Reformed Church of Highland Park
125th Annual Congregational Meeting
May 3rd, 2015

Agenda

1. Call to Order and Opening Prayer
2. Prayers of Thanksgiving and Petition For Our Church 2014-2015 (5 minutes)
3. Appointing Clerk Pro-Tem
4. Presentation of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting from May 4th, 2014
5. Election of Elders and Deacons
6. Report from Pastor Seth & Stephanie
7. Report from Music and Youth Minister - Amos Caley
8. Reports of the Consistorial Committees
   Care
   Faith Development
   Fellowship
   Finance
   Justice and Mercy
   Property
   Worship
9. Reports from Pastors Ben & Henny
10. Special Committees & Affiliated Organizations Updates
    • Immigration Committee
    • Church Accomplishing Long Term Recovery
    • Neighborcorp
    • Labor Trafficking Report
    Who Is My Neighbor, Inc.
    • RCHP-AHC
    • Thrift Shop
    • Women’s Sewing Circle
10. Statistical Report
11. Other Business
12. Adjournment with Prayer & Benediction
RCHP Annual Meeting
May 4, 2014 - Minutes

Opening: Pastor Seth Kaper-Dale called the meeting to order at 12:20pm and offered the opening prayer. Attendants offered prayers of thanksgiving and concern for 2013-2014.

Approval of Minutes: Pastor Seth Kaper-Dale presented the minutes of the 2013 annual meeting as recorded by Franco Juricic and raised a motion to approve; the minutes were approved unanimously.

Election of Elders and Deacons
Nominated for Consistory, Class of 2017 are:
Carol Turner
Bill Henry
Milagros Aguayo
Elaine Hudson

Pastor Seth Kaper-Dale acknowledged and thanked those on the consistory finishing their service. No other individuals were nominated for further consideration in the meeting. Pastor Kaper-Dale raised a motion to approve the four new consistory members; Patrick Beckford seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Committee Reports:

Care Committee
Franco Juricic presented briefly on the care committee with an overview of main focuses, but summarized saying that most of the “care” within the church happens very organically and quite frequently. On a more formal basis, Pastor Awatt and Pastor Henny have been faithfully leading homebound and hospital visitation; the new Steven Ministers class is one week away from completing the 50 hours of training.

Faith Development
Wendy Jager presented the Faith Development report, summarizing what happens each Sunday, each week, each month throughout the year. Over 50 volunteers are involved and she invited others to boost the committee which currently has 5 members and could use more to help organize the growing ministry. Pastor Paul Van Kempen briefly spoke about the youth group activities; the youth group regularly has between 15-20 attendants and includes not only church attendants but community members outside of the church.

Fellowship
Jean Stockdale presented on the Fellowship Committee, inviting anyone who has ideas about fellowship to come to the committee to share. She noted that they are always looking to consider new ideas and welcome feedback. Ilona Faust spoke briefly about the Prayer Shawls group, noting that despite the winter weather preventing several weeks of meetings, the production of prayer shawls by individual members did not stop.

Finance
Pastor Seth Kaper-Dale presented the financial report on behalf of Charlie Page, unable to be present. He noted that the market value of investment funds rose by $91,527 since 2013. He mentioned that some of the investments were sold in order to finance the air conditioning system installed in the sanctuary. He additionally noted that $141,000+ of donations were received in the prior year specified for the Justice and Mercy Committee.
Justice and Mercy
Brian Szura presented the Justice and Mercy committee, chiefly noting the large number of participants not only within the church, but outside organizations which have sought RCHP as a partner in ministry, such as a Muslim group that approached RCHP about partnering in a project to feed the homeless.

Property
Harry Pangemanan was unable to be present; attendants were encouraged to review his report distributed in the packet.

Worship
Pastor Paul Van Kempen noted explosive growth of the music ministry in 2013-2014, with over 100 musicians participating in the 2014 Easter service. The relatively new sound system has helped make more expanded music possible. He also noted the Psalm Plunge, started in 2013 and the recording of RCHP’s first CD.

Affiliated Organizations Updates
Lara Arp reported on Who Is My Neighbor, Inc., noting the expansive programs for infants to seniors. Pastor Seth Kaper Dale reported briefly on the Affordable Housing Corporation, noting that there are currently 12 buildings: 9 that the AHC is fully responsible for, 2 under construction and almost completed and 1 recently purchased.

Budget
Pastor Seth Kaper Dale reported on the budget. He noted the increase of 4 part-time staff which allowed for an expansion of ministry; currently there are 14 staff members and 4 student ministers from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Other Business: Pastor Seth Kaper Dale thanked the congregation for making the 2013 sabbatical possible. Lee Seldon proposed, “May it not be another 10 years before the next sabbatical.” The large majority in attendance vocalized agreement!

Elaine Hudson gave an acknowledgement of thanks to Lisa Berman for “going far above and beyond the call of duty” in all of her work for the church. Attendants gave a round of applause in agreement.

Frank Corcoran announced that the thrift shop had extended its operational hours to 30 per week, doubling the income since 2011. Frank acknowledged the hard work of volunteers and invited others to participate with sorting on Tuesday mornings. Monica Day inquired about sorting hours in the evening for those who are unavailable on weekday mornings; Frank and others involved will look into this possibility.

Patrick acknowledged that the growth of the congregation has led to concerns about space. Wendy Jager encouraged people to attend the first service. Questions of growth and space accommodations are being taken into concern.

Closing: Franco Juricic offered a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 1:08pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Nobuko Hori
The Election of Elders and Deacons

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 Pastor(s).

This year Patrick Beckford (e), Selma Colmant (e), Becca Chapman (d) and Tom Huber (d) finish terms on Consistory. Brian Szura finished his first term, but as a first-time deacon is edible for a second term and has accepted an invitation to be nominated for another term as deacon.

Additionally, over the past few months we had three other elder and deacons step down because of unforeseen circumstances in schedule and/or health. Franco Juricic (e), Pat Pignataro (e) and Pat Kaufman (d) all stepped down during the year.

This means there are a total of 8 slots to fill.

Filling the incomplete terms were Consistory appointees Diane Fisher (e), Colin Jager (d) and Augus (Teddy) Assa (d). Since they all filled brief incomplete terms over the past year Consistory recommends all three for full three year terms, as the class of 2018.

Diane Fisher (e)
Colin Jager (d)
August (Teddy) Assa (d)

Additionally, Consistory recommends the following 5 individuals

The Consistory recommends for Consistory, class of 2018

Franco Juricic (e)
Mary Caterson (e)
Anthony DiGrigoli (d)
Cathy Stanford (d)
Brian Szura (d)

The Consistory, following long-standing precedent, brings a full slate of nominations to the church. We have carefully considered the gifts for ministry of the candidates, as well as the needs of the church at this time.

While it is in our bylaws that additional nominees be permitted to be received from the floor, such nominations will only be received if the individual nominated has agreed, in advance, to serve. If a name is suggested here, but the person hasn’t been asked in advance, we will note it in the minutes and consider the person next year.

Seth and Stephanie’s Pastoral Report, 2015 (May 1, 2014-April 30, 2015)
Today marks the 125th year that the Reformed Church of Highland Park has officially been in operation as a local congregation. We are so thankful that God brought us here, 14 years ago now, to seek God and to respond to God with all of you. We believe that God’s revelation in Christ Jesus, and Christ’s bold journey and God’s commitment to raise Christ up, shapes the life of this congregation. God is being revealed here, through Christ’s living body—the church. And Christ’s body (filled with the Spirit) is living a bold and beautiful journey. We see, over and over, that God is the God who raises us up to walk in newness of life to participate in the transformation of all things.

Last year we thanked God for the tremendous growth in staffing that had occurred over the previous year. We were also particularly thankful for the leadership development that had occurred in the church—assisted by our disappearing for 13 weeks of 2013 as we went on Sabbatical! One of the great gifts of this year has been the continued strength of leadership displayed by staff, student interns, elders and deacons and lay leaders.

