

Reformed Church of Highland Park
127th Annual Congregational Meeting
May 7th, 2017
Agenda

- Call to Order and Opening Prayer
- Prayers of Thanksgiving and Petition For Our Church 2016-2017
- Appointing Clerk Pro-Tem
- Presentation of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting from May 1, 2016
- Election of Elders and Deacons
- Report from Pastor Seth & Stephanie
- Reports of the Consistorial Committees
 - Faith Development
 - Fellowship
 - Justice and Mercy
 - Property
 - Worship Committee
 - Care
- Stephen Ministry
- Reports from Pastor Henny
- Special Committees & Affiliated Organizations Updates
 - Thrift Shop
 - Women's Sewing Circle
 - Prayer Shawls, Selma
 - Still Waters Anti-Trafficking Report
 - RCHP-AHC
 - Interfaith-RISE (Refugee & Imm. Services and Empowerment)
 - Global Grace Cafe
 - DIRE
 - Churches Improving Communities
 - Church Accomplishing Long Term Recovery
 - Church Based Mental Health Services
 - Neighborcorp
 - Who Is My Neighbor, Inc.
- Statistical Report
- Finance – 2016 End of Year P&L,
2016 Balance Sheet
- Other Business
- Adjournment with Prayer & Benediction

RCHP Annual Meeting May 1, 2016 – Minutes

Call to Order and Opening Prayer: Pastor Seth called the meeting to order at 10:20am with a prayer.

Prayers of Thanksgiving: Church members offered various prayers of thanksgiving for this church over the past year.

Appointing of Clerk Pro-Tem: Renee DiGrigoli was appointed as Clerk Pro-Tem for this meeting.

Presentation and Approval of Minutes: Pastor Stephanie presented the minutes of the 2015 meeting and raised a motion to approve. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Election of Elders and Deacons: Pastor Seth discussed the process of the election of Elders/Deacons. This past year, Brian Szura stepped down from his term as Deacon before it ended due to changes in his schedule. Matthew Hepburn was selected as the person to replace Brian Szura. Pastor Seth raised a motion to approve Matthew as Deacon, and the motion was passed unanimously.

Two other terms are ending today: Elder Jean Stockdale and Deacon Grace Kamanda. Both Jean and Grace are willing to serve a second term on Consistory, and the Consistory has recommended both of them for re-election. Pastor Seth raised a motion to approve their re-election and the motion was passed unanimously. Pastor Seth noted that there are no other slots to fill on the Consistory at this time. He concluded this section with a prayer of thanksgiving for Brian Szura.

Report from Pastor Seth and Stephanie: Pastor Seth advised church members that even though the Consistory is full right now, all of the various committees still need to grow. He encouraged people, as they are reading the various reports, to consider what committee they may like to join. Pastor Stephanie briefly reviewed the Pastoral report and advised that more information could be found on the RCHP website. Pastor Stephanie expressed gratitude for wonderful staff at RCHP, giving specific thanks for Wendy Jager, Lara Arp, and Amos Caley. Pastor Seth highlighted the final section of the Pastoral report, advising that RCHP is working to find more ways for our leaders to use their various skills.

Report from Music and Youth Minister – Amos Caley: Amos referenced his report, highlighting that he feels privileged to oversee the Worship Ministry and the gifted and talented people that are involved in the ministry. He encouraged people to come to Choir Practice on Wednesdays, noting the times of the Gospel Choir, Chancel Choir, and Praise Team practices. Amos also noted that he has been cleared for ordination and encouraged people to read his report for more details. Pastor Stephanie then introduced Ian Howells as our new pianist.

Consistorial Committees

Faith Development – Wendy Jager spoke and encouraged people to review her report. She highlighted the Sunday morning teachers, the 40-50 children that attend the various Youth Groups on Monday nights, the weekly Bible studies and groups, and the monthly Women's and Mom's Covenant groups. She brought attention to the need for more help and encouraged people to reach out to her if they are interested in helping in some manner. She specifically noted that a new class for 2-3 year olds may be forming. Wendy ended by noting that the time and effort we put into our children is never wasted, and what we put into them never goes away.

Fellowship – Pastor Stephanie highlighted that the Fellowship Committee works to create opportunities to build fellowship and relationships with one another. She encouraged people to let the committee know of any new ideas they may have and encouraged them to review the report to see if there is anything of personal interest.

Justice and Mercy – Pastor Seth reported, encouraging people to read the report and explained how the Justice and Mercy Committee oversees other projects as well.

Property – Anthony DiGrigoli reported. He thanked Harry for all the work he does in the church. He also highlighted some completed projects, including painting and remodeling the kitchen. He specifically gave thanks to Milagros and

Matt Hepburn for recently cleaning the kitchen prior to the opening of the new café. He ended by noting that many projects still remain (painting the ceiling and sanctuary) and encouraged people to let the committee know if they are interested in helping.

Worship – Amos Caley referenced the report and highlighted how many people are involved in worship. Fifty-five to sixty-five different people are involved in some aspect of music and worship here.

Care – Franco Juricic referenced the report. He highlighted the Sunday support group starting up again, elders being available after service, the new bereavement calendar, ongoing home/hospital/facility visits, babysitting, meals, and the peer-led support group.

Stephen Ministry – Franco Juricic noted that there are 9 Stephen Ministers, and over the past year, 10 Stephen Ministry pairs have been meeting regularly.

Reports from Pastors Ben and Henny: Pastor Seth recognized Pastor Ben Rivera and Pastor Henny for tending to the diverse language needs of the people in our RCHP community. He referenced the dates and times of Spanish Bible study and worship, and Indonesian worship as well. He asked both Pastor Ben and Pastor Henny to submit a written report by next Monday.

Special Committees and Affiliated Organizations Updates

Thrift Shop– Frank Corcoran reviewed his report. He highlighted that in 2015, the Thrift Shop brought in \$21,965.58 of additional income to the church. Pastor Seth recognized Frank and all of the Thrift Shop volunteers for their great work .

Sewing Circle– Pastor Seth reported. He noted that they meet on Thursdays in the Quilt Room and have made a significant amount of items that are sold at the annual Bazaar.

Immigration – Pastor Seth noted that since our intern Eddie moved back to Oklahoma, the Immigration Committee has struggled a bit. However, Walter has taken over until our next intern and has been taking people on detention center visits, and Seth is very thankful for this.

Prayer Shawls– Selma spoke, highlighting that this ministry is in its 9th year. She encouraged folks to join if interested, noting that they meet on Tuesday nights at 7pm.

Still Waters – Jean Stockdale spoke, highlighting the various efforts and outcomes this program has seen in the past year.

RCHP-AHC – Pastor Seth noted that the AHC has just obtained its 19th property and has a total of over 100 tenants. He encouraged people that if they are interested in being on the Board, they meet on the third Tuesday of every month at 7pm.

Interfaith-RISE – Pastor Seth noted that RISE has worked to hold the interfaith community together, has supported 14 refugees, and that RISE will soon be central NJ's placement resettlement office.

Churches Accomplishing Long Term Recovery – Deb Convery spoke, noting that help is still needed at the shore, as Harry continues to go a few days a week for work. She encouraged people to volunteer if possible. Pastor Seth noted that 170 houses have been completed thus far.

Neighborcorp – Pastor Seth reported, noting that the program just received \$57,000 in support.

Who is My Neighbor – Lara Arp reported, highlighting that over 150 family units have been served over the past year.

Statistical Report: Pastor Seth spoke. He noted that the church received many new members this year. He stated there are about 530 people currently involved in the church. Fifteen years ago when they first started here, that number was just 68.

Financial Report: Pastor Seth referenced the report. He highlighted differences between the Plate and Support lines, noting that they increased from 2014 to 2015. Seth also highlighted line 4036, noting that we received a large donation (about \$88,000) from Ralph Voorhees' bequest. He reminded people that you can give to the church via your will, and advised folks to see please see him if someone was interested in doing this. He noted that the church ended the year about \$66,000 in the black, but noted that this would not have happened without the bequest from Ralph. He thanked the church for all of their offerings.

