



# the newsletter

Stone Ridge, NY Rev. Caroline Berninger, Pastor



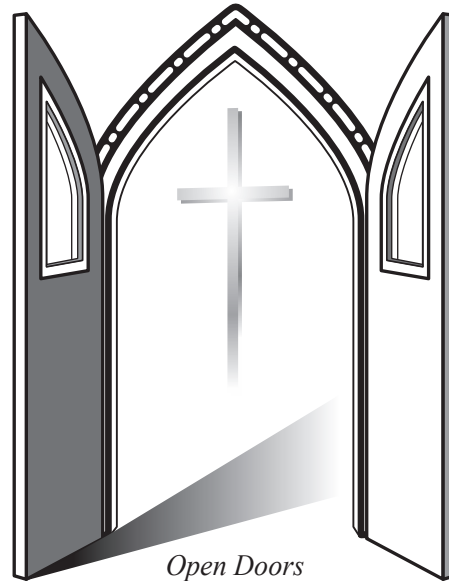
## From the Pastor

Over the past several years, I have tried in these newsletters to keep “Rondovians” [my unofficial term for Rondout-Valley-ites] near and far informed about what’s happening in the church, locally, denominationally, and globally. The COVID-19 pandemic, affecting us since March of 2020, obviously added lots of new and different factors that all of us, including churches, have to deal with. In this spring’s Lent/Easter Newsletter, I wrote about “the tension between forgetting the past and living into a new and different future.” Here, I will not repeat my guidance about where you can find the latest denominational news—that newsletter remains posted on our website, [www.rvumc.org](http://www.rvumc.org).

On a Conference and local level, the most significant change has been the organizing of all churches into “Cooperative Parishes.” These groupings of several congregations near to one another were started in 2019, before the pandemic, at least partly in response to demographic and financial stresses (i.e. fewer people going to church than in the past, and everything costing more). The potential of the Cooperative Parish not simply to enhance ministry but enable ministry (especially in smaller communities and churches) became clear this year, when the NY Annual Conference faced a shortage of 40 pastoral leaders at appointment time. More clergy than anticipated have been retiring, and the “great resignation” in the pandemic’s wake includes pastors. (Personally, I feel that the ongoing work of pastoring has become more incessant and frustrating since March of 2020; we must provide both online and in-person worship, which requires additional time and significant engagement with audio-visual and computer technology. Since re-opening for in-person worship, we have seldom had more than 20 people in attendance; yet, it is not at all clear that many people who are not coming to church are really engaging with the online worship.) Ministry has always been an “anything can happen” vocation...but the continuing surging and waning of COVID makes all of our planning contingent on many factors beyond our control!

But, I digress. Back to Cooperative Parishes: the italicized text from the Conference was part of an insert in the “in person” bulletin on September 4th" *A cooperative ministry is when groups of people representing two or more*

*churches share their ministries to meet the needs of the community. Examples of this are local churches completing a mission project together or working together in a community feeding ministry. A cooperative parish is an ongoing structured way to employ cooperative ministries between churches within a defined region. The cooperative parish will have a Parish Council with clergy and laity from each church in the cooperative parish to discuss, plan and make decisions regarding mission and ministry through the cooperative parish. The Cooperative Parish provides the opportunity for all churches to engage in ministry together that they cannot do as individual churches. These mission and ministry opportunities are possible in a cooperative parish. Cooperative Parishes also offer the laity access to different and new ministry opportunities, experience the gifts and leadership of other clergy and laity across the parish, and use their gifts and calling in new contexts and settings across the parish. Through Cooperative Parishes, the laity are empowered and equipped to live into their unique ministries. Cooperative Parishes are a Wesleyan model of our connection to expand our church’s ministry to the communities, using our churches and our parish ministries as the center of transformative possibility to all the people in the parish and beyond.*



*Open Doors  
Open Hearts  
Open minds.*

“Our” (RVUMC’s) Cooperative Parish is the ESOPUS COOPERATIVE PARISH. The other churches are St. James and Clinton Avenue UMCs in Kingston; Saugerties UMC; and Centerville UMC. There will be an initial “in person” meeting at St. James UMC from 6:30 to 8 pm on Thursday, September 15th. Who knows what great things might come of this?

The months ahead will be a time of seeing what we can all do with our local Cooperative Parish. I remember the words of the Lord from Isaiah 43:19 to which I referred in the last newsletter: “I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?” All of us in the five churches will have the opportunity to “behold new things” in our wider church community. Some of them will probably be inspiring, and a few of them may flop. With the grace of God, and the prayers of many, let’s expect fewer flops, more inspiration!