At the Consistory’s annual meeting in May of 2014 we set, for the first time ever, goals for the year. We have never been a goal setting church. Our general approach to ministry has been to respond to the movement of the Spirit that hits us at any given time and to follow the Spirit’s lead. That approach has taken us far, but last May we stopped and paused and wondered together about what it would mean to set goals. We were careful to keep the goals “open” and not to lock ourselves into tightly defined goals that stymied the listening to God that we are used to around here. We just hoped that setting goals might help open our ears to new avenues for discipleship and service.

Here are the goals that we operated with for the past 12 months.

1) Going Deeper in Our Lives of Faith: As our church has grown we have hoped to encourage a deepening of the Spiritual life among all congregants. This has led to the creation of small groups, to the encouragement of prayer groups, to the specific outreach to congregants to encourage participation in all forms of ministry. We have focused a bit on going deeper individually (we had a series of adult education classes on individual Spiritual Practices) but most of Going Deeper has been about going deeper together. There are a tremendous number of opportunities around here for going deeper. *Have you found your place(s) to do that?* Maybe, for you, going deeper means joining the Housing Board. Maybe going deeper means joining the Prayer Shawl Ministry. Maybe going deeper means finding a way for 5 minutes of regular solitude in your cubicle at work.

   Excellent, thoughtful, Sunday worship is another way to go deeper, and we are so thankful for the shared leadership on Sunday morning that Pastor Paul, and now Pastor Amos, have provided for us. The incredible sharing of gifts that occurs in 1 hr time on Sunday morning is breathtaking and food for our souls. We hear from many of you that you experience a similar profound connection with God through Sunday worship.

   The Consistory has focused on this goal of ‘going deeper’ and will likely continue to focus on it.

   Pastoral care, spiritual care, is something that RCHP longs to provide to each and every member. Sometimes, due to the whirlwind of activity at the church, we fear that people think the two of us are “too busy” for individual care. That is not the case. We will do our best to reach out to you, but please do not hesitate to call Lisa in the office and to set appointments with us. We will always make time. Also, there is a wealth of caring, prayerful leadership that is provided by others besides us. Look for spiritual support and care from among the church family!
2) Collaborating for Impact: Our church is considered a regional leader in the work of justice and peace. That reputation has been in place for years now. However, up until recently, most of our work has been done alone. We have formed our own community development corporation, our own trafficking work, our own housing corporation, our own ministries for immigration, green-initiatives, etc… There have certainly been exceptions to this ‘solo approach.’ For example, Who Is My Neighbor Inc is, at its core, is about collaboration. The board is made up of the community at large. Some of our other boards, too, have great community connections and liaisons. However, we haven’t, in some of biggest areas of engagement, taken advantage of the power of collaboration. We are committed to changing that.

Over the past year we have started working harder to sit at tables with regional, state and national leaders to add our voices to larger efforts. An example of this new commitment is Seth’s joining the board of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture. Through this new collaboration (and through Amos Caley’s being on staff of NRCAT for the past year) we’ve become committed to the efforts to end Solitary Confinement. We will also, likely, become part of collaborative efforts to write and push for legislation to make Torture illegal (another NRCAT initiative). We are starting to sit at the Statewide Immigration Roundtable, to deepen connections with other groups concerned about immigrant rights. We will likely start pushing for Driver’s Licenses for undocumented immigrants—joining with Faith In New Jersey (formerly PICO). We ‘dipped our toes in the water’ of Environmental collaboration this year—joining Greenfaith and hundreds of thousands in a NYC march calling for new regulations on fossil fuels. We started working with lots of groups concerned about Mass Incarceration, and we’ve found ways to sit at tables with wardens, corrections officers and reformers. We took our Hurricane Sandy work, which we’d been doing under our own umbrella, and brought it into close connection with World Renew—a much larger and more impactful Disaster Response organization. All of these efforts of collaboration allow us to make faithful social movements stronger, and, we come away stronger—with new skills and understandings that prepare us for the work God is calling us to do. Maybe, for you, going deeper is about helping us collaborate with others in efforts that change the world.

3) Coming Alongside Other Congregations (especially smaller ones): Through the work of the Classic New Brunswick CDC (which was started at RCHP by Pastor Seth and Student Pastor Dawn Seaman in 2010) we have a mechanism for regular encouragement with small churches. RCHP is central to the functioning of this organization—now called Churches Improving Communities. The goal of Churches Improving Communities is to come alongside churches and to help them dream dreams for community transformation. RCHP has seen community engagement as central to our transformation and it is something that we can share through the existence of this agency. Brian Szura is the President of the Board. Jean Stockdale is the director. Carrie Dirks-Amadeo is the grant writer. Other church members are board members. Need I say more? RCHP plays a central role in CIC and we hope, through this agency, to help other churches grow their local engagement. We hope that you will be attuned to the other communities around here where God is at work through a body of believers. What are they doing well? Where could they use assistance from a stronger congregation? How can we support and encourage the work of another congregation?

Multicultural Fellowship and Service
RCHP is a real leader in terms of being a multicultural church. Our worship, finally, has come to reflect the diversity of our church family. However, we have work to do to develop a truly multicultural identity. The ministries of the church, and the way we are in fellowship, do not yet reflect the fullness of our great diversity. There are certainly signs that this is happening—some of our ministries and groups are quite diverse. Please don’t take offense if your particular group is very diverse! Our hope is that over the next 12 months time and attention will be given to deepening our commitments to getting to know each other across linguistic and cultural divides. We welcome your thoughts and ideas.

One of the ways that we will bridge a divide with the Hispanic community is through the ministry and outreach of Rev. Ben Rivera. We are thankful that Ben has joined our staff this year and we invite the church to work with Ben in our efforts to reach into a community that is present around us, but not yet present in large numbers within our church.

A wonderful staff keeps us moving forward!
Finally, it needs to be said that the creative and alive faith of the RCHP staff and interns plays a huge part in the success of this church. This church has grown so much, and without a strong and encouraging staff we simply couldn’t handle all the elements of church life. Each staff member and pastor has made the church stronger.

We are particularly thankful, as this year comes to a close, for the ministry of Pastor Paul Van Kempen. Without Paul we wouldn’t have two worship services, we wouldn’t have a sound system, we wouldn’t have developed so many musicians for musical leadership. Without Paul we wouldn’t have know that when he left us we would need to find a musical and worship minister with similar musical and theological skills. To be frank, Paul took RCHP Worship to a new level of meaning and beauty.

We are so thankful that Amos Caley is on board and continuing to move the worship of RCHP in the direction that Paul laid out for us—taking it to new places and new heights. Amos brings tremendous musical gifts, new ways of working with musicians and others and a particular theological bent that fits beautifully with the overall direction of this church. We are so thankful that Amos has joined our church on staff.

This report never feels complete—our lives as your ministers are replete with blessings. Thank you for letting us serve God with you—God is good!

Peace to you,
Pastors Stephanie and Seth
In my first three months of formal ministry here at RCHP, the most prevalent theme that has surfaced and resurfaced is **anticipation**.

When I was first offered this job in January I knew immediately that I would accept it, even while deeply anxious about whether or not I could fill the position adequately. Allaying the anxiety that accompanied filling the space vacated by a beloved minister and friend, I gave myself over to anticipation: eager to reenter and serve the community that so shaped me as a graduate student.

The season of Lent brought with it new forms of anticipation. As a community, we figuratively walked the path to Jerusalem, knowing its pain and expecting its promises of hope beyond sorrow. Meanwhile, Sarah and I walked our own path in anticipation toward parenthood, relishing in its joy, terrified of its struggle, but confident in this hope of new life.

These first three months at RCHP have fashioned within me a new way of living—finding a home within the anticipation. Even now, as Sarah and I continue to balance ourselves on the brink of parenthood, and as I straddle the boundary between inexperienced and confident pastor, I am learning to fully embrace the season of anticipation as an embodied reality, both for the church and for myself.