Adjournment with Prayer and Benediction: – Pastor Seth ended the meeting with a prayer for those that have died in the past year, noting the contributions Fran Schell, Barbara Johnson, and Neil Selden. The meeting was adjourned at 11:16 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Renee DiGrigoli
May 3, 2016

The Election of Elders and Deacons, 2017

The Reformed Church of Highland Park is directed by the Consistory. The Consistory is made up of shared leadership of three offices: Elder, Deacon and Called Pastors (Seth and Stephanie).

This year our Consistory has included the following members

Deacons: Anthony DiGrigoli, Cathy Standford, Colin Jager, Grace Kamanda and Milagros Aguayo, Teddy Assa, Matt Hepburn

Elders: Carol Turner, Cassandra Oliveras, Diane Fisher, Elaine Hudson, Mary Caterson, Bill Henry and Franco Juricic.

In addition we have a Youth Consistory representative, Keiko Kereh

This year, due to changes in his work schedule, Matt Hepburn stepped down as a deacon, and as it was nearly the end of the year, we did not fill his spot as Deacon.

Also, Jean Stockdale moved last fall and she was replaced by Cassandra Oliveras as an Elder.

In addition, this year Elaine Hudson's term and Bill Henry's terms have both ended as Elders.

Carol Turner (Elder) and Milagros Aguayo (Deacon) have both completed 1 term, and seek to serve a second term. This is encouraged in our bi-laws when someone is serving on Consistory for the first time ever. It takes some time to establish leadership, and 1 three-year term goes very quickly. Also, Cassandra, having filled the end of Jean's year, is nominated to begin her own term as Elder, starting this year.

So, the Consistory was tasked with nominating 1 addition Deacon and 2 additional Elders for Consistory, in addition to Carol and Milagros and Cassandra.

At our April Consistory meeting we went through a careful process of selections, seeking the will of God's Spirit in helping us select from among those who have been members for at least 1 year. We have nominated the following three people:

Deacon: Sylvia Hove

Elder: Carrie Dirks-Amadeo, Isaac Ehioghae

Finally, we give great thanks to Matt Hepburn and Jean Stockdale, Elaine Hudson and Bill Henry, for all the ways they've served us over the past years, and, in most cases, for many years before that. Our church is a blessed community largely because of the careful leadership that you've shown.

Report from Seth and Stephanie, Annual Meeting, May 7th, 2017

As we complete our 16th year as your pastors we find ourselves just as amazed as ever by what God is doing in this place.

Sunday Mornings

Each Sunday remains a time for being filled up and empowered. Each day of the week remains a day for the implementation of life-changing ministry opportunities.

What occurs here on Sunday mornings, when we gather, is no small thing. For 70 minutes we are transformed from being busy people, trying to move forward with a million important projects, to being a people at rest. During that rest we get recharged for the week ahead. Many pastors speak of Sunday morning as being a burden (and sometimes, when a sermon is not complete late on Saturday night, we know what they mean!). But generally, Sunday morning is as much a pick-me-up for *us* as it is for the congregation. It is no burden—it is joy! Being together with all of you in an alternative world shaped by love is nothing short of miraculous.

There is an old adage, "they're just Sunday Christians." It's meant as a disparaging remark. It suggests a person doesn't "walk the walk" during the week. But we have to say, 16 years in, that just as bad (or worse) would be a Christian community that doesn't take time to rest, to pray, to sing, to hear the word, to be educated and to listen for God's voice together. Sunday, the day of Sabbath rest, is the day when all of us in the body of Christ get reset for work in the world.

The busier our lives get the more important is Sunday morning.

Getting to Know Each Other

We have seen tremendous growth again in the church this year. Yes, we've had a lot of new members, but we've also had a constant flow of newcomers. In reality, the pace of new arrivals is near impossible for us to keep up with. For the first time since we've become your pastors we feel we're falling behind in terms of learning names of each and every one of the newcomers that comes on multiple weeks.

We will be looking for more creative ways to spend time getting to know each other during the program year (Sept-Mid-June) while we are having 2 services. The morning is simply too long for us to add a weekly fellowship meal, but there are surely things we can do to foster more community with new arrivals. We don't want anyone who finds their way to RCHP to ever come multiple weeks and feel they just couldn't connect to the pastors or the people.

Bible Studies, Prayer Groups, Choirs, Home Groups, Fellowship Groups...Finding your place

There are endless opportunities for Spiritual growth at RCHP. During the week there are multiple bible studies, prayer groups, knitting and sewing groups, support groups, choirs...you name it, RCHP has it. And, if we don't, we'd love to help you start something new. There is always room for a new home bible study group, or space to start groups midweek in the church. If you'd like to host a group, but not lead it, we can also come up with co-leadership, so that you have the support you need. While we are thankful for the fairly large number of RCHP people involved in various fellowship/education events, we do believe that there are many more people at RCHP who would benefit from such opportunities than that are participating at this time.

Keeping a Priority on Education and Fellowship for Children and Youth

RCHP's commitment to youth is central to the continuing strength of our church community. We are so thankful for Amos, Lara and Wendy, and for all the leaders who join them in strengthening our children's ministry program. We are growing a community of children and youth who know that a relationship with God and with a community shaped by God has world-transforming potential.

Pastoral Care

The role of Patrick Beckford, Pastor Henny, Carol Turner, April Humes, Stephen Ministers and Support Groups cannot be overstated. As RCHP grows it becomes near impossible for the pastors to provide the ongoing level of personal support that people need when going through crises. Knowing that confident leaders in pastoral care are being attentive, and can be called upon, is a great relief to us.

Major Players Influencing Justice and Mercy in NJ

While most of this report has focused on aspects of church that are very typical (could be found in most any church report) the level of engagement that RCHP has in the social justice infrastructure of the state of NJ is simply incredible. As we have listened to God speaking through worship and prayer we have responded radically. Longevity in ministry (16 years!) coupled with successful program implementation of social-justice projects, gives us a decent-sized 'pulpit' in the world. We are so thankful that other faith communities, the media and social movements look to us for guidance and collaboration on a daily basis. It's a joy to help Central New Jersey more fully reflect the coming, transformed, community of God.

Especially in the dangerous political climate of today our voices, our leadership, and our participation, as a church, has served a very important role.

As we meet for our annual meeting we are thankful for a church that understands that refugees, asylees, formerly incarcerated individuals, friends with mental illness, victims of hurricanes, undocumented immigrants, youth aging out of foster care, veterans, victims of traffickings, LGBTQ individuals, and the earth itself...all are first-level priority in the kingdom of God. And, it is more than understanding—it is participation. We are seeing our church community transformed before our eyes because of the real sharing and caring that is going on.

As we reach the summer of 2017 it is important for us to be considering if we are at a critical point of growth

Churches hit plateaus when they reach certain sizes. We're not just talking about plateaus in terms of numerical growth. We're talking about plateaus of engagement in worship, fellowship and shared life. We need to pay attention to this as we reach the summer of 2017. What do we need to do to create additional crucibles for spiritual growth? Help us, congregation, to think this through as we move into the summer of 2017.

Seth and Stephanie continue, all these years into ministry, to share 1 position at the church. Obviously we have (by choice) taken on far more than part-time work! We love our shared job and all the freedom it gives us to stretch the church in ways that go far beyond what a typical church leadership position looks like.

Staff and Interns

The size of our congregation is such that Elders, Deacons and lay leadership simply cannot keep up with all the needs. We are thankful to have a strong staff that supports lay leadership and that also takes on the tasks that are more than we can expect of volunteer support. In addition to paid staff running many of the church programs, we have, on average 4 interns at a time. These interns provided tremendous leadership during the summer of 2016 and throughout the academic year 2016-2017.

