

FEBRUARY 2026

The Fisherman

The newsletter of the Reformed Dutch Church Of Claverack



Consistory 2026

Elders

Glenn Holzhauer
Snookie Patterson
Melissa Skoda
Julie Veronezi

Deacons

Louise Bailey
Lloyd Lawrence
Cindy Loucks
Jan Lynch

Staff

Rev. Vanessa Funk
Minister

Andrea Mastrianni
Director of Music

Lynn Oliveri
Custodian

Missionaries

Rev. and Mrs. Brad Kautz
Jicarilla Apache Nation
RCA—Partner in Mission

Ashes to Joy

Excerpt from *Ashes to Joy* -- by **Rev. Dr. Mary Hulst**
www.faithward.org/ashes-to-joy

A few years ago, in early Lent, I posted the following as my Facebook status, "I am brimming full of joy!" My liturgically minded friends quickly weighed in: "Well, stop it! It's Lent," wrote one. "Here, here! Ashes. Death. Sin. Think on these things," wrote another.

It was all in good fun, and my friends made me laugh, but it also points to an odd association with Lent: that this season is anti-joy. That we should indeed sit around in sackcloth and ashes and ponder our sins. And, truth be told, sometimes this is vitally necessary to a thriving spiritual life. One needs to discover the sin that so easily entangles so that one can, with the Spirit's help, shake it off and run the race. Blindness to one's own sin leads to narcissism and arrogance, and to the repeated wounding of others and distancing ourselves from God. There is a reason why we focus on discipline and denial during Lent: it reminds us that this is not about us.

But the people who ordered these liturgical seasons did not want unmitigated sorrow at one's own brokenness to be the focus of Lent. Wisely they made Lent 40 days, but didn't count Sundays. On Sundays we are allowed to enjoy whatever it is we may have given up for the rest of the Lent—drink the wine, eat the chocolate, watch the movie, read the book. On Sundays we are to gather in worship and celebrate the resurrection. On Sundays we are given an intentional reprieve from the heaviness of Lent.

And this is because even in this season of dust and ashes, we are an Easter people. We are people of resurrection, we are people of new life. At our core, we are no longer first identified as sinners. Paul stresses this again and again in his letters: "The old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17). "For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3).

Christ is alive! His rule has begun! *Alleluia. Amen.*

The Reformed Dutch Church of Claverack

Drawer K / 88 Route 9H / Claverack, New York 12513 / 518-851-3811
rdccministry.org

FEBRUARY 2026

Worship Schedule

*Worship starts at 9:30 a.m. in the sanctuary,
followed by coffee hour in the Fellowship hall.*

- Feb. 1** Rev. Vanessa Funk
Sacrament of Holy Communion
- Feb. 8** Rev. Vanessa Funk
- Feb. 15** TBD
- Feb. 18** **Ash Wednesday** - Rev. Vanessa Funk
- Feb. 22** Rev. Vanessa Funk

Lectionary Readings

2/1

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 29;
1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12

2/8

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

Isaiah 58:1-9a; Psalm 112:1-9;
1 Corinthians 2:1-12; Matthew 5:13-20

2/15

Transfiguration Sunday

Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2 or 99;
2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9

2/18

Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12;
Psalm 51:1-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10;
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

2/22

First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7; Psalm 32;
Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

Consistory Meetings

- Orientation Meeting **Saturday 2/7, 10 a.m.**
February Meeting **Saturday 2/21, 10 a.m.**

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

Nancy Rasweiler	2/3
Michael Lennon	2/6
Samantha Steenburn	2/6
Jim Mackerer	2/7
Edward Stone	2/14
Steve Race	2/20
Henry John Theiss	2/21
Karen Case	2/23
Pam Kline	2/25
Shirley Shumsky	2/29

Anniversaries

Melissa & Rick Skoda	2/3
Marylou & Mickey Knoll	2/25



News & Notes

RCW January Meeting Minutes

Officers elected & other business to start the new year

Sunday, January 11, 2026 - 21 women attending

Kim Plass presiding called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m.

An election of officers was held. The slate of officers proposed was:

- Louise Bliss — *President*
- Julie Veronezi — *Secretary*
- Linda Nack — *Treasurer*
- Diane Slusar — *Kitchen Co-Chair*
- Irene Holzhauer — *Kitchen Co-Chair*

A motion was made by Melissa Skoda to accept the slate. The motion was seconded by Snookie Patterson. The motion was carried.

On a recommendation made by the RCW Ad Hoc Committee that met December 29, 2025, a motion was made by Julie Veronezi to use 50% of the annual bazaar income for missions and 50% to be held in reserve for church expenses. The motion was seconded by Mary Lou Knull. The motion was carried.

A motion was made to donate \$5,000 to the Reformed Dutch Church at Claverack's fuel fund by Melissa Skoda. The motion was seconded by Pam Kline. The motion was carried.