Anticipation continues to build within me. I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the support and encouragement that the church is providing so graciously. I am excited about the future of both the worship and the youth ministries. I am eager to meet our new child. I am hopeful that, even in the face of unprecedented pain, death, and hopelessness, the church is capable of bringing a message of resurrection.

Easter has happened and is happening. The Christ is alive again and has rejoined those who have been violently rejected and abused. This Christ is now breathing the Holy Spirit of liberation through us, and we can now eternally anticipate some big things, around the bend and into the horizon.

In this spirit, here are a few things that are both happening and are anticipated for the various ministries to which I’m lending leadership:

- The various worship teams and choirs have continued unhindered through the leadership transition, and we are enjoying focusing on words and lyrics as windows to deeper personal and theological reflection. I am so grateful and humbled for the opportunity to work with such talented, passionate musicians, singers, writers, and thinkers. A special word of thanks to Carl Phillips and Derek Cannon for their pivotal contributions within these ministries.
• I am looking to continue widening the diversity of expression that currently enriches our worship experience. Treating each aspect of the service as an expression of congregational prayer is helpful, as our community here at RCHP is already so beautiful diverse and expressive.
• The youth group has continued to steadily grow, and I am building rapport with many of the students. We will enjoy our youth retreat on May 30th, and we’ll continue programming through the summer, with a particular focus on environmental justice punctuating a lot of fun, community building activities. I would be remiss if I didn’t highlight the depth of support and wealth of knowledge that exists within the people of Lara Arp and Wendy Jager, without whom I would have no idea what I’m doing.
• Leadership development is a boring term to describe an amazing process, in which I am privileged to be able to play a role here at the church. I want to continue the work of realizing a new community of God in the world, especially through nurturing the gifts, passions, and dreams of all who participate in the life of this church and its ministries. This goal will foreground all of the work I do with youth, worship, and justice projects in the future.

I am deeply grateful for this opportunity to work, and I anticipate with the whole church the wonderful and challenging road ahead of us.

Warmly,

Amos Caley

Care Committee Annual Report 2014-2015

We are grateful to God for all the ways that church members care for one another.

The Care Committee maintains and supports the Stephen Ministry program at RCHP and coordinates the various forms of pastoral care that take place in RCHP.

Forms of pastoral care include:

- Regular home, hospital and care facility visit by pastors, elders, deacons and church members.
- Respite Babysitting (a new program spearheaded by Diane Fisher)
- Meals prepared for families with new babies (coordinated by Diane Fisher)
- The Support Group continues to meet on the 3rd Sunday of each month for 1 hour.
There is also a peer-led support group that meets on Fridays that kicked off in the past year. 
- A bereavement group met weekly through the summer of 2014.

**Stephen Ministry**

RCHP hosted a regional Stephen Ministry workshop on February 28th with 16 congregations attending. This conference introduced Stephen Ministry to many who had not experienced it before.

Throughout the past year, 10 Stephen Ministry pairs have been meeting on a weekly basis.

**Faith Development Annual Report May 2014 – April 2015**

Committee Members – Lara Arp, Deb Convery, Amos Caley, Wendy Jager, Grace Kamanda, Carol Turner and Paul Van Kempen.

We give thanks for God’s blessings and the opportunities given to us to deepen our understanding of God’s ways and work in the world through Faith Development opportunities.

**Each Sunday Morning**

**Sunday School**

Because of our committed volunteer teachers our Sunday school program continues to be a solid and engaging place for our children ages 3 – high school to explore and discuss scripture and the stories in it. Around 70 children attend Sunday school each week. Our deepest gratitude goes to our teaching team who puts in countless hours of volunteer time preparing and teaching the lessons in order to make this all happen. We give heartfelt thanks to Tracy Cangiano, Sarah MacKinnon, Theresa Dolan, Wendy Nussman, Linda St.Pierre, Grethchen Chapman, Faith Kamanda, Wendy Jager, Erika Spring, Diane Fisher, Danielle and Chris Willard-Kyle, Meghan Beddingfield, Franco Juricic, Grace Kamanda, Anna Laycock, Christie Poluan, and Kat and Peter van Elswyck.

New this past year, Sunday school now meets the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, Sundays of each month with the education hour on the 1st Sunday being reserved for an all church brunch. Adjusting to this new schedule has caused some confusion for families and could possibly be one of the reasons our attendance has been less consistent this year as compared to last year.

**Adult Education**

We thank God for the opportunity to grow in faith through two Sunday morning adult classes – a lectionary based Sunday Morning Bible Study and topic based Adult Education – averaging 30 adults in attendance per week. We are thankful for the twenty-four church members who served as class teachers throughout this year. This year’s adult education topics included such topics as:
The spiritual practices of sacred reading, centering prayer, observing the Sabbath, meditative singing, forgiveness, and liturgical poetry. We also focused on scriptural studies like the revolutionary teachings of Jesus, Israel’s pilgrimage psalms, and texts of terror feminist readings. Adult education also serves as an opportunity for church members to be updated on current ministry opportunities (detention visitation, NeighborCorps, and mental health services). Finally adult education involved conversations on theologies of the cross, philosophy of religion, reformed theology, and interfaith dialogue.

**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. This year’s theme was the ABC’s of biblical characters. 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 Lara Arp leading 1st service children’s worship and student minister Sandi Beresford leading 2nd service children’s worship.

**Nursery**
JoAnn Kafka and Sharon Hopkins continue to staff our Sunday morning nursery. We thank them for the love and care they provide to all who enter the nursery.

**Children’s Library**
With over 300 books the RCHP Children’s Library (Room 107 in the Social Hall) serves all families of RCHP. The library’s focus is on Bible stories, biographies of people of faith, other faith traditions, prayers, and quality children’s literature. A parenting resource section and numerous board books make the library useful for the youngest and older patrons. New this past year was the “Summer Book Bingo” challenge, which encouraged kids to read books from each of the different categories in the library. This event culminated in a “Bible Bingo” with all the prizes being – you guessed it – books.

**Each Week Throughout the School Year**

**Monday Night Youth Programs**
In order to lend more continuity to families and allow for youth leadership to meet together all youth programming was switched to Monday evenings this past year.

**Kids in the Cave (KITC)**
Kids in the Cave continues to go strong with an average attendance of 16 4th and 5th grade children from our congregation as well as from our community at large. The kids especially enjoyed a new service component called “Do It” added to the program this year. Participating in Operation Shoebox through Samaritan’s Purse and decorating cookies to show love to special folks in our church were favorites. Topics covered this year were school, friendships, parables, Christ’s “I am” statements and images of God. Lara Arp and Wendy Jager co lead this group with excellent weekly assistance from Diane Fisher and Swati Singh.

**Middle School Youth Group**
This year a Middle School Youth group was formed. This group is led by student intern Justin Karmann along with Renee DiGrigoli. It has been rewarding to watch the youth in this group grow in their relationships with each other and connect with Justin and Renee.

High School Youth Group
2014/2015 has been a year of transition for the High School Youth Group as Paul Van Kempen completed his work here in February 2015 and we welcomed Amos Caley. A few highlights from Paul’s end of the year report included thanks for Youth Group events like: the haunted house, the lock-in, the Bazaar, a great fundraiser, the mall trip, the fast food progressive dinner, cook-outs, messy game night, movie night, super bowl party, beach trip, mini-golf, a movie outing and more. The “Christianity and Culture” series produced a number of good discussions amongst the youth group as well. For more current information and what’s coming up with the youth group see Amos Caley’s report.

Weekly Bible Studies
Thanks to Pastors Seth and Stephanie for continuing to offer the Wednesday and Friday morning Bible studies (Wednesday 7:45 – 9:00 a.m. and Friday 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.) Student minister Justin Karmann also offered a bible study on Monday nights. If there is interest in this time to meet then we will offer it again.

