



# The 4th Focus

## “My hope is in...”

As we anticipate Election Day and the changes—or not—that may come in the wake of this Election Day, a biblical perspective may be helpful. The polls indicate that the Presidential race is very close and so we know that about half of the nation will be disappointed or will at least not be served by the candidate of their choosing. Regardless of the Election Day results, the disappointment will be deep—even despairing—for many people.

Hurricane Sandy has proven to be devastating for millions of people but I can think of at least two benefits of this “Super Storm.” One is that there is some kind of a break from the intense focus on campaigning and politics. Even the politicians took a break to focus on matters of much greater importance. The other benefit that emerges to the surface for me is that God appears to boldly and perhaps even harshly remind us that politics and politicians are puny and powerless before God. In this fallen world that is both created and re-created by God, our prosperity and even our survival depends not in whom all things

At a time like this, brought home to an or whom do you find thinker and philosopher the phrase “political idea that our politics or creating the good life government/politicians can’t even manage their own budget. How could they be capable of making your budget work out to be flush or make your life rich and full?



each of us should be answer this question: In what your hope? The political pher, Jacques Ellul, used illusion” to describe the government is capable of or even a good society. Our

Anytime we look for something—including government/politicians—to provide what God alone can provide, we practice idolatry. If your hope, joy and peace are found in election results, then you are to be pitied. Or, if you lose hope, joy or peace because of election results, again, it is indeed sad. Government and politicians, no matter who’s in office, will always disappoint those who depend on them. Our passion and prayer is to be for the coming of God’s kingdom and his kingdom does not depend on elections or politicians.

We might ask, what kind of president does this country deserve? God could use what we perceive to be the negative or even destructive decisions of politicians for the humbling, positive and restorative work of his kingdom. After reflection on how humankind “bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get,” the psalmist concludes, “But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you” (Ps. 39:6-7).

Please don’t hear me say that we should abdicate any opportunities that we have to make a difference through well-informed voting or participation in the political and election process. Just as we are to pray for the shalom, peace and good of the city or our society, so should we cast a vote for shalom, peace and common good (Jer. 29:7). Well-informed voting is significant here. We work and invest to vote in a way that will advance a government that pleases Christ and aligns with his Word. Character and morality matters. Citizens of the kingdom of God are called to be faithful citizens in their earthly country.

And so we pray and vote and trust—passing through this country as aliens and citizens—and looking with the greatest hope for the “country” or kingdom that is to come.



This past Monday, 15 GEMS plus some brave leaders and special friends headed out to Alto to visit the **SwissLane Farms**. A country smell greeted us as we arrived! We were given a straw wagon ride out to the building that housed the teenage cows and to see the silos and a resevoir for water. Next, on to the maternity barn

which housed mama cows getting ready to calve. They are given tender treatment and soft (sand) beds and a more quiet atmosphere. I think the phrase “great with child” would be an understatement here. The mature cows are in a barn with sand to sleep and grain to eat.

We enjoyed the two resident cats and goat that helped on the tour. We watched the cows line up before and after milking. Not sure which school they go to but they sure know the drill. The milking process is very advanced and we were able to see the process of how it goes from cow to the milk cooler. Brave Analie experienced milk from cow to mouth er face!! The best part of our tour took us to the nursery where we were able to feed the calves a bottle of warm water. There were also some newborns still wet with umbilical cords. We finished with a snack of string cheese and utterly delicious Troo Moo chocolate milk. Everyone learned a lot and enjoyed the trip to cow country.

- Nancy Aukeman

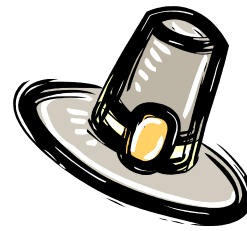
## Check These Out!

**Raising Financially Confident Kids** By Mary Hunt  
Mary Hunt draws from solid statistics and her own hard-won knowledge and experience as a mom who made it back from the brink of financial ruin to help you teach your children how to handle money responsibly.

**Raising Responsible Teens in a Digital World**  
By Brian Housman

A book that takes you beneath the surface and reveals what really motivates your teen, helping you understand your child and build a solid relationship based on love and mutual trust as they move toward adulthood.

**No More Christian Nice Girl!** By Coughlin and Degler  
Discover that emulating the real Jesus is the key to transforming from a Christian Nice Girl into an authentic, powerful woman of loving faith.