*Grace and peace to you all,  
Caroline*



## Treasurer Report Summer 2022

It seems like we are always saying there is good news, and there is bad news. Well, here we go again. First the better news. Since we are back into church on Sundays, compared with last year the loose plate collection, the regular donations, the use of the church donations (with AA meetings) have all gone up. There has been significant fund raising income this year, which is very welcome. However, to temper those things, the pledge amount and District Support have both gone down, such that total income – year to date compared with last year, is only a little higher.

I would like to highlight a couple of the bright spots this year, which other entries may expand on. One is that at least \$3490 has been raised and earmarked for the Bell Tower repair and renovation. Another, because of the relaxation of Covid restrictions in the church, AA meetings have once again occurred and groups have made donations of \$320 this year, where there were no donations last year.

We have continued to pay all bills and our total apportionments this year once again, but reserves continue to be chipped away at. Good news, and bad news.

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## Trustee Report

**H**ello All. End of summer is drawing near. We had a successful car show and were able to raise enough money ( we Hope ) to start work on the bell tower this fall. We still need to address the stone steps at the main entrance. Over the past few months it became obvious to all the residents on the road to the parsonage that it needed some major repairs. This being a private road that we share with three other homes it called for getting together to address the issues and get it done. We had agreed to hire Mr. Bob Lapp to do the work and it has been done. Also it turned out very nicely done and I drove down it this morning after yesterdays two inch rain storm and the road held up nicely, no washouts, no puddles and no visible water anywhere near the road.

To my knowledge there hasn't been any other incidents with the building that need immediate attention, however I have purchased two more smoke/carbon monoxide detectors which need to be installed as per the Fire Marshal who inspected the building this year. This will be done shortly.

To keep costs down I would like to propose that if we can get some volunteers to help, Matt Robbins and I would like to start on the Bell Tower siding replacement. As this is approximately forty feet high we would like to rent a man lift to facilitate getting to the higher portions and being able to work with two men on the lift and then could use someone on the ground to cut lumber and pass up materials. This would save us the expense of contractor labor. If anyone would like to volunteer to help please call me at 845-687-9061. This would be much appreciated.

Respectfully submitted  
Thomas Fiore  
Chairperson, Board of Trustees



RVUMC is on the "Movies With Spirit" calendar again, for December:

Dec. 17 MERRY CHRISTMAS (Joyeux Noël) 2005 PG-13

(You will recognize the movie!--*Christmas in the trenches!*)

Screenings are on the third Saturday of the month and start at 7 p.m. They are followed by refreshments and a moderated discussion. Evenings end by 10 p.m. A \$10 donation is suggested for moviegoers over age 12.

Movies With Spirit is endorsed by the Kingston Interfaith Council, Dutchess County Interfaith Council, Kingston Area Council of Churches, Ministers' Alliance of Ulster County and Mid-Hudson Islamic Association. The series has no religious affiliation.

845-389-9201 • gerryharrington@mindspring.com • facebook.com/MoviesWithSpirit

## Sympathy

to the family of Dan Rose  
Feb. 20 1924-May 23 2022  
Service was held at RVUMC June 2nd

**I**t is yet to be decided as to whether or not there will be a trip to The Children's Home toward the end of November. In the past we have delivered presents and donations at that time. As yet, we don't know what their policy will be concerning the pandemic and opening the campus for visitors. As soon as we know we will see if there is a need to make the trip. We should plan now to continue to make monetary donations as we get closer to Christmas. The trip to Binghamton is a long one in winter and it takes a near full car of gifts to make it worthwhile.

On another note, there has been a lot of political interest in the area of people's rights. There have been statements made elsewhere, about our rights and how the declaration of independence guarantees them. Most of us know that our rights are guaranteed in the CONSTITUTION of the United States. The declaration is a statement of intent to break away from Great Britain in 1776. No guaranteed rights appear in the declaration. It takes democratically voted law as in the constitution to guarantee rights.

Arnold Jones

**First Responder Sunday/** Second Sunday Supper Sept. 11  
Worship 10 am; Supper 5:30



Future Second **Sunday Suppers** will continue outdoors, weather permitting; indoors with windows open/or “to go” depending upon weather and current contagion levels. (October 9, Nov. 13)

**Tentative Charge Conference date:** Saturday morning December 3. This will be with the other churches of the Esopus Parish. Stay tuned for details.

**CONGRATS!**

to Julia Caster,  
Rondout Valley High School  
Class of 2022!  
Julia is now at Clark University  
in Worcester, MA.

**Welcome!**

to Harper Rue Spiro,  
born at Vassar Bros. in Poughkeepsie  
on August 1 2022  
to Beatrice Capen Gurdy and Dave Spiro.  
Harper joins big brother Foxx Moses.

**Welcome!**

to Matt Robbins,  
baptized at RVUMC on May 22, 2022.

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***Please Don't Forget  
our Neighbors in need  
and We can make a difference!***





**STONE RIDGE  
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