Prayer and Meditation Group
The Tuesday Night Prayer and Meditation Group continues to meet in the quiet room from 7:00-8:00pm. This spiritual formation group supports RCHP members through prayer and meditation traditions. Under the leadership of Deb Convery and Carol Turner, 8 to 10 core members meet weekly. Each week focuses on a particular aspect of prayer or meditation: ministry of cards and prayer for recipients (Donna Bispo), chanted meditation with Blessing Circle (Kathy Malkiewicz), guided meditation (Deb Convery), and centering prayer (Carol Turner). The fifth Tuesday of the month allows connection with other small groups at RCHP dedicated to prayer practices. The group also serves in the healing liturgy every second Sunday. If further information is needed or you would like to join, please contact Deb Convery or Carol Turner.

Women’s Covenant Group (monthly)
The Women’s Covenant Group continues to thrive as we travel along the path of spiritual exploration as well as keeping a healthy balance of “fellowship” during our monthly gatherings (2nd Sunday of the month, at 12:15 p.m.). Our October retreat, at Crossroads Retreat Center, had 18 in attendance. Our focus was on the Wisdom Tradition as expressed in Proverbs 8:1-32, led by Pastor Patty Fox. Outreach to the congregation at large included our October, 2014 healing liturgy for women who are victims of domestic violence, which resulted in the creation of an original liturgy, as well as a new communion plate. In celebration/recognition of International Women’s Day weekend in March, 2015, we hosted a Saturday evening viewing of the documentary “Half the Sky”, which chronicles the realities of girls and women in “developing” countries. The Sunday worship service focused on the challenges for girls world-wide in receiving an adequate education. Many thanks to Pastor Stephanie, Gretchen Chapman and Carol Turner for their valued partnership, support and guidance in celebrating the Divine Feminine. In Christ Sophia, Deb Convery.

Small Groups
Small groups continue to develop at RCHP. Some groups really took off this year. Other groups have remained small. Each group has its own flavor. Kat and Peter van Elswyk have recently started a new group for 20s and 30s. All the groups are listed each week in the bulletin and we invite you to call Seth and Stephanie if you are trying to decide which group might be the best fit for you.

**Faith Development Events throughout the Year**

**Vacation Bible School**
We praise God for an incredible Vacation Bible School with the theme “God’s Fruity Spirit.” Over 100 children from our church, South River Reformed Church and the community at large spent the week learning and experiencing God’s love for them. Special thanks goes to Diane Fisher for her organizational leadership and to Paul Van Kempen for writing the VBS original musical “God’s Garden.” Additional thanks to 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.

**Live Nativity Sunday School Field Trip**
As an opportunity to experience the Christmas story in a new way RCHP families and children visited the Middlebush Reformed Church’s live nativity during advent. 30+ folks gathered here to share a meal and then carpool over to the live nativity.

**Christmas Pageant**
The Christmas pageant was a collaborative effort, but special thanks go to Meredith Carmen for a lot of the costume organization and to the women’s sewing circle for making repairs to existing costumes and creating new angel costumes for our growing cast.

**Easter Labyrinth**
We thank God for the opportunity to experience the story of Easter through this year’s labyrinth “Covered in the Mantles of Christ; Wrapped in the Wisdom of God.” Over 120 people walked the Easter Labyrinth over Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Thank you to the thirteen sets of artists and the labyrinth greeters who prayerfully guided this journey with their creative gifts.

**Looking Ahead**
As we continue to grow in numbers we look for ways that Faith Development opportunities can serve to connect us with each other as we connect more deeply with God. In addition, we look forward to ways the young at RCHP can serve and minister taking actions to live our their faith in the here and now.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Jager
Faith Development Chair and Minister of Children’s Ministries
FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT
June 2014-April 2015

Our purpose is to facilitate social and educational opportunities that serve in bringing our diverse congregation together. Many church members volunteer, making our fellowship events fun and successful. We thank God for you people and for these wonderful occasions:

Weekly
- Day-to-day Business
- Coffee and bagels every Sunday

Once-a-month
- Potluck Brunch first Sunday of the month
- Nature Club- ongoing
- Game night – 1st Friday each month
- Senior Prayer Breakfast or Seniors Day Out, 2nd Friday each month
- Nature Club outing – 2nd Saturday morning each month

As needed
- Youth Appreciation Dinner (twice)
- Meals for families with new babies
- Cakes for Christenings
- Flowers placed in the church in memory or celebration of loved ones

Seasonal Events
- Mother’s Day Breakfast (May)
- Father’s Day Breakfast (June)
- Jim Hudson Memorial Softball game-(June )
- Church Camping Trip (AUG)
- Picnic Van Wickle historic house (AUG)
- Rally Day- (Sept)
- Yard Sale- (Sept)
- Summer Pastor Appreciation party (Sept)
- Halloween Party-(Oct)
- Holiday Bazaar-(Nov)
- Senior outing lunch and concert in Princeton-(December)
- Advent craft night & Pot Luck dinner-(December)
- Christmas caroling for the Members for homebound seniors-December
- Children’s Christmas party combined with pageant cast party (Dec)
- Tues Lunch with the Pastors (8 weekly sessions)
- Concession table for the Lower Raritan Watershed Association Benefit- February
• Party for Pastor Paul, Shannon and Ben - February
• Easter Party, Easter Egg Hunt and Children’s Easter party (March)
• Maundy Thursday potluck dinner - (March)
• Easter Breakfast (after Sunrise Service / before 9 a.m. Service)

Looking forward
The Committee is interested in having a Book Club, Movie Night and Senior Sing-a-long.

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 yours,
Elaine Hudson

Finance Committee Report, 2015
Reporting on January-December 2014

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 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 $56,322 worth of stock to meet expenses, the value of our investments was not dramatically reduced over the year ($626,963 -- Dec 2014) vs. ($652,390 -- Dec 2013).

Regular Income increased by $17,327 ($322,990 --2014) vs. ($305,663 -- 2013) -- reflecting increases in weekly congregational giving and rent ($79,382) received for use of church facilities. Also, we received a large amount of money ($88,672) that was specified for justice and mercy projects—most prominently Hurricane Sandy.
Our Total Expenses were slightly lower ($584) than in 2013. Lower costs of staff, utilities, office expenses, repair and upkeep, van insurance, etc. were balanced out by increased costs for benevolence (Hurricane Sandy, etc), classis dues, property maintenance, etc.

Although our 2015 budget is $16,000 lower than in 2014 ($385,238 --2015) vs. ($402,000 --2014) we have a first quarter $21,896 deficit that is $12,868 higher than last year. While the first quarter is often difficult financially as expenses are high, this deficit is of concern.

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

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Report from Finance Committee…continued

As members of your church finance committee/consistory, we monitor the RCHP spending deficit as our church reaches out and serve one another and our neighbor as ourselves. You and your family are our reason for being and you and your family allow us to continue to grow, to care and to share.

What do you already do? What would you be willing to do to help us meet our commitments to one another and to our extended community in the coming year? What talents and gifts have you shared with us already? What else would you like to bring in terms of talent and financial gift--to be blessed and shared with our covenant community? What help and support do you need to enable you to share your time and talents with us?

These are the kinds of questions that the Finance committee/Consistory would like to consider with you during the coming year. Join with us as we prayerfully seek to meet our financial commitments, now and in the future. In the coming year, we will ask each committee and small group to help us establish a time and talent, church account, that with our financial support, becomes a tithing practice to the community we love.

Prayer: Help us continue to live into the values of the Gospel: help us to put our treasure where our heart is, help us to offer our loaves and fishes, until we are truly astonished by the abundance that we have to share with one another. And help us to remember that the miracles keep happening: More than 500 belong to our extended community. Thousands are touched by God through our loving outreach and engagement. Work with us to welcome and affirm the talents and gifts of all who worship with us.

