



## FROM THE DESK OF ....

**REV. ANDY RIENSTRA**



### JOY TO THE WORLD

Most of us have a favorite Christmas Carol. Mine is "Joy To The World." I like the music and the words. I liked it as a child and I still do. I even like it more than ever at this point in my life. Perhaps I have a better understanding of genuine joy?

Joy can be easily misunderstood. When we are young we tend to confuse it with excitement, pleasure, fun and happiness. All are related to joy, but are more temporary and less satisfying. C. S Lewis in his autobiography, "*Surprised by Joy*," maintains that when we taste excitement, pleasure and fun we are never satisfied. We always want more. By contrast genuine joy provides a definite sense of fulfillment.

We celebrate joy at Christmas because of God's gift of Jesus. People can be joyful because in Jesus God came to live among us and within us. In various places in Scripture joy is defined in terms of God's presence in the deepest resources of our being. Elizabeth tells Mary (Luke 1:41-44) **that she was filled with the Holy Spirit, and the baby within her leaped for joy.** In Acts 13:52 we read **"and the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."**

As we get ready for Christmas I would like to challenge all of us to be people flowing over with joy. It will be a wonderful witness to what Christmas is all about. The renowned Presbyterian preacher Jonathan Edwards insisted that the one tell tale sign between people of true religious experience, and those who were counterfeit, was their joy. Joy was the dead giveaway that God was present in a person's life.

That doesn't mean that we have to be hyper ecstatic and always cheerful. In fact many of us may have good reason to feel depressed and burdened as we approach this season of Advent and Christmas. Life has been hard on us. Some of us are suffering from deteriorating health. Others are having difficulty with relationships. We may be emotionally impacted because people we love are in physical and physical pain and we don't know how to help. We are all somewhat stressed and saddened because of the constant noise of war and the fear of terror. Regardless it is possible to experience a down deep awareness that all is well because the peace and presence of God can come to life within us. It doesn't mean that we always have a smile on our face (although more smiles would be nice), but it does mean that we disclose an anchor of hope within that can't be destroyed by the uncertainties and disappointments of life in a broken and troubled world.

In a Journal to which I subscribe, Doris Donnelly wrote this about joy: "A friend of mine once said of joy; 'Equipped with it, I am able to accomplish many jobs that look too difficult or tiresome to be done. I can also cope with difficult people. I am able to endure disquietudes and discomforts with long-suffering cheer that is not my native disposition.' Joy then is not the sentiment of people who have lost their marbles and their hold on reality. Nor is it a pious wish, but rather a permanent, all-pervasive character of the Christian, irrepressibly active, filled with inward satisfaction and outgoing benediction." (WEAVINGS, November/December 93, p.10)

As we sing "Joy to The World" this season may we do so with that kind of joy! Let us face the future with its mystery and uncertainties possessing a firm hope that God in Christ is ever with us and within us.



**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7PM.** For Christmas Eve, Saturday, **December 24th** our Worship Service will begin at 7:00 pm. On this solemn yet joyful occasion, our emphasis this year will be on the Joyful Aspect. Please come and rejoice and bring friends as well!





## All Are Invited to Our Advent Brunch Dec. 11

Everyone is invited on **December 11th** to enjoy an Advent Brunch following service in Demarest Hall (our gym). Invitations will be sent to our college students, Rutgers Protestant Campus Ministry friends, Elijah's Promise neighbors, and the New Brunswick Theological Seminary community as well. We will probably need to have an idea of how many people may come, so sign up on the bulletin board or call the Church Office to RSVP.

We look forward to a time of some good fellowship. If possible we may have a speaker from Rutgers Protestant Campus Ministries with us, and a couple favorite Advent hymns or carols will be enjoyed. So, don't miss it....Sunday Dec. 11.

## Children's Christmas Program

The children of our church will be helping us worship on Sunday **December 18th**. This will be our time for the children to share with us their Advent and Christmas program. Even if you have not been in Sunday School lately, you are welcome to be part of this worship. If possible try to be with us in Sunday School on Dec. 4 and Dec. 11 when we will be rehearsing for the Dec. 18 service.

## Consistory Notes

At the November meeting of Consistory, Rev. David Risseeuw, our Classis Supervising Minister, briefly discussed the issue of "financial realities" for Second Reformed Church when the time comes that someone responds to a call to serve as minister of SRC.

Rev. Risseeuw advised that our consistory and congregation will need to think very practically and hard about the financial commitment needed to attract a minister to our church. He was able to provide us with the information given below.