Running for Governor

Many church members share with us just how much of an impact RCHP has had on their lives. Being in this community influences people's decision-making. This year, I (Seth) need to 'blame' my decision to get involved in politics on the church! The way that you've taught me to understand the message of Jesus, and to understand the will of God, has led me to believe I need to try to influence the systems that lead to the great imbalances in the world. RCHP has been the place where I've learned to administrate, and to dream, and to collaborate and to encourage. It's the place that sets my priorities, fills my spirit and empowers me to try things. I'm thankful for all of you and for this opportunity.

The Peace of Christ to all of you, dear congregation

Pastor Stephanie and Pastor Seth

Faith Development Annual Report May 2016 – April 2017

Committee Members – Lara Arp, Deb Convery, Amos Caley, Wendy Jager, and Carol Turner.

Each Sunday Morning

Sunday School - Because of our committed volunteer teachers the weekly Sunday school program continues to be a solid and engaging place for our children ages 2 – high school. Over 90 children are involved in our Sunday school this year. We continue to be blessed with excellent volunteer teachers. Please join me in giving our deep and heartfelt thanks to Cyndy Reames, Theo Campbell, Nadiah Tucker, Tracy Cangiano, Sarah MacKinnon, Michelle Tanasy, Wendy Nussman, Linda St.Pierre, Gretchen Chapman, Faith Kamanda, Wendy Jager, Austin Morreale, Renee DiGrigoli, Danielle and Chris Willard-Kyle, Franco Juricic, Grace Kamanda, Kelly Glen, Matthew Dean. The hours they spend preparing lessons, sharing the stories of our faith, and being a tangible sign of God's love to our children and young people are a valuable gift to our whole church community.

We returned to weekly Sunday school this year (except on holiday weekends), and have found this continuity beneficial to our attendance as well as allowing us to build a more supportive community for the children. Due to the increased number of children in Sunday school, we added a 2s and 3s class for our youngest members this past year. Because Sunday school is what many of our children most look forward to on Sunday, we will again continue classes through July, combining classes for the summer. I will need additional volunteers from the congregation for 6 weeks this summer in order to give our academic year teachers a much-needed break.

Adult Education – Topics based class and Sunday a.m. Bible Study - We thank God for the opportunity to grow in faith through two Sunday morning adult classes – a Sunday Morning Bible Study and a topic-based Adult Education averaging 30 adults in attendance per week. We are thankful for the abundance of church members who served as class teachers throughout this year coordinated by Lara Arp and for student ministers Dana Gray and Thad Winkle for leading the Sunday morning Bible study.

Children's Worship - We praise God for the ways our children can learn and experience God through children's worship each Sunday for 15-20 minutes during the sermon. Children's worship is an intentional time of prayer and theological reflection centered on scripture, an opportunity to learn about the liturgical seasons of the Christian calendar, and an exploration into why and how we worship God. We are thankful to our children's worship leaders and assistants with special recognition of Anna Petrie, Wendy Nussman, and Lara Arp.

Nursery - In order to foster relationships between young families and our congregation, we are now running the nursery on a partial volunteer basis. JoAnn Kafka continues to provide continuity during the 1st service, and she is now assisted by a volunteer during the 1st service. Combinations of 2 volunteers staff the nursery during the 2nd service. We are grateful for all the new nursery volunteers: Sarah Caley, Sena Kaper-Dale, Francisco Maldonado, Sonia Kalinda, Theresa and Juliana Dolan, Jodi and Bobby Kopac, Wendy Nussman, Olga Muleka, Isabella Sanchez and Diane and Alyssa Fisher. Each nursery volunteer commits to helping for one service, once a month. Currently we could use 3 more nursery

volunteers to fill the occasional 5th Sunday slot. Additional thanks go to Sarah Caley who manages the nursery volunteer schedule – no small job.

Children’s Library - The RCHP Children’s Library (Room 107 in the Social Hall) continues to be a quiet space in a busy building where children and families can check books. The collection focuses on Bible stories, biographies of people of faith, Muslim, Jewish and other faith traditions, prayers, and stewardship. The library also includes a parenting resource section and numerous board books for toddlers. Our summer reading program “Summer Book Bingo” continues to be popular among the younger crowd at RCHP. Once again we celebrated everyone’s participation with a “Bible Bingo Blast” event and all the book prizes came from the Tower Thrift shop.

Each Week Throughout the School Year

Sunday Night Youth Programs

Our youth programs have stayed the same, but we now hold them on Sunday night. Three programs run each Sunday night: Kids in the Cave for 4th and 5th grade students, Middle School Youth for 6th - 8th grade students and High School Youth program for 9th – 12th grades. Each program is led by an RCHP staff member who has consistent volunteer support.

Kids in the Cave (KITC) - Kids in the Cave meets in the church basement from 7 – 8 p.m. Each evening consists of hang out time, group games, a focus discussion and prayer. We close each evening by praying and singing together around a lit candle. This prayer time has deepened the bond we share with each other. I have observed this to be a particularly meaningful moment for our kids as they can express their joys and concerns in a quiet and safe space. Our main service project this year has been to assist WIMNI with their Terra-cycling efforts. Each week KITC kids sort, categorize and bag all the terra-cycle items dropped off at the church. Other service projects this year included letters to detainees, pictures and notes of encouragement to shut-ins and assembling school kits for Church World Service (currently in process). We covered such topics as families, diversity within a group, self-esteem, healthy friendships and ways to pray this year. Our end of the year trip involved walking an outdoor prayer labyrinth in Princeton Junction. Wendy Jager, April and Virgil Humes co-lead this group with 10 – 16 kids attending each week.

Middle School Youth Group – We thank God for a vibrant middle school youth group consisting of 25 amazing youth that meet on Sunday evenings (average of 18 youth per night) and attend an annual spring retreat at Cross Roads Retreat Center. On a weekly basis we engage in topics related to our lives and our world, asking the important questions of how and where our faith interjects into these topics. As a group we enjoy playing games, doing creative projects, participating in the social justice and community service aspects of RCHP, and simply hanging out together. Danielle Willard-Kyle, Chris Willard-Kyle, and Lara Arp co-lead this group.

High School Youth Group - The high school youth group meets every Sunday evening from 7:00 to 8:30 in room 201 (above the social hall stage) and is led by Amos Caley. A typical evening incorporates a game or hands-on activity, a discussion prompt, and a conversation. We try to spend time each week creatively engaging topics that are pertinent to our lives, our world, and our faith. Our current weekly attendance ranges from 8 to 12 students, with three adult volunteers (Amanda Sorenson, Dan Betz, and Anthony DiGrigoli) faithfully attending to co-facilitate. We occasionally deviate from this weekly schedule to participate in other activities, like retreats, worship services, and other fun events.

Some highlights from this school year include:

- Designing, building, and hosting a series of Halloween “Escape Rooms” in the Cave.
- Staying up all night, eating pizza, making movies, and playing games at our Winter Lock-In.
- Leading the music and liturgies at the midnight Christmas Eve Service, and listening to Nanette Dande deliver a powerful sermon on what Christmas means to her this year.
- Making graffiti art to decorate the sanctuary for our season of Lent.
- Going on our High School retreat in May to Cross Roads Camp.
- Many engaging conversations on issues like this year’s presidential election, the refugee crisis, teen dating violence, the role of music in our lives, stress/anxiety, and “Christian charity” through global missions.

Confirmation Class - This year's confirmation class ran from October through May, meeting 3 times per month under the leadership of Pastors Amos, Stephanie, and Seth. We met from 6 – 7 p.m. on Thursdays in the Leadership Office, and our lessons covered so many questions integral to our faith: Who is God? Who is/was Jesus? What is the bible and why do we read it? What/Who is the Holy Spirit? What is the role of the church? What are sacraments? What does it mean to live as a person of faith?

Nine middle school students faithfully journeyed through this class: Hailen Arp, Marwin Aslah, Christia Assa, Abby Carman, Amos Chapman, Penelope de la Cruz, Josie Estes, Ava MacKinnon, and Bella Sanchez. Each of these confirmands entered into a mentor relationship with church members who, in turn, invested time and thoughtful conversation with their mentee. Our mentors this year were Theo Campbell, Derek Cannon, Nora Devlin, Pat Devlin, Faith Kamanda, Grace Kamanda, Kathy Malkiewicz, Chris Willard-Kyle, and Danielle Willard-Kyle.