Submitted by: Carol Turner and Colin Jager
Justice and Mercy Committee Report,
May 1, 2014-April 30th, 2015

The Justice and Mercy committee, and lots of subcommittees loosely affiliated with it, continue to be a major source of spiritual growth and engagement for RCHP members and friends. This year we expanded the depth and breadth of our community’s work in such areas as prison/detention work, environmental concerns, and found new ways to reach out into the community and within the Classis New Brunswick.

This year the committee was led by Brian Szura, and the committee consisted of Pat Kaufman, Frank Corcoran, Jean Stockdale, Cathy Stanford, Chris McNabb, Lara Arp, Becca Chapman-Smith, Richard Roczynski, Deb Convery, Tom Huber, Jess Munger, Colin Jager, Joel Wattacheril, Amos Caley, Erika Spring, Meghan Beddingfield, Raymond Jones and Pastor Seth.

Activities & Projects This Past Year

Farmers Market Food Distribution: RCHP Justice and Mercy hosted the Friday Vegetable Distribution in conjunction with the Farmer’s Market. RCHP Sunday School rooms and the Quilt Rm. functioned well for this and many church volunteers participated. Approximately 40 people were served each week.

Vacation Bible School (VBS): This year’s VBS raised funds for water filtration systems and raised $1,000! This project was a project of Compassion International.

Mission Trip: For this year’s Mission Trip, Harry Pangemanan and Anthony Digrigoli co-led a group to Rockville, Illinois. The trip focused on helping rebuild after this past year’s tornado damage.

Mission Dinner: Justice and Mercy helped organize the annual Mission Dinner, a dinner at the end of the Bazaar that helps us support various missionaries. Funds raised helped us support our missionaries (see below) and the following: Robert Wood Johnson chaplains $100; St. Peters Hospital chaplains $100; HP Fire Department $150; HP Volunteer Rescue $150; Camp Warwick $200; NBT Seminary $1,000; NRCAT $400; Classis New Brunswick CDC $500; NeighborCorp Re-entry Serviced $200.

Angel Tree: Justice and Mercy organized the Angel Tree Gift Drive and provided 65 local children new clothing and toys as Christmas/Holiday gifts.

Detention Center Visitations: We continue to coordinate weekly detention center visits, which have been led by Chris McNabb.
**Hurricane Sandy Relief:** Under the direction of Harry and Deb, CALTR (Churches Accomplishing Long Term Recovery) continues to do fantastic work in helping families at the New Jersey shore get back into their homes. CALTR has brought many hundreds of volunteers through RCHP’s doors to help with Sandy-related recovery work. RCHP also hosted a World Renew conference on long term recovery this past March.

**National Religious Campaign Against Torture:** RCHP is a “participatory congregation” in NRCAT’s campaigns. Pastor Seth is also on the national board of NRCAT. Our work with NRCAT will deepen and expand this year as we seek to end the use of solitary confinement in New Jersey prisons. A member of the committee participates in NRCAT’s monthly teleconferences.

**Torture Report Reading Vigil:** In January RCHP hosted a vigil where participants read the report that was released bringing to light the use of torture by the CIA and the failures of torture methods to obtain any valuable information. The event was attended by many not directly associated with RCHP.

**Human Rights of Women Conference:** The Women’s Group organized and hosted a conference on women’s rights this past winter.

**Human Trafficking Movie Night:** Organized by Sandra Beresford, this event was well attended despite the big snow storm.

**Human Trafficking work:** Jean Stockdale has tirelessly worked to help victims of human trafficking, and has accomplished amazing results. Jean’s ministry to people who are often invisible to the rest of society has truly changed many lives for the better.

**Hunger Van:** RCHP teamed up with Muslims Against Hunger to host two Hunger Runs this past year!

**Highland Park Social Justice Forum:** Liz Estes helped organize the first of this program this past year, which was well attended and brought many people from throughout the community together to discuss this important issue.

**Night of Outrage, Lament & Hope:** RCHP hosted a lament service and vigil following the death of Michael Brown.

**Prison Letter Writing partners:** We continue to write letters to incarcerated people. Cathy Stanford has stepped up in a leadership role in organizing meetings between RCHP and Canterbury House at Rutgers to discuss our letters and offer support.

**Interfaith Prison Coalition:** Members of the committee participated the first meeting of this coalition, which was organized in large part by Amos. We look forward to further meetings and in particular to actions which may arise from the coalition.
**NeighborCorps Re-Entry Services:** The program continues to grow, and additional funding has come in to support and expand the program. Many members of RCHP provide leadership roles and are on the steering committee.

**Ocean in a Teacup:** RCHP presented this play, written by Lee and Neil Selden, as a fundraiser to support Neighbor-Corps. Over $1050.00 was raised! The turnout was wonderful, and the cast had a lot of fun!

**Pete Seeger Benefit Concert:** The committee organized this benefit concert to help raise funds for a new non-profit, the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership. David Brahinsky and friends provided the wonderful musical tribute to Pete Seeger, and the event was very well attended. Over $1,000 was raised to help the LRW purchase water monitoring equipment!

**Churches Improving Communities (CIC):** Formerly the Classis New Brunswick Community Development Corporation, this non-profit was dreamed up at RCHP and is led by many of our members. CIC seeks to help other churches in the Classis develop, fund and promote their own social justice programs. CALTR and NeighborCorps Re-Entry Services are under the umbrella of CIC.

**Low Income Mental Health Program:** Bonnie Gordial and Carol Turner are working to create this program which will bridge and fill the gap between existing social services.

**LGBTQ Overture and Open and Affirming Support:** Many in our community have continued to promote the LGBTQ overture at General Synod, thanks to the leadership of Liz Estes. RCHP members were also invited by members of Colts Neck Reformed Church to discuss their experiences within an open and affirming congregation, as Colts Neck seeks to become open and affirming as well. RCHP also hosted a meeting of approximately 30 minister and consistory members to craft language to make the Classis New Brunswick and open and affirming Classis.

**Drone Conference:** Seth, along with committee members, attended a recent conference on the use of drones, which was hosted by Six Mile Run Reformed Church. We hope to meet this issue as a church of faith more deeply this issue in the coming year.

**Environmental Sub-Committee:** Colin Jager is currently organizing a sub-committee that will seek to faithfully address environmental concerns and issues. The committee decided that this area was too big to house under the regular J & M committee structure.

**A Little Change for a Big Change:** The committee re-institute this program where a group or cause is highlighted during service, and small donations may be made as our way of saying thanks and of recognizing their important work.
Mission Support: Missions who receive significant financial support from RCHP: The Ten Clay’s in Italy, The Fords in Kenya, the Vis’ in Palestine, and the Sendra Child Survival Program in Indonesia. This year we have assigned three members of the committee to keep in more regular contact with the missionaries we support and to inform the congregation of their activities and needs. Through the committee, RCHP provided the following financial support: $1500 for Marlin & Sally Vis; $1500 for the Fords; $750 for the Ten Clay’s; $1,000 Sendra Child Survival Program.

Compassion International - Since 2010 RCHP has partnered with Compassion International through child sponsorship. As of May 2015 35 congregants or congregant groups (The Women's Sewing Circle, the Sunday School) sponsor and correspond with 45 children around the world. Every other month or so interested sponsors gather at Wendy Jager's for a letter writing night where we pray for and write to our sponsored children.

Operation Shoebox - As a joint effort this year the Sunday school along with Kids in the Cave and the Middle School youth group assembled and sent 13 Christmas boxes to Samaritan's Purse to be distributed worldwide to children in need. We hope to make this a church wide service project next year.

Looking Ahead

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

- prison work and ministries including detention, incarceration and solitary confinement issues;
- environmental issues;
- Nepal;
- immigration issues, both in the US and in Europe;
- Drones;
- LGBTQ issues within the RCA;
- Human trafficking.

