmas became more widely celebrated as both a religious and cultural holiday in the U.S. Their popularity grew throughout the 20th century, becoming a familiar part of the American holiday landscape.



Today, nativity scenes are commonly found in a variety of settings across the United States during the Christmas season, reflecting both religious tradition and artistic expression.

RCPE Calendar of Events

December 2025

6th Christmas Wishes Wrapping Party

24th 7:30pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

28th 10am Christmas Carol Sing Service

January 2026

1st Happy New Year

The *Mission of the Month* for **December** will support **My Kingston Kids, Inc.**



Kingston Kids
Early Learning Centre

This not-for-profit organization was created to assist parents in providing the children of Kingston, NY and beyond, with the support needed to bring out the best in their kids, as well as others. This is done by providing children with exciting activities, engaging & fun-loving events, interactive educational tools

and appropriate entertainment.

If you feel called to donate to this mission, please write checks to The Reformed Church of Port Ewen and write "December M.O.M." on the memo line. Online giving is also available.

Note : the Mission of the Month for November collected \$665 for HVNCVR

December Birthdays

5 Mike Bradley
13 Jessie Steadman
14 Georgia Steadman
20 Laura Van Aken
21 Jerimiah Harries
26 Harry McCarthy



January Birthdays

2 Linda Bresnahan-McCarthy
4 Rick Whitaker
12 Ann Beukelman
16 Vera Rubeo
26 Ray Wells

December Anniversaries

13 Jessie and Brian Steadman



Christmas Volunteer Opportunity!

Join us in spreading some holiday cheer! On Saturday, December 6 from 12:00-2:00 pm the RCPE will be wrapping gifts for community families at Christmas Wishes of Ulster County. This year they are located at the Hudson Valley Mall. Use either the mall entrance next to NCG Movie Theatre or behind Dick's Sporting Goods next to the hair salon.

We would like a count of how many volunteers we have coming, please let Matt or Paula Van Aken know if you plan to attend (mvanaken@thercpe.org). There will also be a sign up sheet in Fairbrother Hall on Sunday, November 30th. Everyone that participated last year had a fun time!



The Back Pew Clean Humor & God's Truth



MOVIES WITH SPIRIT

Dec. 20, WAITRESS: THE MUSICAL (2023), New Connexions United Methodist Church, 1 Grove St. New Paltz — This heartwarming musical comedy, filmed during a live Broadway performance, follows Jenna Hunterson (Sara Bareilles), a pie-maker and waitress stuck in an unfulfilling marriage in a small town. When a baking contest in a nearby county offers her a chance at escape, Jenna fights to reclaim a long-forgotten part of herself. Through the support of her fellow waitresses and an unexpected romance, Jenna finds the courage to take a long-abandoned dream off the shelf. *"The perfect treat this holiday season."* — Tania Hussain, Collider. *"Captures the energy previously only experienced by theatergoers in person."* — Fred Topel, United Press International. *"And now I am hungry for pie."* — Frank J. Avella, Edge Media Network. *Not Rated.*



Dear Friends,

Wishing you all a joyful and blessed Christmas! As we celebrate the birth of our Savior, may His love fill your hearts with peace, hope, and happiness. I'm grateful for our fellowship and the warmth of our church family, and I pray that this season brings you comfort, togetherness, and the reminder of God's incredible grace.

May the spirit of Christmas shine in your homes and guide you into a new year filled with faith and blessings. Merry Christmas, and may God's love be with you always!

With love and gratitude,

Kathy and Mike Kinsch



- "It is Christmas in the heart that puts Christmas in the air." — W.T. Ellis



Poinsettia Order Form

_____ @ \$ 8.50 ea. = _____

In Honor / Memory of

(Please write clearly)

Given by:

Please place in offering plate, or give to Colleen Sutton by December 14th. Please check box below indicating whether you would like to take your poinsettia home after Christmas or donate to the church.

Take Home

☐

Donate to Church

☐

Dorcas Society

Meeting

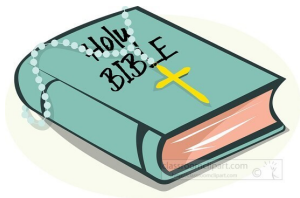


The Dorcas Society is a women's Christian organization that was established in the early 1800's. It was originally founded to provide clothing for the poor but with time expanded to address almost any church or local community need. The name is based on a woman in the New Testament named Dorcas, who was known for her good works and charitable deeds. Her story is also notable for her miraculous resurrection by the Apostle Peter after her death. The RCPE has had an active Dorcas Society for over 100 years. However, over the last few years their membership and charitable activities have declined. We are

working on revamping the RCPE Dorcas Society into a vital resource for our church and eventually our community. If you are interested in becoming a member of our team or just want to learn more about our ideas and plans, we welcome you to join us on **December 16th at noon** in the church. We plan on having a potluck lunch with the meeting. Please let Beverly Gallagher (845)-729-7171 or Diane Bradley (846) 382-6920 know if you would like to be included in the lunch.