June 4th is Confirmation Sunday, where we will get the chance to read and listen to each Confirmand's "Personal Faith Statement," which is a reflection on their faith in light of their experiences, beliefs, and values at the present moment. A special celebration is planned for the adult education hour between services (in the Parlor) on June 4th.

Weekly Bible Studies - 2 weekly Bible studies continue to provide congregants a chance to study God's work in depth. Thank you to Pastors Seth and Stephanie for continuing to offer the Wednesday 7:45 a. m. and Friday 10:00 a.m. Bible studies.

Prayer and Meditation Group - The Tuesday Night Prayer and Meditation Group meets in the prayer chapel from 7:00-8:00pm. This spiritual formation group supports RCHP members through prayer and meditation traditions and also serves in the healing liturgy every second Sunday of the month. Under the leadership of Deb Convery and Carol Turner, 4 to 7 core members meet weekly in person to pray together and 22 members receive weekly email requests for shared prayer and meditation. The format for each meeting is: introduction of participants with shared prayers of thanks and petition; a specific prayer or meditation practice (as described below) for 20-30minutes, and a closing prayer. Each week focuses on a particular aspect of prayer or meditation: 1st Tuesday of the month: ministry of cards and prayer for recipients (Milagros Aquayo with Donna Bispo); 2nd Tuesday: guided meditation (Rose Slirzewski or Deb Convery); 3rd Tuesday: Chanting Meditation (April Humes) or Centering prayer (Carol Turner); and 4th Tuesday : walking meditation in the church sanctuary (Kathleen Malkiewicz). The 5th Tuesday of the month allows for a special prayer or meditation event (often praying with color). Please contact Deb Convery or Carol Turner to join or receive more information.

Additional small groups held monthly or as needed

Women's Covenant Group - The Women's Covenant group continues to evolve and has taken many twists and turns over the past year. Our emphasis on inclusiveness in our group for all who identify as female, prompted us to host a showing in June, 2016 of the film "Call Me Malcolm", about the transgender journey of a seminary student in the UCC denomination. Thanks to Austin for being part of our discussion after and allowing us to ask the awkward questions!

Patrice Donnell (from Marble Collegiate Church in NYC) facilitated the October retreat; the focus was Embracing Acceptance & Sacred Esteem: a journey toward joy & wholeness. Fifteen fabulous women attended, including 2 from Neighborcorp Re-entry Services. For our 2017 women's retreat, we will join in the RCA Women's Sankofa trip; RCHP will be one of the stops on the bus tour and we are also invited to take part in the 3-day journey through NJ & NY.

Last fall, we concluded that the monthly meetings were no longer serving the needs of the participants, and that occasional meetings for special events several times a year feels right and will hopefully spark more interest.

Many thanks go to Pastor Stephanie and Carol Turner for their valued partnership, support and guidance in celebrating the Divine Feminine. A special thanks to Gretchen Chapman, co-organizer and co-programming coordinator, who is leaving RCHP for a well deserved position at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. We will miss her passion and devotion to women's spirituality.

In Christ Sophia, Deb Convery

Mom's Covenant Group - The Mom's Covenant Group provides a time of support and fellowship for all RCHP mothers. The group meets the 3rd Friday of every month in members' homes in Highland Park and is led by Renee DiGrigoli with support from Wendy Jager. Topics this past year included: contentment, gratitude, mom self-care, the power of our words, and building relationships. 4 – 8 women attend monthly.

Faith Development Events throughout the Year

Vacation Bible School - We praise God for an incredible Vacation Bible School "Go with the Flow." Over 100 children from our church and the community at large spent the week learning and experiencing God's love for them. Special thanks goes to Diane Fisher and to Amos Caley for writing the VBS original musical. Additional thanks to the many other volunteers too numerous to name.

Advent Preparation Night - Once again we welcomed in the Advent Season with advent preparation night held here the first Sunday evening of advent. The evening consisted of a potluck, advent devotions, preparing advent cards for congregants, crafting advent wreaths and singing carols. A record number of families and individuals attended.

Christmas Pageant - The Christmas pageant was a collaborative effort, but special thanks go to many of RCHP parents who organized costumes and parts.

Easter Labyrinth - We thank God for the opportunity to experience the story of Easter through this year's labyrinth "Prayer and Protest in the way of the Cross." Over 120 people walked the Easter Labyrinth over Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Thank you to the artists and the labyrinth greeters who prayerfully guided this journey with their creative gifts.

Looking Ahead – Those of us on the Faith Development Committee are continually reflecting on how we can best serve RCHP by providing opportunities for all members of all ages to connect with and experience the love of God more fully; then, in turn, move outward to serve and transform our world. If you have ideas or thoughts for us, or would like to join our committee, we meet the 1st Tuesday of every month at 9 a.m. Please feel free to contact any of us at any time.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Jager
Faith Development Chair and Minister of Children's Ministries

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT MAY 2016 – MAY 2017

WEEKLY

Purchase items and setting up for coffee hour each Sunday

ONCE A MONTH

First half of year potluck brunch first Sunday of month.

Senior prayer breakfast second Friday of month.

Nature Club-ongoing

AS NEEDED

Youth Appreciation Dinner

Cakes for Christenings

Flower placed in the church in memory or celebration of loved ones.

SEASONAL EVENTS

Mother's Day Breakfast

Father's Day Breakfast

Four picnics June July and August

Rally Day (Sept.)

Yard Sale (Sept.)

Book Group led by Linda St. Pierre

Going away potluck brunch for Jean Stockdale

Halloween Party(Oct)

Holiday Bazaar(Nov.)

Advent craft night and potluck dinner(Dec.)

Senior outing and concert in Princeton(Dec.)

Christmas caroling for the homebound seniors(Dec.)

Children's Christmas party combined with pageant cast party(Dec)

Senior Karaoke Party(Mar.)

Variety Show led by Linda St. Pierre raised \$400.00 for needy family(Mar.)

Easter Egg Hunt and Party(Apr.)

Maundy Thursday potluck dinner(Apr.)

We welcome any new ideas that will better serve our church family. Please join us when we meet on the first Thursday of the month at 7:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Elaine Hudson

Justice & Mercy Activities & Projects This Past Year

Vacation Bible School (VBS): This year's VBS theme of "Go With the Flow: In the Stream of the Spirit" drew attention to issues surrounding water. VBS fundraising efforts went toward supporting water access; monies raised went toward building two wells in a Zimbabwe village community. The total raised exceeded \$1400.

Mission Dinner: The Annual Bazaar was another wonderful opportunity for us to highlight the missionaries we support through RCHP and to raise money toward our annual contribution toward their work. We raised \$1300 with a Bountiful Global Feast—a great way to end a terrific annual bazaar.

Angel Tree Gifts: It is now standard for RCHP to provide a tremendous number of gifts for low-income children during the holidays. 80 children from New Brunswick schools and from our housing corporation connections received gifts of toys, educational supplies and clothing from church members.

RCHP Missionaries: Our church funds provided much needed support for 4 international ministries this year. We support 1) the ministry of Josh Vis, who works with Christians, Muslims and Jews in Israel and Palestine. 2) Tim and JJ TenClay, who work with refugee ministries, and the Waldensian Church, in Italy 3) Peter and Patty Ford, who work on Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Beirut, Lebanon 4) A Compassion International Center for Women and Children in Indonesia.

Hurricane Sandy Relief: Under the direction of Harry and Deb, CALTR (Churches Accomplishing Long Term Recovery) continues to do fantastic work helping families at the NJ Shore back into their homes. CALTR brought hundreds of volunteers through RCHP's doors in the last 12 months to help with Sandy-related recovery work. Also, in 2016, Harry Pangemanan was invited to address the NJ State Assembly about the state of Hurricane Sandy reconstruction.