The following is based on the 2006 salary guidelines of the RCA Classis of New Brunswick. These figures assume a full time pastor with 10-15 years of ministry experience:

|                         |                           |                             |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Cash Salary:</b>     | <b>\$ 42,400 - 44,800</b> | <b>Housing Allowance</b>    | <b>\$ 17,000 - 22,000</b> |
| <b>Auto Allowance</b>   | <b>\$ 5,000 - 7,000</b>   | <b>Pension Annuity</b>      | <b>\$ 6,500 - 7,000</b>   |
| <b>Health Insurance</b> | <b>\$ 13,800 - 14,500</b> | <b>Continuing Education</b> | <b>\$ 1,000 - 1,500</b>   |

**sub-total \$ 85,700 - \$ 96,800**

### **PLUS 1/2 of Social Security.**

Representatives of Consistory will be working with our Treasurer Edward Winant to analyze our financial affairs as we approach the end of 2005, and anticipate financial realities and demands in 2006 and beyond. It will be helpful if our church members are also considering these issues and ask pertinent questions of consistory members as they arise.

*Phyllis Beals*

## For God Loves a Cheerful Giver

Hopefully, by now you received the Stewardship packet prepared during October and November. The Deacons and Stewardship Committee of SRC ask you to reflect on the blessings in your life. For all that we have been given is God's. When we make our offerings to God through church we are giving back only a small fraction of what is already his.

Please make a pledge for offering in 2006. When you complete a pledge form with your commitment for giving, it enables Consistory to plan realistically for 2006. Please read the article "Consistory Notes" as it may help you understand one issue that we will grapple with in 2006, and definitely has to do with our church's finances.

When you complete and return a pledge form with your commitment for giving, it enables Consistory to plan realistically for 2006. You may mail your pledge to church or you may place it in the offering plates during worship.

Thank you *Stewardship Committee*





## Greening of our Church

We will be decorating our church with Christmas wreaths on Saturday, **December 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Kathleen and Tom Williamson will be heading this festive venture. If you would like to help make our church look beautiful during the advent season, please contact Kathleen at 732 605-9345 ASAP.

## Women's Lunch

Join together with the women's group on Tuesday, **December 13<sup>th</sup>** at 12:00 pm for Christmas stories, poetry and memories. Bring Christmas cookies to share over tea after your bag lunch.

Ellie Holz will be doing devotions and Helen Sandor will bring one of her delicious casseroles to share! Noel, Noel!

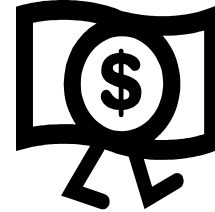
## Clean-up Kits

The Second Reformed women's group are taking donations for "clean-up" kits. These kits will hold cleaning supplies for people in need in New Orleans and other areas in the US hit by Hurricane Katrina. Each kit or bucket costs \$45, this includes shipping. If you would like to donate a monetary gift or need more information, please contact Helen Sandor or Martha Palmer.



## Year to Date information: Month Ending November 2005

Income received: 189,599.94  
Expenses Incurred: \$169,097.34  
Pledge commitments: \$42,356.88  
Pledges received: \$43,003.01



## This Year's Christmas

### Offering goes to.....


....**Reformed Church World Service**. Are you looking for a meaningful gift, a new family tradition, or a way to make a difference this Christmas? RCWS is offering 3 Christmas gift projects that will help bring hope to children in Africa and the US. Your monetary gift will help support one or more of the following projects:

1. Goat project in Niger (\$35 for 1 goat),
2. Heart-to-Heart Kids Kits for US hurricane survivors (each kit is \$25)
3. Feeding program for one malnourished child under the age of five in Malawi for one year (\$50)

You can use your Christmas envelope that you received with your offering boxes or earmark your check "Gift of Hope" and place it in any offering plate during December.

# DECEMBER



  
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## December Ushers

4—Communion—Helmut Horr, Glenn Orban  
Curly Boelhouwer & Hap Harris

11—The Howarth Family

18— Kathleen Williamson, Dawn Harris, Helen Pallay & John O'Shea

24—Christmas Eve— Curly Boelhouwer, Helmut Horr, Hap Harris & Steve Sandor

25—Christmas Day—To Be Announced

## December Coffee Hosts

4—TBA

11—Advent Brunch

18—The Winant Family & Helen Erdey

25—TBA



### Do you Possess Worship Gifts?

In an effort to keep our services varied and dynamic, the worship committee is looking for people who would like to participate in the services on Sunday mornings. Do you enjoy reading scripture? Would you like to share a message with the children for the Children's Sermon? Are you gifted in writing prayers that you would like to share with the congregation? We'd love to hear from you!

There are sign up sheets on the bulletin board in the hall. Please sign up for any activity that you are willing to provide. The worship Committee or Rev. Rienstra will then get in touch with you about when we can use your gift of service.



THANKS GOES TO THE YOUTH GROUP KIDS FOR HELPING TO RAKE LEAVES IN THE BEARDSLEE YARD LAST MONTH!!! YOUR HELP IS GREATLY APPRECIATED