The following events are currently planned:

- RCHP Work trip to Washington, North Carolina, August 10-14

Respectfully submitted,

Brian P. Szura, Chair
Justice & Mercy Committee
Prepared by Harry Pangemanan

Thank God that by His grace and mercy we have carried out all the duties and responsibilities of this past year. Our building has been around for more than 100 years, and the building has been a central part of the effectiveness of ministry here. So many people are in and out in this building, so many important things going on in this building, so many meetings have taken place. This is true both for members but also for the community at large. This is a place where all people gets blessings and help.

I have been given the responsibility as a property manager by the church Consistory, and I’m grateful for all the grace that I’m shown in carrying out this responsibility. I’m also appreciative of all the help that has been given to me in carrying out this responsibility.

Here are all my activities I’ve carried out as property manager:

- Ensure that all activities of the church service goes well
- Pay attention to things that can inhibit the activities and take action to avoid problems before they start.
- Perform daily tasks
- Carry out minor repairs in accordance with my ability

As for the repair work and the daily tasks that have been implemented in a year, namely:

- Replacing lower kitchen cabinets
- Replacing light bulbs
- Install two de-humidifiers in The Cave
- Cleaning snow
- Cleaning the yard
- Cleaning the church garden
- Adding a bath in thrift shop
- Gutter Cleaning
- Plumbing clean out
- Checking all fire exit signs
- Checking air conditioner and heater
- Replace the hot water tank
- Changing air suction for bathrooms and kitchens

This is the annual report of the property committee. Thanks for all the help that has been given. I very much appreciate you all. If there are things you want to ask you can contact me. With regards this report was given to the church.

Harry Pangemanan, Property Manager
Worship Report May 1, 2014-April 30, 2015

2014-2015 was another wonderful year for worship at RCHP. Together we approached God, we received a fresh word from God and we began the process of responding to God. That is the flow of the faith experience that we share.

Sunday Schedule
Over the past year we have ‘perfected’ (at least for now!) our schedule for Sunday morning. We moved to two morning worship services in Fall of 2012, trying that out for an entire year. We found that two services in the summer months was not necessary, so by summer 2014 we decided to do two months of just 1 service. This had the added benefit of giving people who were now “first service” or “second service” people a chance to be in fellowship. Additionally, having us worship together in the summer reminded us of the central value of Sunday fellowship as a way to build and maintain relationships. Since Fall, 2014, we have been having 1st Sundays of the month be Communion Potluck Sundays. We have a large potluck between the services and forego Sunday School on those days.

Changes to the Chancel
Over the past year we have made so many changes to morning worship, and most of the bold changes really were a credit to Pastor Paul’s leadership. Paul really felt that a serious transformation of the chancel area would help more leaders to be part of church music. That is exactly what has happened. We have room not only for large choirs, we also have room for as many as 8 instrumentalists to be up in front leading us in song on any given Sunday. The changes that have been made also allow us to have the baptismal font and the communion table properly highlighted in worship. Baptism and communion are the two central symbols of God’s grace in our tradition. We are glad their is room to make them front and center.

Seasonal Sanctuary Transformation
Throughout the year there have been various transformations of the worship space. Adding banners and artwork and “ministry mantles” that speak aloud the theme of the season have been wonderful additions. Sundays where the sanctuary is filled with memorial flowers are also particularly beautiful. We are so thankful for the many artists.

Musical Leadership
RCHP is blessed to have had Carl Phillips as our consistent and wonderful accompanist/choir director for many years now. Carl has been open to the wide array of music that is utilized as prayer in this place and works well with musicians. Adding Pastor Paul, and now Amos, to the mix at RCHP, has been transformative. Having a theologically trained director of music who is attentive the variety of ways that people in our church pray and connect with God has helped make our worship some of the most stunning worship anywhere. It would be impossible to list every person who has been part of musical leadership this year. Easily 100 people have led the church in song
vocally or with instrument. We are particularly excited about youth musicians who have joined various praise teams and have performed special music. We are thankful for what music means to our prayer life at RCHP.

**Sound and Screen**
RCHP Consistory had many discussions back in 2012 about whether or not we wanted to be a church with a high quality sound system and with a powerpoint screen. We had strong debates about it, with Pastor Paul really pushing for us to make these changes. Like with the changes in the chancel Paul felt that changes in sound and technology would give more people opportunities for leadership and would enhance the quality of the service. It is hard, at this point, to imagine worship without it.

**Multi-ethnic, Multi-Linguistic Worship Leadership**
2014-2015 RCHP took additional steps to bring other languages into our time of worship. We are thankful for the leadership of the Rivera family at 1st service and the Indonesian Choir at second service. There were many others who offered their gifts in other languages, but these were the groups most often called upon!

**The Voices of Children**
Paul, and now Amos, have done wonderful things with Voices of Praise. Children in the church are learning to read music, they are playing chimes and they are thinking theologically about the lyrics of songs. The fact that nearly 20 kids come each Wednesday to be musically engaged is a sign of the quality of what is being offered! First Voices continues to thrive as well—with 7 children regularly engaging in practices on Wednesdays.

**Gospel Choir**
One of the biggest additions to our life over the past year has been the Gospel Choir. With 40 different people participating in it during the first year it has clearly been meaningful to participants! Congregational response to gospel music has also been overwhelmingly positive. We cannot thank Derek Cannon enough for what he has done for the church by adding Gospel to our expressions of prayer.

**Chancel Choir**
Week in and week out the chancel choir offers beautiful music to our church family. We are thankful for the beauty of these voices and for the consistency that this choir brings to our worship.

**Student Ministers**
One joy we have at RCHP is to watch students live into leadership in worship. We were blessed again this year with Vito and Sarah in the summer, and Meghan, Chris, Justin and Sandy during the academic year.

**Preaching that is a Response**
We (Seth and Stephanie) have been blessed to be preachers in an active church. Preaching is best when it is the “second act,” an act of reflection on real praxis (work) in the world. God is at work, and reflecting on God’s work makes for good preaching. Thanks for being a church that is attuned to God’s work, participating in God’s work, and ready to join us in reflecting on the joy and challenge of God’s word to us.

Worship committee meets the first Thursday of every month, from 6:45-7:30. Amos runs the meetings now. We reflect on past services, and turn our eye toward the next weeks, and wrestle together with big questions about faith and worship. Join us.

Peace, Pastor Seth

Consistory Annual Report
Ministerios Hispánicos - RCHP
May ‘14 – May ‘15
Rev. Ben Rivera

Narrative:

The Hispanic Ministry at Reformed Church of Highland Park was launched in on September 2014. Thus, this report only covers seven (7) months to the present. Four (4) main areas of focus were identified in conversations with Rev. Seth Kaper-Dale: 1) Bible Study; 2) Worship; 3) Translation; and 4) Outreach. Additionally, I was to provide support to the main staff with pastoral care when requested from church members and/or the community. Once the space, time and days of the week were agreed upon, outreach was conducted via email and phone calls to a list of Hispanic members and visitors. The outreach connected to sixteen (16) individuals from which (4) four members helped to initiate the group. What follows is a summary of what has occurred:

- **Bible Study** - Out of the thirty-five (35) possible meetings for Bible Study, only two were cancelled due to inclement weather. Areas of study are Prayer, Gospel of Mark and Matthew. This is the best attended component with an average of four (4) people.
- **Worship** – The participation with this element of the ministry is best describe as erratic with attendance oscillating form the very good to ministering to the angels, that is, no other people are present. We had thirty (30) out of thirty-five (35) Worship services – one was cancelled for inclement weather and the others due to the holidays Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year, and Holy Friday
- **Translations** – This has being a challenge at two fronts: *first*, there are not enough people to create a rotating team of translations or numbers present to translate to; *secondly*, the equipment malfunctions as well as creates health concerns scratching the skin.
• **Outreach** – this demanding constituent of the ministry averages fifty to seventy-five flyers per special service (1 Cultural Worship, 2 Mini-Concerts, 1 Healing and 1 Family & Friends). Weekly, we provide information about our services to about four to five people. Social media is being used as part of the outreach efforts – presently, we’ve recorded several segments of our services to upload to Youtube.