National Religious Campaign Against Torture: RCHP is a "participatory congregation" in NRCAT'S campaigns, which works to end torture in four primary areas, including in U.S. prison and detention facilities. Pastor Seth currently serves as Vice-President of their Board of Directors.

Interfaith RISE: As of Fall 2016, Interfaith RISE was approved as an official refugee resettlement site; the organization has welcomed 31 individuals as of this mid-year mark (year ends Sept 30). The organization's inter-faith network of participating organizations has continued to grow, now consisting of nearly 40 congregations. (See Refugee Resettlement Report)

Adopted Stream: Through EnJ, RCHP continues to maintain its adopted stream in Highland Park, working with the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership to help monitor the biotics of the stream and scheduling periodic clean-ups.

A Little Change for a Big Change: The committee has continued this monthly program in which a group or cause is highlighted during service, and small donations may be made as a way of appreciating and recognizing their significant work.

Guantanamo Rally: While in D.C. in June, for Bread for the World, our group dressed in Orange Jumpsuits and spoke out against the continued usage of Guantanamo Bay Prison for post 9/11 detainees.

Bread for the World Lobby Day: In June 2016, a group of 13 traveled to D.C. to attend this galvanizing event focusing on Global Food Security and Summer Food Programs for U.S. Children.

Sanctuary State Rally: 1 week after the elections RCHP gathered a group together for a rally in front of the Capitol, calling on the state to become a Sanctuary State.

First 100 Hours Vigil: RCHP partnered with GreenFaith to host an inter-faith Vigil on January 22 as part of the national prayer response to the 45th President's "first 100 hours" in office. Approximately 100 individuals gathered at RCHP for the event in solidarity around Criminal & Racial Justice, Environmental, and LGBTQ issues.

Women's March: On January 21, 2017 a group from RCHP gathered in the state capital to join the Women's March on Trenton.

Thirteenth Screening: on February 12, NeighborCorps hosted a screening of the documentary "Thirteenth" followed by an evocative panel discussion on mass incarceration featuring Boris Franklin, Andrea McChristian, and Marshall Rountree.

Prayer & Protest: This year's Lenten theme of "Prayer & Protest" was further enacted via inter-faith services which ran for six weeks consisting of singing and praying God's Executive Orders. Timely issues included the Environment,

Immigrant Rights, and violence against Women. Funds raised at these services went to organizations and efforts supporting these themes.

Climate March: On April 29, 2017 a group from RCHP and GreenFaith joined the thousands rallying in the Climate March on Washington, D.C.

Action Bulletin: The first Sunday of each month, the J & M committee now places an insert inside Church bulletins providing members with specific opportunities to become engaged with J & M events and initiatives.

LOOKING AHEAD:

We will continue to expand and deepen our work in the following areas:

- Prison work and ministries including detention, incarceration, Juvenile Justice, and solitary confinement issues
- Environmental Issues
- Immigration and Resettlement Issues

The following events are currently being planned:

- Bread for the World Lobby Day
- Stream Clean Up
- Screening & Info Session on Drones
- Site visit with Ramapough Tribal leaders

Respectfully Submitted, Cassandra Oliveras-Moreno

Property Report May 2016 – May 2017
Prepared by Harry Pangemanan and Anthony DiGrigoli

Current Committee Members: Harry Pangemanan, Anthony DiGrigoli, Jim Szara, Mike Zuliski, Milagros, and Lara Arp.

We praise and thank God for this church and all of our church family. Our entire building and property is a place where many people receive a blessing from God. Individuals and both small and large groups travel in and out from our property and use our property to get care, help, practice their beliefs, and feel safe and welcomed.

We also give thanks to God that our entire building is always open to anybody, our building acts as a temporary shelter when weather is unkind, a temporary housing for people that need housing for a short time, and we continue to use it to host Sandy Recovery volunteers while they are here to do Sandy recovery work at the Jersey Shore.

Here is all the work and care that our committee has done since May of last year:

- Pay close attention to things that can inhibit the everyday activities and take action to avoid any problems before they start.
- Walk through every day to check that everything is working.
- Communicate with others to learn of any concerns that they might have.

Below is the list of work that has been done and some that is still in progress:

- New security cameras installed throughout the commonly used areas of the property.
- Replace broken sink handles with new sink handles in the men's bathroom.
- Regular yard maintenance
- Snow removal
- Replace batteries and lights for fire alarms.
- Passed fire inspection.
- Replace ceiling in back entrance to the sanctuary.
- Clean out room upstairs for immigration group.
- Add more power outlets in Sunday School office
- Add more power outlets in the Cave

- Wash all carpet in parlor, Sunday school office, Sunday school rooms and nursery room
- Add a new fridge in the church kitchen for Cave and Sandy volunteers use
- Add a closed cabinet for Fellowship committee in pantry room
- Install a new AC in upstairs room
- Add more power outlets in kitchen, quilt room and the cave (underway)

Looking Ahead

- Need more people to join Property Committee
- Need to install a new AC in Sunday school office
- More painting is to be scheduled for the Social Hall, Sanctuary, etc.

Respectfully Submit,

Harry Pangemanan and Anthony DiGrigoli

Worship Committee Annual Report

Worship Staff

Aside from Pastors Stephanie, Seth, and Amos, RCHP is very blessed to have Derek Cannon and Ian Howells on staff. They both bring a deep sense of joy and commitment to the music ministries. Ian has been on staff for just a year, and his gifts have been a tremendous blessing to the whole church.

Children's Choirs

First Voices (pre-K to 2nd grade) and Voices of Praise (3rd to 6th grade) are our children's choirs that both meet from 5:00 to 5:30pm on Wednesdays, in the Parlor and Sanctuary respectively. Pastor Seth leads First Voices, which is small but mighty this year, and Pastor Amos leads Voices of Praise, which consists of between 10 and 15 students.

Gospel Choir

Our Gospel Choir meets for rehearsals on Wednesday evenings in the Sanctuary, from 6:30 to 7:30. It continues to be very well attended under the leadership of Derek Cannon and the accompaniment of Ian Howells. Derek has been urging us to connect emotionally and spiritually with the songs, and both the rehearsals and the Sunday singing have benefited from this beautiful form of communal prayer. The Gospel Choir usually leads songs two Sundays per month, with three songs distributed between those Sundays.

Chancel Choir

Our Chancel Choir meets for rehearsals on Wednesday evenings in the Sanctuary, from 7:30 to 8:30. Ian Howells directs and accompanies the choir, and rehearsals are a fun way of connecting to sacred music and other choir members. Our song selections range widely in their styles, sounds, and levels of difficulty, but no experience is required for attendance. We learn and grow together on a weekly basis. The Chancel Choir usually leads at least one song during three Sundays per month.

Praise Teams

RCHP has four different praise teams, with 27 different musicians and vocalists distributed between them. Each team is assigned one Sunday per month, and they rehearse the Wednesday prior to their scheduled Sunday, from 8:30 to 9:15pm in the Sanctuary. We enjoy working with a range of styles and songs, with a focus toward leading sung-prayers in the context of the flow of each service. Our church is richly blessed with talent, diversity, and generosity, and the Praise Teams reflect this great wealth each week.

Technical Support

RCHP is very fortunate to have faithful and competent volunteers who help with the technical aspects of the worship services. Helping Pastor Amos with the sound each week is Jonah Giacalone and his son Ben. Also

assisting consistently are Keiko Kereh, Amber Wagner and Olivia Jager, with occasional help from other middle school and high school students.

Care Committee 2016-2017

Expressing gratitude for the ways in which church members show care to one another and to the community.