Lectionary Scripture Readings for December 2025



First reading And Psalm	Alternate first reading	Second reading	Gospel

Dec 7, 2025	Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19; Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12
Dec. 14, 2025	Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11
Dec. 21, 2025	Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25
Dec. 24, 2025	Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14
Dec. 25, 2025	Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-4; John 1:1-14
Dec. 28, 2025	Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23

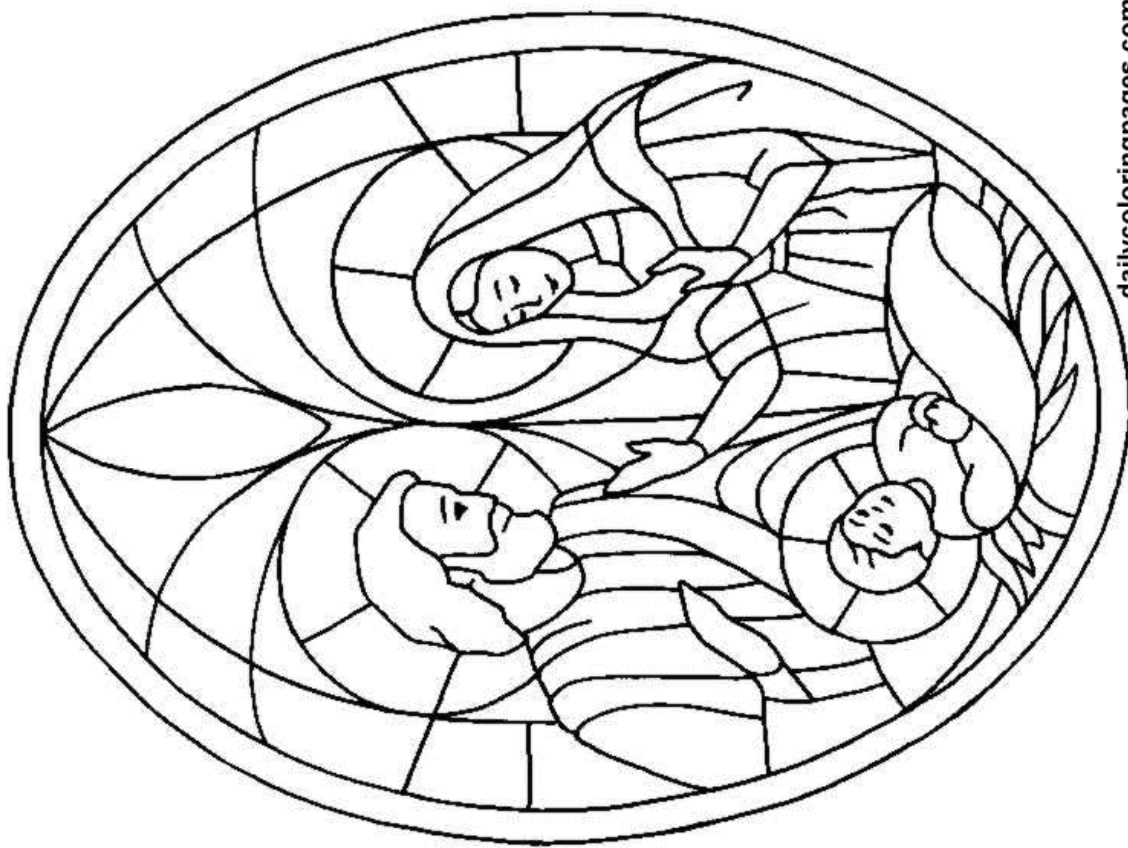
Oh Come, Let Us Adore the New Born King!

Every year our Nativity set adorns the Chancel as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior. This year, take a moment to relish the extraordinary detail of the figures which were skillfully crafted by Jean Wells. We are blest to have this wonderful gift from such a faithful woman.



December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 5-8 pm AA (FH)	3 12:30 pm Bible Study (Lib) 4-9:30 pm SCA (FH) 7-7:45 pm Contemplative Prayer	4	5	6 6:30-10:30 pm Hudson Valley Comm Dance (FH)
7 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am Children's Church	8	9 9 am—2 pm Woodstock Weavers 5-8 pm AA (FH) 7:00 pm Consistory Mtg. (Lib)	10 12:00 pm Bible Study Webinar (Lib) 4-9:30 pm SCA (FH) 7-7:45 pm Contemplative Prayer	11	12	13 8 am—8 pm Private (FH)
14 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am Children's Church	15	16 12 pm Dorcas Meeting 5-8 pm AA (FH)	17 12:30 pm Bible Study (Lib) 4-9:30 pm SCA (FH) 7-7:45 pm Contemplative Prayer	18	19 5-9:00 pm ANA (FH)	20
21 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am Children's	22	23 5-8 pm AA (FH)	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 7 pm Worship	25 CHRISTMAS REFORMER DEADLINE	26	27
28 1ST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am Children's Church 5-8 pm AA (FH)	29	30 5-8 pm AA (FH)	31 4-9:30 pm SCA (FH)			



December 2025 Reformer

Our facilities are handicapped accessible

We're on the net!
Therpcpe.org

(845) 331-2782 Church Office
(845) 331-2782 Church Hall
E-mail: office@rcpe.info

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