



The Open Door - January 2023

*The Reformed Church of Bushkill
5969 Milford Road, East Stroudsburg, PA 18302
(570) 588-6773 / bshklch@ptd.net (E-mail)
www.bushkillchurch.org (Website)*

“Striving to Do What Christ Tells Us through Scripture”

We will not be serving breakfast on January 1st.
The breakfast buffet will resume in February.

Elders and Deacons for 2023

At our recent annual congregational meeting, we elected Elders and Deacons and also answered questions regarding the budget for 2023. Copies of the budget are still available in the narthex.

Theresa Taylor and Pete Newman ran unopposed for the two-year terms for Elders.

Juanita Rivera was elected and Yvonne Rodriguez and Wayne Taylor were re-elected as Deacons for two-year terms.

They will be ordained and installed on Sunday, January 8, 2023.

The Book of Church Order of the Reformed Church in America requires that we mention that if anyone knows of a Scriptural reason they shouldn't be ordained and installed and continue to serve, please contact Pastor Jim (jtvrcb@ptd.net; 588-6773).

Articles for the February *Open Door* are due by Monday, January 16th.
Please e-mail them directly to the church office, bshklch@ptd.net, or leave them in the church office mailbox in the narthex.

The Last Four Sermons

Hello everyone,

The last four sermons we talked about doubt and being restored, “the road to redemption”. So since, right now I just have the two, let's start with doubt. We talked about doubting Thomas. When and where are you like that in your prayer life, your walk with Christ? We are told to pray without doubt and just because it isn't the answer we wanted, we shouldn't look at it as unanswered prayer. What we really should be asking God for is whatever the outcome, that it may let us be content with it.

As I don't like to repeat (well maybe I do), just as it says in Psalm 139:16, all of our days and have been ordained and already written in His book, so the outcome is going to be what it is going to be.

I think we sometimes expect too much from God. After all He's God, but He will only give us what we need and He will teach us along the way in parables just as the disciples were taught, so are we being taught. That is why sometimes we have those doubts because we aren't getting the whole picture. We need, just as I was told the other day, to be still, quiet and listen but remember as you do, that you're really bringing God into it. In other words, when you talk to God, I believe the listening comes while you're talking to Him at the same time. When we talk to each other we can't do that because then we don't hear.

When you think about sermons they really connect themselves, if you think about it and dig into them as we should. We need to just learn how to dig and dig and then dig some more.

I think Jesus would say "ye of little faith"; He said that to the disciples, are we any better? See how this first sermon relates to the second sermon, "Becoming New".

It's all in there, this is how we begin our new beginning, our becoming new by doing this kind of work for each other. We have to learn to relate to God and His Word and if we can't relate to Him, how are we going to begin to be the new me or the new you (doubt)? So many times we are afraid to show or speak about how we interact with God to each other for the fear of being wrong when talking about Him or being unsure about what is right. Look, we all learn from each other. Why do think it says in His Word to not stop meeting together? There is so much going on at those times and I really don't think we take full advantage of it. I believe we don't dwell enough on His Word or think about each other's words enough to give them any thought with God. Why do I know this? Maybe it's because we don't share those kinds of conversations with each other because again, we are sheltered or protective of ourselves.

Do you know the song that says the walls came tumbling down? It's our walls, the ones we built up over the YEARS! That protective covering. But when we are covered by His love that protective covering should be coming off or wearing thinner each and every time. Then we need to ask Him for the things we want from Him, like the boldness to speak about Him to each other or people you don't know. How brave is that!

I was told once when I said I don't know why God has given me the insight or wisdom or the boldness that I now have, the person said, "Well, did you ask for that"? And I said yes. There you go, so plain and simple and right in front of my face. I couldn't see that until I shared it with someone else (thank you Elba). I never thought about it that way.

The road to the new me, the road to the new you, may you start asking God for the things you want to understand and how His Word pertains in your life today.

Christmas and the Cross --

The beginning and the end. When you think about this baby boy coming in only to die, it puts a whole new spin on it. It is what was needed then and yet today, not that Christ is suffering today, but you could look at it that way as well because after all, it was our sin that put Him on the cross. Our sins that were the nails, the hammer, the spear, the crown of thorns, the whipping lashes, that tore His skin. This is what Mary's baby boy was born for; to tell us that there is a better way, a better life and the promise of life after death.

Christ came so we could become new and live a better life by honoring God and loving Him. It took a child to show us what God was willing to do. He gave His only Son so that we might learn and that we might live as long as we believe in Him. What a journey it is to walk with Christ from His birth to His sacrifice. So sad but

yet so glorious. May we be able to show the love that Christ showed even by a smidgen. What a change it would be; no judging, no criticism, reading the book, not just the cover. So when we look at someone, the first thing we should be doing is bring Christ in with us. This actually becomes as easy as breathing when we practice it. "Working on becoming new in Christ"; the power of the Cross.

As I stated a few sentences earlier, what a difference the world would be if we showed the love Christ had for us. The Cross has that power as it was stated in Pastor Jim's sermon; there are no boundaries that the Cross of Christ cannot cross.

What a power it holds; the love, "God's Love". It all begins with that, so much meaning, so much to take in, and the way to become new.

The Cross says it all! Thank you Lord!

I wonder what the next two sermons are going to give me so that I can share my thoughts with everyone

Amen and God bless,
Elder Bob Craver

If you have a mid-week prayer request for our e-mail prayer team please e-mail Jen Schoonover, schooent@ptd.net or call/text her at 570-534-5752.

Financial Report - MaryAnn Conza

11/01/22 to 11/30/22	01/01/22 to 11/30/22
Income \$ 16,621.34	Income \$189,888.13
Expenses <u>18,308.84</u>	Expenses <u>181,076.55</u>
(\$ 1,687.50)	\$ 8,811.58

We received \$14.69 from AmazonSmile this month from members of our Congregation that listed the Reformed Church of Bushkill as their charitable organization when purchasing from Amazon.

The offering envelopes are in the narthex. If you were not assigned an envelope in 2022 and would like envelopes in 2023, please contact either myself or Roseann VanWhy at the end of the service or you can call me at (570) 588-6095. Also, contact us if you no longer wish to receive your assigned envelopes. If you are unable to pick up your envelopes, you should contact the church office, (570) 588-6773.

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers -- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." **1 Peter 5:2-3**

Blessings to you all,
MaryAnn

The *Our Daily Bread* devotional is always available in the narthex -- feel free to take a copy and some extras for your family or friends.

If you've been thinking about being an Elder or a Deacon in the future, Bob Craver will be holding a class in late January.

This class will help you examine your discernment with God's guidance . See Bob Craver to let him know you'd like to attend so he can plan more effectively.

Please bring in your Mignosi's Foodtown receipts for 2022; we'll be wrapping up the year later in January. Mignosi's generously donates 1% of the receipts minus several ineligible items. There is a box in the narthex for the receipts.
Thank you!

Reminder:

There is a Men's Prayer Group that meets every Wednesday at 9:00 AM.
All men are welcome.

The Caring Community of Needleworkers meet every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month in the blue room downstairs.

There are about 65 used candles from the Christmas Eve service.
If anyone would like them for a craft project, please see Mary or call the office, 588-6773.

The mailboxes still have a lot of Christmas cards. Please check when you are here; you may have some addressed to you.