## Nov

- 1 - Iva Brus
- 1 - Michelle Coutchie
- 6 - Marge Bolthuis
- 7 - Micah Meendering
- 8 - Madilynn Bierens
- 14 - Nick Kooyer
- 15 - MK Townley
- 18 - Philip Brinks
- 26 - Justin Bierens
- 27 - Sydney Hawkins
- 30 - Nancy Brinks

## Dec

- 1 - David Bolt
- 3 - S. Van Timmeren
- 7 - Anna Wetzal
- 11 - Caleb Coeling
- 12 - Peg Blanksma
- 15 - Dennis Jingles
- 18 - Bob Berthiaume
- 19 - Amy Coeling
- 20 - Kurt Faasse
- 21 - Beth Rossiter
- 23 - ME Berthiaume
- 24 - Elise Adams
- 24 - John Studebaker
- 25 - Gabriel Hawkins
- 26 - Erin Broene
- 28 - Tom Boehm
- 28 - Marv VanderVelde
- 29 - Dave Bolt
- 31 - Greg Coutchie
- 31 - Eliana Parler



## Christmas Cards



It's the time of year where we once again have the privilege of sending holiday greetings to our members who are not able to attend worship.

There will be a box across from the mail slots for you to drop your cards. To make sure there is plenty of time to deliver them and so they can enjoy the cards throughout the month, the deadline is Sunday, December 2.

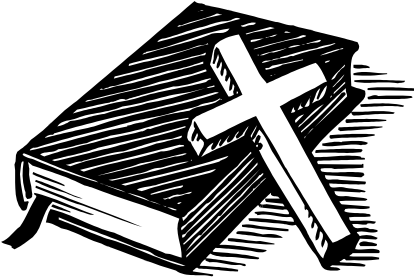
Here is this year's list:

Bud Waterloo, Peg Blanksma,  
Geneva Horling, Charlton Meyer, Tim Randall,  
Joyce Van Neuren, Dee Christians,  
Marv & Bertha Vander Velde

## Reformed Church Heritage ~ *New Amsterdam Becomes New York, Part 2*

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In what has become known as the Glorious Revolution, the Roman Catholic English King James II was deposed in 1688 and replaced by the Dutch king William III and his wife Mary, the eldest daughter of James. While this event was greeted optimistically on both sides of the Atlantic as ending the threat of Catholic domination, it also ushered in a time of trouble for the Reformed Church.



Governor Edmond Andros, a supportive appointee of James, was seized after news of William's arrival in England reached the colony. Lieutenant Governor Francis Nicholson fled in June 1689 leaving an associate counselor behind. The absence of official documents announcing new leaders and a rumored threat of a French invasion from Canada lead the people to appoint a Committee of Safety and named as interim leader Jacob Leisler, a captain in the New York militia and deacon in the Reformed Church. While many saw Leisler as the hope for greater self-government,

he was opposed by most Reformed ministers. Their reasons may have included a disbelief in the invasion rumors or doubts about his leadership abilities. To their discredit, they most likely scorned Leisler as a social commoner, choosing to take the side of the aristocracy that opposed him instead of acting as peacemakers.

Three Reformed ministers were persecuted because of their outspoken criticism of Leisler. For some time Rudolphus Varick of Long Island remained silent, but finally spoke out. He fled to Delaware, but later returned. Dragged from his home by soldiers, he was imprisoned for six months. Poor treatment while in prison probably hastened his death. Henricus Selyns at New York was still permitted to preach, but was closely watched and had his mail censored. On one occasion Leisler, a member of Selyns's congregation, arose during a worship service and threatened to silence the minister. Godfriedus Dellius of Albany was accused of several false charges, but went into hiding and eventually made his way to Boston.

Leisler ruled for twenty months and for a time received the quasi-recognition of William and Mary, but eventually Henry Sloughter was appointed governor. For failing to yield control to a military representative who arrived ahead of Sloughter but lacked proper credentials, Leisler was found guilty of treason and hanged on May 16, 1691. Even in death, his memory continued to bitterly divide the church. In time, Leisler's name was cleared and his property returned to his heirs, who in 1698 requested that his remains buried near the gallows be exhumed and given a proper Christian burial. The governor consented and ordered, after a joyous procession, that his remains be interred under the floor of the Reformed Church over the protests of Selyns and his consistory.

Colonial governors continued to seek to further establish the Anglican Church, but were hindered by the mostly Reformed Elective Assembly and the still small minority of Anglicans in the colony. In May 1696, the Reformed Church in New York City was granted a royal charter protecting it from local government interference. In time, other Reformed churches received similar charters.