• **Spiritual Discipline** – On 4/27 we began a 40 Days of Coming Closer to God as a way of seek wisdom, direction and favor from God in these endeavors.

• **Pastoral Care** – I’ve done hospital visits, calls and counseling as well as officiated in a funeral service in support and request of the Senior Pastoral Staff.

**The Future:**

During the summer months, July and August, we plan to be down in the ground doing outreach in the following cities: Highland Park, New Brunswick, Perth Amboy Plainfield and Piscataway/Edison. Our hope is as it was. We are looking to have between 30 to 75 people by the beginning of the fall.

My family and I would like to thank the Pastors and the consistory for entrusting us with this ministry. May God be glorified in all that Reformed Church of Highland Park does.

**Immigration Committee**

**What:** Immigration Ministry/Committee

**When:** Monday nights, 6:30-10pm on a weekly basis
Committee Nights, the first Thursday of the month, 5:45pm

**Why:** As a result of our Indonesian brothers and sisters being personally impacted by the injustice of the immigration system, we became involved in visiting detainees on a weekly basis. Immigrants arrive and make a life in this country to improve their situation or their family's quality of life. Too often the immigration system treats them as criminals. Instead, we point to their goodness and their potential and when appropriate, we work with them to achieve success in the United States by providing for their practical needs upon release from detention.

**Who:** We visit those who are held in ICE custody within Elizabeth Detention Center and Delaney Hall Detention Center. Often these are asylum seekers but other times they're simply newly arriving immigrants or people who've lived here for a long time and don't possess proper documentation.

We visit with church members, Rutgers University students, interns, and concerned citizens.

**Success:** We've been able to accompany two people as they were released from detention. One is living in NYC and doing well. The other is Isaac who attends our church, rents a room from a church member, and works in patient care at RWJ Hospital. We're currently visiting approximately 6 individuals and hopeful for their release. We continue to visit them regardless of the possibility for release to provide friendship and pastoral presence in the midst of an otherwise desperate situation.
Dreams for the future: We hope to provide long term housing options for asylum seekers and newly arriving immigrants in partnership with AHC. If you're interested in helping with this effort, please contact Pastor Seth.

CALTR – Churches Accomplishing Long-Term Recovery ~RCHP 2015 Annual Report

In the Fall of 2014, under the umbrella of Churches Improving Communities, the Sandy Relief Project received a $99,000 grant through the Hurricane Sandy NJ Relief Fund, and formally changed its name to CALTR – Churches Accomplishing Long-Term Recovery. The grant provides for the purchase of construction materials for the continued restoration of low-income homes at the Jersey shore. The grant also provides salaries for two part-time employees: Harry Pangemanan, Project Coordinator and Deb Convey, Volunteer Recruiter/Hospitality Coordinator.

To date, CALTR has rehabilitated over 120 homes and hosted 65 week-long work groups from the U.S. and Canada. Our goal for the grant cycle, which runs from Nov. 1, 2014 – Oct. 31, 2015, is to rehabilitate an additional 40 homes. One of CALTR’s additional goals is to mentor those who are unemployed/underemployed, so that volunteers enhance their skill sets, thus making them more marketable when applying for jobs. To this end, CALTR has worked closely with Work First NJ, a State agency that provides clients with life skills guidance and encourages volunteerism as a way to build confidence and provide for networking opportunities. CALTR has also connected with Civic Justice Corps, an organization that provides job training for young men who were formerly incarcerated or are currently court-involved; and Renovation House, a year-long residential program for men with substance abuse issues. We will be working with volunteers from both of these organizations over the course of the spring and summer.

CALTR continues to work with Gateway Disaster Response Team for work site assignments in the Union Beach area and also continues to partner with World Renew Disaster Response, the Michigan-based organization that arranges for our week-long work groups. We thank both of these organizations, as well as the Reformed Church in America and Keyport Community Church, for providing CALTR with support that is valuable beyond measure. CALTR also wishes to thank the dozens of volunteers who give so selflessly of their time and talents in helping to ensure that RCHP provides hospitality that is nourishing to both body and soul.
In Peace,
Deb Convery,
Committee Chair*

*CALTR Steering Committee: Seth Kaper-Dale, Harry Pangemanan, Anthony DiGrigoli, Carrie Dirks-Amodeo, Bill Seaman (Keyport Community Church), Clark Petrie (Colts Neck Reformed)

NeighborCorps Re-Entry Services
Submitted by Anna Laycock, Director

This report documents the services provided by NeighborCorps Re-Entry Services for the 2104 year. NeighborCorps’ volunteer navigators engage Participants, as well as the Participant’s community, cultivating relationships critical to the Participant’s successful transition. Additionally, Navigators support the Participant in becoming active members of and leaders in their communities. Thanks to the generous funding from the Middlesex County Office of Human Services, NeighborCorps has served a total of 9 Participants during the pilot-program period. The number of Participants with recidivism is 1.

During the pilot year from April 1 2014 to December 31, 2014, NeighborCorps staff and volunteers have had 869 points of contact with Participants and their community members. Points of contact include face-to-face interactions and telephone and text communication. Participant’s Community is defined as any individual who is identified by the Participant as a positive support and agrees to communicate with Staff/Navigators of the program. In addition, the total number of respective volunteer hours is 1,168.

During this pilot-program, each Participant was matched with a team of up to 3 Navigators. Navigation teams met on a weekly basis and worked together to create monthly Navigation Plans based on Participants’ short and long term goals. Navigation Plans included a list of 4 to 5 goals within the 3 GPS categories. GPS is a navigational tool used to assist with goal setting. GPS is an acronym that stands for: G- Gainful Employment, P-Personal Development, and S-Social Integration. Navigation teams were encouraged to consider each of the 3 categories, and the Participants’ Community-Support persons were often included in the goal-setting process. Navigators met with Participants each week and reviewed together the Navigation Plans as they worked to assist and empower Participants. Examples of completed Participant goals include: attending NA/AA meetings, completing inpatient and outpatient drug and alcohol programs, securing housing, securing employment, reestablishing relationships with children and family members, etc.

In addition to providing assistance with setting and completing goals, Navigators provided other services to all program Participants. The supportive role of Navigators was key to empowering program Participants. Navigators provided non-judgmental, compassionate support and mentorship. Weekly meetings included time for Participants to share openly their challenges, successes, or concerns. Additionally, Navigators and
staff often provided referrals to various social service providers and organizations based on the needs of Participants.

NeighborCorps’ Staff and Committees established connections with a number of community organizations in order to increase the quality of service provided. In particular, the PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transitioning from Homelessness) Program served as a significant resource for NeighborCorps Participants facing homelessness. Other community partners include among others: Classis of New Brunswick CDC Circle of Friends, Rutgers Mountain View Project, Rutgers Mountain View Project Student Organization, Middlesex County Minority Concerns Committee, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, Collaborative at Rutgers, Elijah’s Promise, RCHP Affordable Housing Corporation, National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) of Middlesex County.

During the pilot period, NeighborCorps provided a volunteer opportunity for 20 volunteer Navigators. Funding enabled us to provide training to all volunteers, including 3 major community-wide training events open to the public. Volunteers were trained in a variety of disciplines including the role of navigators, appropriate conduct/behavior, SWOT analysis, substance abuse, emergency protocol, and self care. In addition, NeighborCorps provided Navigator Manuals to all navigators, which included a comprehensive list of resources and services available in Middlesex County. Navigators were recruited through local communities of faith, including the churches served under the Classis of New Brunswick CDC. Additionally, NeighborCorps provided volunteer opportunities through partnerships with community partners.

NeighborCorps would like to recognize the generosity of the Middlesex County Office of Human Services as well as the cooperation and participation of the administration and staff at the Middlesex County Adult Correctional Facility for their contributions to a successful pilot program.