- Elder care: there is an elder appointed for prayers in the prayer chapel for anyone looking for prayer and support.
- We have continued our Bereavement Calendar Project which had been coordinated by Carol Turner. Cyndy Reames has graciously taken on this project from this year forward. Church Members submit the names of loved ones that have passed on, and on that month we, mention those names honoring and remembering them. We read this as part of the Communion Liturgy.
- Healed by meals and meals for new baby arrivals for members or friends that have had a baby or are sick, injured, or unable to cook for themselves temporarily.
- We held an open time of prayer on Thanksgiving Morning for anyone who was grieving. Elder, Diane Wagner Prayed with attendees.
- The Stephen Ministry Program continues with 9 Stephen Ministers from 2 classes that we commissioned. Franco Juricic and John Rametta continue to offer support and supervision to our Stephen Ministers twice per month. In Summer 2016, two more Members attended a week-long training to become Stephen Leaders: Cathy Stanford and Anthony DiGrigoli. Another training class of new Stephen Ministers is finishing up in May which will add another 5 SMs to our already wonderful team.
- Patrick Beckford is our Ministry Associate.

Tower Thrift Shop Report – Submitted by Frank Corcoran

The Tower Thrift Shop currently has 12 volunteers, 4 of which are cashiers, they sort clothes, and help keep the store clean. Our volunteer, Lin Chan, is especially helpful by cleaning the Thrift Shop floors each week with sweeping and mopping. We are open for business 31 hours per week; 1,612 hours a year. We ended 2016 bringing in \$21,626.53 in additional income to the church. The Thrift Shop also helps needy families by selling items at a very low cost or by giving them for free.

Highland Park Reformed Church Sewing Circle Yearly Report 2016

Our sewing group meets every Thursday to sew and have lunch. We are six ladies strong one regular visitor and one now in Assisted Living.

Most of our handmade items are sold at the Bazaar. We also had two very productive sales at Sunrise Assisted Living Home.

We support a seven year old girl through Compassion International with monthly and holiday gifts.

We purchased new tables for the Quilt Room.

Janet Peterson

Prayer Shawl Ministry – Submitted by Selma Colmant

Prayer Shawl Ministry group began in August, 2008, with a handful of women who wanted to reach out to share the compassion and the love felt in their hearts for those needing comfort. Today there are approximately 10 to 12 people, both members and non- members of RCHP, who combine knitting and crocheting into a prayerful ministry and spiritual practice to reach out to those in need of solace, as well as in celebration and joy. Many blessings are prayed into every shawl as it is being created. Upon completion, the group prays a final blessing into each shawl before it is sent on its way to convey God's love.

Since August of 2008, we have presented hundreds of shawls to people in and out of our congregation. Many of the recipients have expressed deep gratitude for the gift of the shawl and the awareness of caring that it has brought to their lives.

We meet each week on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm in the Parlor and are always looking for new people to join our group. Some of the members are not able to be with us on Tuesday evenings and work from their homes. We help each other in designing and crafting the shawls while we enjoy the gift of friendship and community. We have received generous donations of yarn which is available. If anyone is wishing to join us, we love teaching knitting or crocheting to anyone who wants to learn.

Still Waters 2016-17 Report Submitted by Jean Stockdale

RCHP's program of care for survivors of labor trafficking is named after a comforting image in the 23rd Psalm: "He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul." Begun in 2010 when church members visited a detained victim of trafficking, Still Waters has by now assisted more than 200 formerly trafficked people, accompanying them through a long process of applying and waiting for federal permission to remain in the USA and be authorized to work. This simple permission, hard to obtain, provides formerly trafficked people a chance to recover from the crimes they suffered.

In 2016 the Still Waters program strengthened RCHP's relationships with three groups of people: 1) those we assisted in past years; they continue to contact our church to express their gratitude, and to seek guidance on their challenges of living in this county; 2) those we have not yet assisted – a group of over 100 victims who were tricked into leaving the USA by the company that exploited their labor. The Still Waters program keeps faith with these severely cheated former workers, keeping in contact with them and keeping them in our congregation's prayers; 3) federal officials who could honor RCHP's requests to allow the unrecovered victims to return to the USA.

Over the year, Still Waters volunteers held meetings with these officials, provided them with information, and engaged in creative waiting. Jean Stockdale temporarily relocated to Texas to better utilize the help of volunteer phone interpreters and document translators who assist us in keeping contact with unrecovered victims. Family members of those we assisted made a 26 ft. scroll containing bible verses, artwork, and reports of the difficult circumstances of unrecovered victims. The scroll was of delivered to regional decision-makers in the government's long chain of people who could decide to allow justice for these victims. At the end of April, Pastor Seth and RCHP's adult education class wrote letters to a top decision-maker in Washington DC. Now we pray that 2017 will be the year in which the unrecovered victims of trafficking become certified by the US government to apply for U-Visa status and eventually re-enter the USA. We pray that the experience gained and connections made by RCHP in the effort to assist survivors of trafficking can be utilized to assist all immigrants struggling for safety and peace.

**The Reformed Church of Highland Park Affordable Housing Corporation
(RCHP-AHC)
A brief 2017 Report**

Back in 2005, in response to a recognized need for affordable housing in our community, RCHP created RCHP-AHC. This organization originally built Irayna Court—housing for women aging out of foster care—but it has gone on the build, refurbish, purchase and rent many more homes. In total RCHP-AHC is involved in 23 properties and has 113 tenants. All of our tenants fit the criteria of having some sort of block to permanent affordable housing. We house youth aging out of foster care, justice involved youth, Rutgers students who were formerly incarcerated, asylees, refugees, previously homeless veterans and chronically homeless mentally ill adults.

This program has become a massive system, and the board of directors is now Carrie Dirks-Amadeo. There are 14 board members, most of whom are members of RCHP. Pastor Seth is the unpaid Executive Director and there are 10 paid employees.

In 2016 the big change for RCHP-AHC was that it added Interfaith-RISE (our refugee resettlement program) as a new program under its auspices. This program is growing leaps and bounds, and RCHP-AHC's long history of working with housing is critical to the success we've had so far.

The AHC has an operational budget of nearly \$500,000, funded completely outside of the church.

The AHC has raised nearly \$10,000,000.00 in grant funding for the construction, rehabilitation and purchase of affordable homes since 2006.

INTERFAITH-RISE

In 2015 RCHP began to focus on refugee resettlement, as a response to the largest refugee crisis in the history of the planet. 65 million people were displaced from their homes by wars and strife around the world. Throughout 2016 RCHP worked with interfaith partners to develop a new organization—Interfaith-RISE (refugee and immigrant services and empowerment)—so that we could prepare to become a state department approved refugee resettlement site.

In September of 2016 we were approved. During this fiscal year (Oct 1, 2016-Sept. 30 2017) we will resettle approximately 50 refugees. Half way through the year we have already resettled 31 in Middlesex County.

Interfaith-RISE lives under RCHP-Affordable Housing Corporation. RCHP-AHC has been in existence since 2006 and was ready to show the state department that adding a refugee resettlement component to our work was totally doable.

Interfaith-RISE boasts 50+ congregations involved in our network, and regular communication occurs through monthly noontime meetings.

Interfaith-RISE has become one of the key organizations for resettlement in the state and through speaking engagements, fundraisers and terrific media attention we have helped shape the narrative for positive views toward refugees in New Jersey.

Global Grace Cafe Report, Annual Meeting, 2017

From 2009-2016 A Better World Cafe was a mainstay of RCHP. With this restaurant we were able to create a space or midweek fellowship, encourage healthy eating, locally grown produce, job creation and just a wonderful spirit. When A Better World closed in 2016 we would have really lost a beautiful thing if it weren't for the fact that we were ready to start something new!

From 2009-2016 the global diversity of our congregation increased dramatically. We started experiencing the best potlucks one could possibly imagine. At our annual bazaar, for the past few years, we've celebrated a Bountiful Global Feast, putting on display the culinary wizardry of our congregants.

As we started thinking about Refugee Resettlement, Job Creation and Global Food we decided to attempt to form Global Grace Cafe. The result has been increased. RCHP now has a robust restaurant with delicious food and we provide jobs for many newly arriving refugees and asylees. Global Grace has become a media sensation, and some of the videos produced about our restaurant have gone viral.

The restaurant works because we have an amazing Global Grace Director. Emily Randall-Goodwin, directly out of school, has proven to be a genius both in terms of her culinary coordination and her ability to work with an incredibly diverse population of chefs.