Following the Leisler troubles, relations between the English authorities and the Dutch church were cordial with the exception of the rule of Edward Hyde, Lord Cornbury (ruled 1702-8) known for his corruption, drunkenness and gambling debts. His scandalous conduct led many to settle in New Jersey, where the Reformed Church thrived. In England, the Bishop of London received a letter informing him of Cornbury's harassment of the Dutch church which had long lived in peace with the Anglicans.

After Cornbury's departure came the reign of the English kings from Germany George I (ruled 1714-27) and George II (ruled 1727-60) who cared little for the extension of the Anglican Church. This paved the way for a period of great growth for the Reformed Church in America.

- Eric O'Brock

## *I Surrender All!*

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Students in Children's Worship kicked off the fall season on a journey with Moses and the Israelites as they miraculously crossed the Red Sea, ate manna from heaven and drank water from the rock. Children learned that *God is Mighty to Save* and are eager to worship God with all their hearts.

Recently, we were discussing postures of worship and the lifting of our hands. I explained to children that the Bible speaks of clapping hands, bowing our heads and knees as well as lifting hands to our God. I stretched out my hands describing an attitude of surrender. Suddenly, a preschool worshipper lifted her hands high above her head and piped up: **"I Surrender All!"** As soon as she lifted her hands and made her declaration, everyone— children and adults were impacted and the Holy Spirit seemed to fill the entire Praise Room with unexplainable JOY!

For a moment, we basked in the presence of the Lord. Without apology or shame, this young worshipper in her childlike faith surrendered her entire being to the Lord.

All praise is due to our Sovereign Lord! He has ordained praise from the lips of children and infants (Psalm 8:2). As followers of Christ, let us continue to learn how to become like these little children. Our Lord teaches us: *Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:4).*

- Regina Riley

## *Women's Retreat*

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We arrived late Friday and picked out a bed – except Ruth – she had her reservation in early! We enjoyed a couple of walks to Lake Michigan and gathered around the table for a delicious lasagna and salad supper. After supper, we gathered as a group. We talked about the title of the book – some of us really didn't care for it, "When Will My Life Not Suck?" We shared what struck us most or affected us most from our reading of the book. I shared that I still have to set goals even though I stopped setting goals because of all the trials in my life, and all the things that constantly change. It seems like nothing is accomplished when I plan or set goals to complete. But after reading the book, I learned it is important to continue to do that, so I will. We finished our evening with singing and prayer.

The next morning we were split into small groups. My group was with Amy and Gina. We talked about the chapter "Dancing with the Scars." From this chapter we asked ourselves who is the "Maureen" in our lives? We all have special prayer warriors in our lives. Maureen loved God and shared Christ's love with the author. He found a deeper relationship with the Lord because of it. She was a spiritual mentor and we also have and need spiritual mentors to help us through our trials.

"Garden Club of Warriors" is another chapter. In this chapter the author told how when Jesus went to the garden to pray before his crucifixion, he took his disciples with him. But he took only three with him and prayed (Matthew 26:36-38). We were asked if there was anyone in our lives who would be there within the hour if we called at 3 AM and said, "I really need someone to talk to!" Do I cultivate that kind of close relationship with others? Do I have a garden of friends? We were given cards to send out notes to the special friends in our lives - those who made an impact on us.

Another chapter from the book I appreciated was "Content or Discontent: Choosing My Tent." You plan a trip to Italy, you get guide books, you learn some handy phrases in Italian, you plan to see the coliseum, Michelangelo's David, and the gondolas in Venice. You have months of eager anticipation, but when the plane lands, the stewardess says "Welcome to Holland." "Holland?!!! You say, what do you mean Holland???" I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy." You have to get different guide books, learn a different language. It's different. If you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things about Holland. How will we respond to our disappointments in life? The apostle Paul was content even though he went to Italy as a prisoner instead of an evangelist. We too need to learn to be content with our disappointments in life.

I got to know Gina better at the retreat. She has a really amazing story of the Lord's work in her life. I enjoyed my time in our small group with both Gina and Amy. It was also good to come together at the end and have each group share highlights from their small group discussion.

Thank you to Becky Berrevoets for the great job she did organizing and facilitating the retreat. I don't know what I would do if I didn't have the Fourth women as my family. They have helped carry me through great trials and have rejoiced with me in good times. It was certainly good to be with them for the retreat.

- Nancy Brinks