(an affiliated non-profit of RCHP)

May 2014-15: We are thankful for a wonderful year at WIMNI, grateful for the generous community support received to operate our many programs, and welcoming of our five new board members. Current board members are Jacquelyn Juricic, Meredith Carman, Tracy Cangiano, Phillip Dowdell, Rita Finstein, Kathy Malkiewicz, Hagit Mano, Nychev Michel, Robyn Shumer, Sarah Stout, and Judy Targove.

The Family Den celebrated its third 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 15-30 families per day, with over 13 nationalities represented within the participants. We are thankful for Pastors Seth and Paul who join us on Friday mornings with their guitars for singing.

The Highland Park Senior Social Network celebrated its first anniversary and boasts an active 25 participating adults (60 and older). In addition to concert and museum outings, this group gathers
for monthly meetings and has begun an oral storytelling series called “Beginning Life Trails and Tales.”

The Cave Afterschool Drop-In Center, a partnership program of WIMNI and RCHP, provided a positive experience for middle school youth, under the leadership of Cave Director Erika Spring. The Cave received a grant to incorporate a visual and poetic arts enrichment component into its spring semester.

Camp Cool Environment equaled summer fun for over 20 elementary aged children and 5 teenagers per week during the summer months. 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.

In the fall, WIMNI successfully held its first musical theater camp featuring the original work “Tree Town” written by Paul van Kempen. In the spring, WIMNI successfully operated its first sewing and woodworking camp.

WIMNI continues to be the collection organization for Terracycle in Highland Park, recycling hard-to-recycle materials that would otherwise be thrown away. WIMNI continues to partner with Elijah's Promise to operate A Better World Café, offering healthy, seasonal and local foods to all regardless of one's ability to pay. WIMNI continues to serve as fiscal agent for Highland Park Buddy Ball, a sports program for children with disabilities.

We are thankful for receiving a grant to host WIMNI’s spring fundraising concert featuring Irish and Bluegrass music. We are grateful to have hosted the 2nd annual Gratitude Graffiti Project in Highland Park, with over 27 participating locations. We are thankful for the four Rutgers School of Social Work students who served as WIMNI interns during this past academic year.

Respectfully Submitted, Lara Arp, WIMNI Executive Director

Who Is My Neighbor? Inc. (WIMNI) is a 501c3 nonprofit that provides enriching social and educational programs for children, families, and adults, and creates connections and fosters a sense of belonging in our diverse community.

Still Waters assistance to victims of labor-trafficking

Jesus asks us to visit the sick and the imprisoned. Our church was blessed with a special opportunity by visiting one detainee at the Elizabeth (NJ) Detention Center. We learned he had been labor-trafficked – brought to the USA for a supposedly good job, then forced to work instead in terrible conditions by the company that brought him here. In 2010 we obtained his release from detention. Other workers from his country who had been trafficked with him soon came to know that our church was a safe place to go and we would try to help them get justice.

By assisting each one to complete extensive paperwork to the US government, our Still Waters program has made it possible for more than 150 survivors of labor trafficking to obtain the right to remain and work in the USA so they can recover from serious harms they suffered. We have been able to help at least 80 families reunite, who had been separated for several years
due to the trafficking. In March, Pastor Seth went to Houston to protest the policy of a foreign
government that was blocking more families from being reunited.

Taken from the 23rd Psalm, “…God makes me lie down in green pastures, God leads me
beside still waters, God restores my soul”, our Still Waters program bring peace and repair to
damaged lives. Amazingly, the cost of operating the program is covered by generous donations
from people who have recovered, so it does not come out of our general fund.

Jean Stockdale

RCHP-Affordable Housing Corporation Report
May 1, 2014-April 30, 2015

The past 12 months of RCHP-AHC have been extremely rewarding ones. We have
now been in operation for 8 years, and in that time we have made a real contribution to
homeless or housing-insecure individuals with the highest level of financial need and
complicating factors in our area.

RCHP-AHC consists of a board of 16 members. 13 members of the board are church
members. This agency gives many in our church community a meaningful way to live
out the work of the beatitudes—to help the meek inherit the earth. By providing “Grace
First” housing, giving people a stable place to lay their heads, individuals are then able
to develop other aspects of their identity. We have been at this long enough now to see
incredible personal advancement in tenants. This model is working.

RCHP-AHC now owns & operates the following houses.

- Irayna Court—6 Apartments for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care
- All Saints Apartments—11 Apartments for previously homeless Veterans
- 3 family units on South 2nd Ave in Highland Park (a duplex and a single family unit)—
  Housing for financially eligible families
- 2 single family homes for 10 unrelated chronically homeless single individuals in New
  Brunswick
- 4 units (2 duplexes) in Newark for Justice Involved Youth—10 unrelated youth living in
  the 4 units
- 2 units (1 duplex) in Newark for Chronically Homeless Mentally Ill Adults—8 unrelated
  previously homeless adults
- 1 Group home in Franklin for 4 developmentally disabled adults

RCHP-AHC also serves as Property Manger for 3 other houses.

- 1 duplex on Cedar Ave in Highland Park for two financially eligible families
- 1 single family house on Meeker St. in Newark for 4 Justice Involved Youth
- 1 single family house in South River for a financially eligible family
RCHP-AHC also just turned over a house that it developed in Edison to Enable Corporation. This house serves 4 individuals.

In all, RCHP-AHC houses 86 individuals in 35 units on 14 different properties. All tenants are recipients of case management services from partner providers and also recipients of intentional care and service from our agency and from area faith community partners.

It is amazing to see an agency that began with a singular dream of building 6 units for women aging out of foster care expanding into this incredible network of care.

The operating budget is over $400,000, and the property holdings are valued between 5-7 million. All costs associated with RCHP-AHC are covered by the agency and its sources. RCHP-AHC covers half of the salary for Lisa Berman (our church executive assistant) and pays $1,000 a month rent to RCHP.

Peace to you,
Pastor Seth

Tower Thrift Shop Report – Submitted by Frank Corcoran

The Tower Thrift Shop currently has 16 volunteers who are cashiers, they sort clothes, and help keep the store clean. We are open for business 31 hours per week; 1,612 hours a year. We ended 2014 bringing in $23,705.88 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.
**Rolls as of December 31, 2014**

Active Members: 224
Inactive Members: 74
Children of Members and Adherents: 135
Adherents Adults: 154
Total: 587

**Members Received: 38**

Alex Lawrence
Eric Lawrence
Renee Dimayuga
Kathy Malkiewicz
Colleen Ellerker
Teresa Hyers
Justin Karmann
Nicole Karmann
Kristin Tone
Michelle Tanasy
Donna Bispo
Deanna Hepburn
Matthew Hepburn
Anthony Digrigoli
Renee Digrigoli
Gladys Waynor
Carrie Dirks Amodeo
Kendra Humphries
Cecelia Rowedder
Rachel Ruggieri
Dorothy Meyer
Crystal Meyer
Sharon Blessman
Ann Vardeman
Bobbi Knowlton
Swati Singh
Robin Thompson
Edward Thompson
Phillip Dowdell
Richard Riccardi
Diane Dickson
Isak de Vries
Kwonjin Choi
Jerry Choi
Luz Mercedes Tapia
Sarah Kok
Sarah Jean Faust
Michael Woodyard
Deaths: 6
Jennifer Peplinski
Lorraine Tuers
Helen Haluko
Robert VanErden
Barbara Johnson
Fran Schell

Baptisms: 9
Santiago Kaufman Legra
Kendra Humphries
Jessica Humphries
Charlotte Faust
Sarah Jean Faust
Kennedy Faust
Aleah Jaramillo-Mauro
Gladys Waynor
Grace Elizabeth Barrett

Marriages: 7
Derek Cannon and Allen Bryant
Cassandra Olivera and Franklin Moreno
Nancy and Karen Van Dyke
Michelle Alphonso and Isaul Vargas
Devren Hunt and Tivoli West
Jovonn Quinones and Shabree Wilson
Colleen Ellerker and Terry Heyers