We encourage everyone to come regularly to the cafe, from 9am-2:00pm. Support the work of refugee resettlement while enjoying delicious food!

DIRE (Deportation and Immigration Response Equip)

Our congregation responds to God, and responds to the powers that rise up in the world that defy the way of God. The behavior of our government toward immigrants, at this particular moment, calls the church into action. In January, after an Executive Order was signed that could severely hurt people in our church and community, RCHP called for an interfaith movement to create DIRE. DIRE is an effort to come around those who are afraid, because of the Executive Order, and to offer them tangible support.

*Accompanying immigrants to meetings with ICE

*Helping shape policies that are progressive and supportive to undocumented immigrants

*creating an 'emergency squad' to help people in crises with ICE.

This effort has led to tremendous interfaith engagement. With monthly meetings, a hotline, and lots of working groups, DIRE is proving to be helpful to immigrants and a good way for congregants and the community to get involved in tangible forms of support.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Seth



Churches Improving Communities

www.ImprovingNJ.org

ChurchesImprovingCommunities@gmail.com

Report for RCHP Annual Meeting – May 2017

Churches Improving Communities (CIC) is the community development corporation of Classis New Brunswick that assists churches to begin or expand community service and social justice projects. Pooling resources between churches, programs, and other local non-profits, CIC dramatically increases the level of service available to the community through limited financial resources.

Additionally, CIC operates four programs in collaboration with Classis churches: Church-Based Mental Health Services, which offers free and low-cost professional mental health counseling at seven churches; CALTR – Churches Accomplishing Long-Term Recovery, reconstructing hurricane-damaged homes along the New Jersey shore for low-income residents; NeighborCorps Re-Entry Services, which assists people to successfully re-enter their communities after being released from the Middlesex County Adult Correctional Facility; and the Focus Church Development Program, which pairs CIC staff with one church for a full year of walking with that church, discerning needs, and developing programs. The CIC Board of Trustees oversees the organization, with steering committees advising each individual program.

CIC also assists Classis churches with their programs as needed, consulting on grant writing, program development, budgeting, community partnerships, volunteer recruitment, and other topics.



CBMHS

Church Based Mental Health Services (CBMHS)

Church Based Mental Health Services Provides free and low-cost professional mental health counseling to individuals at churches in Middlesex, Somerset, Monmouth and Ocean Counties.

Each of the participating Churches answered a call to serve members of the community who have difficulty obtaining non-crisis mental health services as a direct result of the stigma of mental illness, the cost of mental health services (with or without insurance) or the complexity of our mental health care referral system.

In 2016 services were offered at 6 churches by mental health counselor April Humes, LPC with Dr. Carol Turner of the Reformed Church of Highland Park serving as Acting Clinical Director of the program. Last year there were approximately 70 individuals served by the program.

The following churches participate in CBMHS: First Reformed Church of South River and the Reformed Church of Highland Park in Middlesex County; Colts Neck Reformed Church, the Community Church of Keyport and The Church in Brielle in Monmouth County; and Middlebush Reformed Church in Somerset County. In March 2017, the program expanded its services to the Ocean Community Church in Manahawkin, NJ. Lorrie, McGough, LPC, LCADC, NCC was hired to provide services at this location and April Humes was named Clinical Director of the program with Dr. Carol Turner serving as Consulting Psychologist.

To date, the number of people served by the program since its inception in 2016 has reach over 90. These **individuals received a thorough assessment** of needs and resources, vetted referrals, and when appropriate,

short-term counseling. Problems addressed include **depression, anxiety, chronic pain, marital or family relationship problems, substance use problems, grief and stress** due unemployment. Direct clinical hours average 46 hours monthly between approximately 20 individuals. Services include weekly or biweekly, **individual or couple's sessions** as well as **monthly caregiver support groups**. These services are also made possible by independently licensed professionals within our congregations and communities who volunteer their services to the program and make provisions within their own practices to assist with clients needing longer-term care. In addition to individual and group support, CBMHS clinicians and volunteers have offered educational programming on teen dating violence, bullying, stigma and general mental health awareness at each location.



Focus Church Development Program

The Focus Church Development Program (FCDP) is a joint program of CIC and Classis New Brunswick that pairs CIC staff and volunteers with one church for a full year of discernment and program development. CIC walks with the church to explore the strengths, needs, and dreams of the congregation and larger community, and assists in the creation of programs that address these dreams. In 2016/17, FCDP has worked with First Reformed Church of New Brunswick. A committee with members from CIC and First Reformed met monthly to set the agenda for the work and to discuss progress; a congregational meeting in October gathered input and ideas from the congregation; and an intern began a version of The Table at First – a group that met Sundays after church for lunch and a topical discussion. Applications for the 2017/18 FCDP program are available now at ImprovingNJ.org/FCDP.



CALTR – Churches Accomplishing Long-Term Recovery

CALTR rehabilitates homes along the New Jersey shore that were devastated by Hurricane Sandy in Monmouth, Middlesex and Ocean Counties, utilizing donated supplies and group volunteers from around the country, as well as local unemployed volunteers who improve their job prospects and earning potential.

Approximately 4,000 homes in NJ are still in need of repair 4 ½ years after SuperStorm Sandy made land fall. Most organizations have closed down operations due to a lack of funding; CALTR is one of the few left standing. 2016 saw the following accomplishments:

- 171 week-long volunteers from 7 groups across the U.S. and Canada
- 38 local unemployed volunteers mentored in job skills
- 5,784 estimated total volunteer hours
- \$147,871: Approx. Total saved by homeowners on labor and materials

Though we are still blessed with out-of-town groups for 2017 (7 groups total), we are seeing more of an emphasis on local groups and individuals. Our MLK day of service hosted 20 local volunteers from RCHP, RU Alpha Phi Omega and Volunteer Match.

CALTR is always seeking funding sources and we wish to thank those organizations that donated in 2016, including The Foundation to Save the Jersey Shore, Colts Neck Reformed Church and the Community Outreach Group of Middletown, NJ. We also wish to thank the many hospitality volunteers who give so generously of their time and hearts, in particular, Chuck Lacaille and Holly Sutterlin, our kitchen managers.

Our efforts to raise awareness of the work of CALTR were accomplished with bright yellow t-shirts with the CALTR logo and a promotional video was completed in the Fall of 2016. We are grateful for the time and talents of videographer Jeff Wertz and editor, Amina Megalli. To view the video, follow this link:

<https://vimeo.com/188204830>



NeighborCorps Re-Entry Services

NeighborCorps Re-Entry Services provides free, supportive services that help individuals to transition from Middlesex County Jail back into society and avoid recidivism.

The Participants

NeighborCorps serviced over 30 Participants in 2016, a significant increase from our previous average of 10 Participants. Our increase was a result of working with the jail's staff to obtain their "County Sentence Report." This report contains a list of over 100 individuals who are being released within the year who we are able to contact directly and inform them of our program's support and services. By obtaining this list, we have established a reliable referral system and can maintain our numbers consistently.

With the help of all our interns and volunteers, our Participants have been able to receive reliable, unconditional support and empowerment beginning inside the jail and continuing throughout their re-entry process. Along with this support, they have also been able to obtain emergency housing preventing homelessness, gain substantial employment, utilize Church Based Mental Health Services enroll in drug and alcohol treatment programs, receive accompaniment to court, probation and parole appointments, and any additional assistance when needed.

The Navigators

In 2016, NeighborCorps trained over 20 volunteers with 725 contact hours accounted for. NeighborCorps continuously outreaches to local churches, communities, organizations, and colleges in order to meet our growing demand of Participants. We have added additional volunteer roles in order to support our Navigators and cater to those who desire to get involved but are unable to meet the time commitment of a Navigator. These roles include, assisting with employment, transportation, and accompaniment.

The Interns

NeighborCorps has welcomed 12 interns over the course of 2016. Interns from Rutgers Social Work, Criminal Justice, and Public Health programs, Princeton Theological Seminary, Western Theological Seminary, and the Middlesex County Public Defenders Office, have all been a tremendous help in this year's growth.

