



"Nearer"

Dear WRC,

I had the great privilege this past week of attending the latest Confirmation class, and I want to tell you a little about what happened.

Sara and the students invited me to join them for a session to get to know each other a little better. It was my own little version of an Ask Me Anything, and as you can imagine, that's a little daunting. Giving a group of teenagers the reins to ask you whatever they want comes with some fear and trembling.

There were a few random questions asking about my favorite color (blue), food (tacos), and animal (Great Horned Owl). My personal favorite asked how I felt about pickles, specifically dill. There is a story there. Also: I'm for them.

For random questions, though, that was it. They didn't really mess around in the shallow water; they went for it. What struck me, though, was that they also didn't dive into tense political or ethical arguments. As a pastor these days, you sort of expect to have to answer for all the Church has ever done wrong or be thrust into the center of a raging public debate about whatever hot-button topic is in the spotlight. But they didn't do that. Their questions went right to the heart of some of the most important things they could have possibly asked. Questions like: "How did God find you, or how did you find God?" "When did you start truly believing in God?" "How often do you pray?" "Since no one knows for sure, what gives you confidence that you're right about life after death?" "How did you get so close with God?"

Their questions point to the quest that they're on, to a yearning, a searching, hidden just below the surface of their teenage lives. When given the opportunity, they didn't mess around, they went right for what matters most. This is something we can learn from them. There is so much else that distracts us. There is so much else that starts to cloud up this business of being the Church here in Wyckoff, or of being Christians in the world. So many other things begin to seem so important, begin to cause us to worry. We need reminders now and again to focus on what really matters.

They didn't need that reminder. They weren't distracted. They went right for the jugular. Because if this isn't what all of this is about, then what are we even doing?

How do we get near to God? How do we grow up in Jesus? How do we recognize and receive God's presence, nearer to us than we are to ourselves? Aren't those THE questions?

In Christ,
Pastor Andy

**SPECIAL POINTS OF
INTEREST**

- Family Ministries News
- Missions News
- Announcements
- Joys and Concerns
- February Birthdays and Anniversaries





FAMILY MINISTRIES



THIS PAST MONTH

We've hit the ground running in 2023! There is a deeper awareness of the Holy Spirit moving in our student's and leader's lives. As always, the Lord is moving and, specifically, rising up this generation to be faithful disciples. Their honesty and vulnerability are beautiful to witness. On January 13, we took some youth to Spruce Lake Retreat Center for their Ignite Weekend. The teachings provoked discussions on identity, salvation, and confidence. The Gaga pit was well loved by all, including the leaders! Then, last week, a few students attended the RISE conference that was organized by Touch the World. This was a fun and engaging conference that invited students into deeper reflection. We started asking, "What is God saying to me and how do I apply it into my life?" In Sunday School, we've begun practicing for the "Godspell" performance with 'Mr. Greg.' We've discovered a lot of hidden talent in our students and I'm excited to see how that will continue to develop as they lift up their voices in worship! We had a family campfire as well. I'm looking forward to February when we will begin our monthly family dinners! Thank you for your continued prayers for our students and families; they are much appreciated.



NEWARK SERVICE DAY FOR FAMILIES OF ALL AGES

Join us for mission work on Feb. 26. We will join North Reformed Church in Newark to make and distribute lunches. We'll meet at Ponds Reformed Church in Oakland at 12:00pm. Then, we will make sandwiches and head to North Reformed Church in Newark to make and distribute lunches to the community. It's a meaningful experience and we invite both young families and youth group students to join us.

Sign up to attend: <https://forms.gle/pQK1EokcyYJXAQ3m6>

Sign up to donate Items: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4cafad29a7fdc25-youth1#/>

FIRST YOUNG FAMILY DINNER

We invite our young families to join us in the family ministry space on Feb. 22 at 5:30pm. We'll enjoy dinner together then break into small groups. Adults will discuss a parenting topic each month while children engage in a craft. After February, we will meet every third Thursday of the month.



WEEKLY EVENTS



BIBLE STUDY

Wednesdays at 9am on Zoom- Join us for 45-minute dive into each week's Scripture passage: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/91413616383?pwd=QmVKd3djNU5mdVYyQlNwQ3crbTNvQT09>



MISSION OPPORTUNITIES



FEBRUARY WALK-IN DINNER THANK YOU

On Saturday, February 4, WRC prepared and served food at the homeless shelter in Hackensack. We thank our volunteer cooks, cleanup crew, and servers, pictured below, for their help with the walk-in dinner!



MEET A MISSION OF WRC

Meet Family Promise of Bergen County! Family Promise is based in Ridgewood and works throughout Bergen County to empower homeless working families to become self-sufficient by providing temporary housing and personalized support. The aspect of Family Promise's work that you are likely most familiar with is the Walk-In Dinner program which we support by preparing and serving a meal at the Hackensack Shelter. While we participate four or more times each year, Family Promise ensures that dinner is served every night. We also support Family Promise financially, which helps to make a number of programs to serve homeless working families possible, including Camp Lots-of-Fun which takes place for two weeks each August for the children in the shelter and support programs. For more information regarding Family Promise, their website is bergenfamilypromise.org.