The following changes to the signatories for the RCW checking account are: as newly elected treasurer, Linda Nack's name will be added, Donna Lynk Campion's name will be removed, and Shirley Sullivan will remain as a signatory.

Discussion included setting up regular dates for meetings, publishing meeting minutes in the Fisherman, preparing meals for people in need, creating Easter Baskets for shut ins and assisting with Soup fund raising.

A Craft Swap is being planned for April 18. A bake sale will be included on the day of the event and RCW members will be asked to contribute both to the Craft Swap and the bake sale.

Mulhurn Gas will service the stove in the kitchen.

A motion was made by Carolyn Wilber to adjourn. The motion was carried and the meeting was adjourned.

Julie Veronezi, *Secretary*

Next Page: **See a message from the RCW's President**

A Message from the RCW President

To the Women of the RCW,

Thank you to those members who were elected at the January meeting.

Four quarterly business meetings of the Reformed Church Women, have been included in the church calendar. **March 8, June 14, September 13** and **December 13**. Please add these dates to your personal calendars.

At the business meetings, we will, for example, review finances, respond to budget requests, hear plans for ongoing events and fund raisers, and consider ideas for new events. The business meetings are for sharing, and for encouraging participation and fostering togetherness. Chairwomen will carry on as always, with hope that update information will be shared at a business meeting.

“Love only grows by sharing.” -- Brian Tracy, *Motivational Speaker & Author*



Four Women of the Bible Who Make Good Role Models for Us:

- **Mary.** Luke 1:39 “I am the Lord’s SERVANT.”
- In Genesis we read that **Rebekah** demonstrates HOSPITALITY.
- In the book of Ruth 1:4, **Ruth** demonstrates LOYALTY.
- **Hannah** (1 Samuel 1:1-15) demonstrates great FAITH, PRAYER and PRAISE.

Blessings -- Louise Bliss, *President RCW*

Winter Weather Notification



THE DECISION –

When: The night before a forecast of heavy winter weather

Who: The Vice President of consistory and the minister

THE COMMUNICATION –

Who & How:

- The VP of consistory will contact the prayer chain and will call the children’s ministry volunteer head to ask them to contact parents.
- The minister will contact consistory and will post on the church’s Facebook page.
- The secretary of the consistory will email the whole church.

Other Happenings

Ash Wednesday – Agape Meal & Worship Service

Please join us on **Wednesday, February 18**, for our tradition Agape Meal at 6 p.m. -- followed by our Ash Wednesday worship service at 7 p.m. You may bring a cover-dish item for sharing during our fellowship dinner, but it's not required! Come for either dinner and worship, or both -- we would love to see you there!

2025 Annual Reports Due in February

To all committees and organizations: please remember to submit your annual reports for 2025 to the church office by **February 20**.

The data is needed for both the church's comprehensive 2025 report and our *Annual Consistorial Report* to the RCA General Synod.

Bible Study: Reading Revelation Responsibly

Over the next few months, the Wednesday morning Bible Study will be examining *Reading Revelation Responsibly* by Michael J. Gorman. *Reading Revelation Responsibly* is for those who are confused by, afraid of, and/or preoccupied with the book of Revelation. It attempts to put Revelation into its original historic context, make connections to the rest of Scripture, and show its relationship to today's Christian doctrine and practice.



You may join the Bible Study group at any time -- please contact Reverend Vanessa or Jan Dunham for more information, or just drop in during any Wednesday session.

DVD & Soup Sale returns in February

Thank you to all who participated in the January DVD & Soup Sale at the Claverack Free Library. The sale was a SELL-OUT and raised \$570 for our programs.

The next sale is on **Sunday, February 15, 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.** You can help by contributing a soup to sell or purchasing soup during the event. For more information, see Shirley Sullivan or contact the church office.

Join a committee!

Working together through your talents & gifts while making new friends!

Worship -- strives to provide a meaningful worship experience for all, glorifying God and bringing the Word into our midst

Nurture -- assists in providing Christian compassion to those in need of support within our church family and community

Mission -- supports God's mission of love through tangible needs and fundraising

Fellowship -- organizes and sponsors various get-togethers and activities to foster community

Property -- oversees the repair, maintenance, and historical needs of our buildings and grounds

Stewardship -- administering the use of the church's talents and funds in support of God's ministry

Christian Discipleship & Education -- develops and administers educational programs so that all may grow in the love of God

Interested? See a Consistory member or Reverend Vanessa for more information or to get started!



If you would like to **support this newsletter and other good works of the church**, please consider donating by scanning the QR code with your camera app.

We appreciate every donation. Thank you!

Contact Us

The Reformed Dutch Church of Claverack

Rev. Vanessa Funk, Minister

Wednesdays & Thursdays. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

(616) 541-0855

rdccpastor@gmail.com

Church Office Hours

Thursday, 8am - 4pm;

email or call for appointments

(518) 851-3811

office@claverackreformedchurch.org