The Staff

This past summer, NeighborCorps has also welcomed Jacob Rogers-Martin, former Princeton Theological Seminary intern, as our Employment Coordinator. Jacob was an outstanding member of the team during his summer internship with NeighborCorps by going above and beyond to help our Participants during their re-entry process. He has continued the same passion with his work as Employment Coordinator and we are blessed to have him on board. Currently, the Program Director and Employment Coordinator are our sole staff roles.

NeighborCorps in 2017

This year, as NeighborCorps continues to strengthen, we are planning to build on our program involvement for both Navigators and Steering Committee members. We have a high need for male Navigators and will continue to outreach to the community, building partnerships in order to meet this need.

We started the year off with utilizing our newly published, online training modules, which have helped Navigators to prepare for the Participants they begin to support. We have developed two modules for our website and are currently working with a Public Health intern to complete two additional modules. Beginning in January, Navigators are also required to attend an orientation at the jail before their clearance process is complete. The jail provides this orientation in order to familiarize volunteers with the jail's staff and visitation policies.

Earlier this year, we hosted a screening of Ava DuVernay's 13th documentary as part of our film series. With a great turnout of 100+ people, we will be hosting another screening this summer on solitary confinement. We will continue our film series throughout the year in order to not only increase local awareness about issues surrounding mass incarceration, but to also give people an avenue to become active in their own communities.

CIC BOARD

Brian Szura, President

Clark Petrie, Vice-President

Craig Jensen, Secretary

Rev. Douglas Shepler, Treasurer

Rev. Seth Kaper-Dale

Rev. Dr. Ursula Cargill
Rachel Weissenburger
Anthony Di Grigoli
Jean Stockdale
Dr. Carol Turner
Carol Anderson

CIC STAFF

Justina Otero

NeighborCorps Program Director

Jacob Rogers-Martin

NeighborCorps Employment Coordinator

Harry Pangemanan

CALTR Project Coordinator

Deborah Convery

CALTR Volunteer and Hospitality Coordinator

April Humes, MA, LPC

CBMHS Clinical Director

Lorrie McGough, LPC, LCADC, NCC

CBMHS Mental Health Counselor

Carol Turner, EDD

CBMHS Consulting Psychologist

Carrie Dirks Amodeo

CIC Executive Director

Kathy Fisher

CIC Bookkeeper



Annual Report 2016

Respectfully Submitted by Lara Arp, WIMNI Executive Director

Who Is My Neighbor? Inc. (WIMNI) is a 501c3 affiliated nonprofit of RCHP that provides enriching social and educational programs for children, families, and adults to create connections and to foster a sense of belonging in our diverse community. We are thankful for a wonderful year and grateful for the generous community support to operate our many programs, for our five Rutgers School of Social Work interns, and for our Board Members: Meredith Carman, Tracy Cangiano, Rita Finstein, Kathy Malkiewicz, Hagit Mano, Nychey Michel, and Judy Targove.

The Family Den celebrated its fifth anniversary. This energetic early childhood enrichment and parenting support program is meeting many needs within our community among families with young children, and it averages 20-30 families per day, with over 16 nationalities represented within the participants. This year *The Family Den* is thankful to have been a welcoming place for the newest refugee children and parents resettled into Highland Park. We

are thrilled to have social workers Meredith Gard and Anita Shukla-Accardi join our staff, and we are thankful to Pastors Seth and Amos who join us on Friday mornings for sing-along.

The Highland Park Senior Social Network celebrated its third anniversary and boasts an active 25 participating adults (ages 60 and older). In addition to concerts, museum outings, and luncheons, this group gathers monthly for meetings to discuss topics of interest and to create opportunities for socialization.

The Cave Afterschool Drop-In Center, a partnership program of Who Is My Neighbor and RCHP, provided a positive experience for over 50 middle school students. Enrichment opportunities in The Cave included a cooking class operated by medical students from Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and multiple arts programs.

Camp Cool Environment provided seven weeks of summer fun for over 30 children per week. Through daily games, hands-on activities and field trips, the kids gained a greater appreciation of the natural world and our relationship to it. Over one-third of the campers attended on financial scholarships generously given from individuals in our community. We are very thankful for our outstanding camp staff: Jewel “Ducky” Soroka and Julianna Klioze.

In 2016, WIMNI ran a musical theater camp featuring the original work *Go With the Flow* written by Amos Caley. WIMNI brought *Elegies: A Song Cycle* featuring Carl Phillips to Crossroads Theatre and The Do Rights funk concert to Pino’s. WIMNI continues to be the collection organization for Terracycle in Highland Park, recycling hard-to-recycle materials that would otherwise be thrown away. WIMNI proudly serves as fiscal agent for Highland Park Buddy Ball sports program for children with disabilities and fiscal agent for the Highland Park African-American History Project.

Statistical Report January 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016 Reformed Church of Highland Park

Rolls as of December 31, 2016

Active Members: 250

Inactive Members: 37

Children of Members and Adherents: 125

Adherents Adults: 93

Total: 412

Members Received: 28

Jeasita Sundalagi

Steven Sundalagi

Holly Mandel

Justan Mitchell

Denise Arroyo-Lerner

Janice Arroyo-Lerner

Trace Laluyan

August Jan Laluyan

Pat McCartney

Theo Campell

Nick Archer

Pat Devlin

Nora Devlin
Sylvia Hooe
Olga Muleka
Isaac Ehioghae
Jacob Rogers-Martin
Sam Corbett
Sena Kaper-Dale
Bobby Kopac
Juliana Dolan
Angela Tawo
Nate Roselwicz
Jocelyn Pangemanan
Meghan Lord
Kelly Glenn
Englin Tumundo
Alex Turpin
Lindsay Stevens

Deaths: 6

Barry Kauff
Ellen Hori
Gregory Mauro
George Mills
Suzanne Turner
Kay Pitt

Baptisms: 3

Jackson Parlatore
Francisco Gabriel Maldonado-Gordic
Molly Barrett

Marriages: 3

Ketty Sumampouw & Donald Goodman
Anna Urrey & Neil Rae
Kristine Sawlsville & Joseph Teahl

Finance Committee Report
Reporting on January-December 2016

Members: Jim Collins, Selma Colmant, Colin Jager, Seth Kaper-Dale, Charlie Page, Carol Turner, Sharon Teahl, Jim Zarra

As a church we are truly blessed by the generosity of members and friends, both past and present. Some of the projects this past year which were funded in part by special gifts created as memorials by church members and their families, and our investment accounts -- Main, Hartz, and Sanctuary Accounts -- included supporting our student ministers, providing special music during worship, supporting vacation bible school, and financing the summer Mission Project. We are fortunate that despite having to sell \$51,608 worth of stock to meet expenses, the value of our investments increased over the year (\$654,390 -- Dec 2016) vs. (\$641,491 -- Dec 2015).

Regular Income decreased by \$70,064 (\$329,470 --2016) vs. (\$399,534 -- 2015) reflecting decreases in weekly congregational giving, rent for use of church facilities (\$65,356 -- 2016) vs. (\$82,829 -- 2015) and a special gift of \$93,175 in 2015.

Fortunately our Total Expenses were lower in 2016 (\$476,195) vs. \$505,212 for 2015. Lower costs of staff, utilities, office expenses, repair and upkeep, were balanced out by increased costs for insurance, classis dues, property maintenance, etc.

Although our 2017 budget is \$5946 less than in 2016 (\$385,660 --2017) vs. (\$391,606 -- 2016), we have a first quarter \$21,760 deficit which is \$10,618 higher than the first quarter last year. While some of this difference reflects that 2016 Easter was in March, the first quarter is often difficult financially as expenses are high.

The many valuable ministries of the Church continue to depend upon the generosity of its members and friends. We wish to thank you for all of the ways that you contribute financially to the church.

The Peace of Christ to you,

Charles Page
Finance Committee