Family Promise has just reached out and asked their supporters to purchase cases of **16oz** bottles of water for them to distribute. They give out water every day at the shelter and are in need of extra help meeting that need. We're taking on the challenge to collect cases of **16oz** water bottles here at the church to then be delivered to Family Promise.

We will collect the water from February 15 through February 26. Cases of water will be collected in Heneveld Hall during Coffee Hour on Sundays and can be left on the wire racks outside the Heneveld Hall entrance during the week. Please keep that entryway tidy as it is used regularly by the Nursery School and other groups.

If you have any questions, contact Karen Riether - kriether@gmail.com or 201-788-5674.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



ASH WEDNESDAY

On Ash Wednesday, February 22, the sanctuary will be open from 8:00-10:00 am for people to receive ashes and pray.

That evening, there will be a 7:30pm service held at First Reformed Church, 259 Lafayette Avenue in Hawthorne.

ACTIVITIES UNLIMITED MEMBERSHIP

Activities Unlimited is a senior men's club, based in Wyckoff, which offers many activities for members, such as Golf, Public Discussion, Bridge, Tennis, Hiking, Stock Market, Science, Computer, Hiking, Book Club, Gardening, Trips and Tours, Dinner Dances, History, Photography, and more.

We also have monthly meetings, where we have noted speakers to address us in Heneveld Hall at Wyckoff Reformed Church.

We encourage you to join our over 350 members and enjoy our activities. Visit www.activitiesunlimited.org for a more detailed look at our organization, including how to contact us or call David Voehl (973) 865-8705 or Doug Cooper (908) 907-1112 for more information.



MEMORIAL BRICKS

There is still plenty of time to purchase an engraved brick to add to our Memorial Walkway! You can pick up a form in the sanctuary and return it to the office or purchase yours online at <https://www.wyckoffreformed.org/memorial-bricks-2023>. Don't miss this once-in-a-generation opportunity to mark a special occasion or remember a loved one!

BOY SCOUTS PINEWOOD DERBY

WRC hosted Boy Scouts Pack 110 Pinewood Derby in late January. They collected food pantry donations as their "entrance fee" to the derby.

The Pinewood is a highlight of the Scouting year and the pack appreciates being able to hold it at WRC!



WRC BOOK CLUB

The next book chosen by the WRC Book Club is *The Grace In Aging: Awaken As You Grow Older* by Kathleen Dowling Singh. There are a few copies in the library system.

We will meet next on Thursday, March 9 at 3:30 pm in the Memorial Room. You can also join via Zoom if need be.



WRC WOMEN'S MEETINGS

The WRC Women's January potluck lunch included sharing of prayers and concerns, laughter and love over delicious homemade meals.



JOYS AND CONCERNS



Shelton Platt, Norma Leonhard, Trudie Zegel, Joyce Wolff, Eileen Black, Peter Rubacky, Rich Lynch, Susan Fox, Cathy and Art DelColliano, Erika Bach, Janette Daehnke, Bruce Monroe, Roz Brickman, Jeannie Tamaroglio, Chuck Austin, Brad Ritter, Donna, Teagan Christophersen, Cheryl, Larry, Jane Taylor, Rick, Melissa, Mike, David Murdock, Neal Schlendorf, Frank, Pam Ritter, Lauren, George, Jack Broderick, Donald Moore





BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES



February Birthdays and Anniversaries

Devan Schulte	2	Robert Spierenburg	11	Frankie Castellvi	22
Mike DeRosa	2	Bernard Sweetman III	12	Grace Flynn	22
Madeline Castro	3	Ryan Mangino	12	Violet Rickenbach	22
Henry Nebesni	4	Amy Stober	14	Melissa Walters	23
Tate Ramsey	5	David Perry	14	Kathy Lane	24
Mary Schlendorf	6	Lorinda Pienaar	14	Mariah Noe	24
Joelle Leach	6	Hallie Galgano	15	Howard Goodman	26
Quinn McDonald	7	Jeanne Sico	18	Dave Hug	26
Caden Kutcha	7	Samantha Franz	19	Jan Calaski	27
Bernie Sweetman Jr.	8	Keith Moody	19	Isabella Cortina	27
Bill Ondrof	9	Jack Livesey	19	Matt Stober	29
Austin Abad	9	Madison Aug	21	Vivienne Leimer	29
Jerry Mattera	10	John Ponchak	22		
Arleen Ritter	11	Brad Ritter	22	<i>Anniversaries</i>	
		Collin DeRose	22	Klaus & Lynne Radicke	15
				Brian & Mary Lange	16

To support Wyckoff Reformed Church, please visit www.wyckoffreformed.org/give

