

The Rev. Megan Hodgkin, Senior Pastor

The Rev. Jason White, Associate Pastor



THE MESSENGER

From the Pastor Megan's Desk:

Over the holidays, I began reading “A History of the First Reformed Church of Scotia, NY.” Scrawled across the top right corner is a name. Helen Nelson. A woman that many of you knew as a saint of the church. I consider it a privilege to have this copy that was once hers. Actually, the entire experience of reading these well worn pages inside their faded orange cover has felt like quite a privilege. The sacred moments, the silly ones too, and the moments of loss and pain, all tell a profound story about the formation of a beloved community we now know as our church family at First Reformed.

My favorite entry is near the very beginning:

1814: THE FOUNDING OF OUR CHURCH

While the history of our church dates from Nov. 21, 1818, when the articles of incorporation were signed, the history of the movement begins several years earlier. Gerard Beekman, a distinguished citizen of New York City and son-in-law of John Sanders of Scotia, left that city with his wife to escape the expected bombardment by the British during the War of 1812. They made their home with Mrs. Beekman's brothers, Robert and Jacob G. Sanders, in their residence in Scotia on Mohawk Avenue directly opposite present Collins Street.

Mr. Beekman was a man of strong religious convictions, as well as of some wealth, and, becoming convinced that there was a need of religious influences in this locality, started a prayer meeting during the winter of 1814 in the Sanders home.

Like so many vital movements of God's Spirit in the world, First Reformed Church of Scotia began with prayer. Before a church was even imagined, a few people began gathering to pray.

While our surest foundation is in Christ and Christ alone, I find great encouragement in knowing that our local roots are buried in the prayers of those who first gathered in the Sanders' home.

Prayer is perhaps the oldest of all of the spiritual disciplines. Even before there were scriptures to be read and studied, God's people were praying. Adam and Eve, Noah and his family, Abraham and Sarah, Moses and the Israelites - each one was in dialogue, in prayer, with God.

During Lent, we will explore the practice of prayer using the prayers of the Psalmists. May it be a time of reflection, considering the prayers that have brought us where we are today. May it also be a time of exploration, experimenting with new ways to pray, new ways to spend time with God. And having learned from those before us, may it also be a time of preparation as we lift up prayers for all that is still to come, in our personal lives and in our life together as a community.

Blessings,

Pastor Megan

Offering Envelopes: Boxes of offering envelopes for 2018 are arranged for pick up on tables across from the church office. Please pick yours up soon. Offering envelopes help us be systematic givers -- an important part of Christian life.

If you did not request offering envelopes on your 2018 pledge card, then please use an envelope in the pews for cash, or simply write your giver number on the memo line of your check.

Children's Offering Envelopes: We offer our Sunday school children and youth their own special boxes of offering envelopes as a way to encourage regular giving. Sunday school students select a mission to support with their giving each term. Parents: these boxes of offering envelopes are an opportunity for you to teach your child the discipline of systematically giving to their church. Please speak with your child's teacher or Coordinator of Christian Living Kristin Bodden, if you'd like a box.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: Do you know someone in need of prayer and support? Is someone in our church family going through a life change? Prayer shawls are a way of wrapping those we love in prayer and healing. Each shawl, lap blanket or afghan is knit or crocheted, by a member of our church as they pray with each stitch for God's love and grace to warm the recipient. Would you like to be a part of this ministry? Yarn and knitting supplies are available in Room 5 or contact Kristin Bodden at 518-370-4751 with questions or requests for shawls.



February Mission of the Month: Our Mission of the Month for February is Bethesda House – a ministry to the homeless community of Schenectady County. Bethesda House is committed to the principal of “Housing First.” Housing First means that of all the many problems faced by homeless people such as unemployment, addiction, mental health, clothing or safety, the issue that needs addressing first in order to be successful at addressing the others is housing – having a stable, safe place to stay. Bethesda House is located on State Street. Volunteers are needed during the day. Please call 518-374-7873 to volunteer. We regularly give used clothing and new toiletries to Bethesda House.

Designate your giving to Mission of the Month by using the month's yellow envelope in your box of offering envelopes, or by writing Mission of the Month on the memo line of your check. Please include your envelope number if you have one.

Valentine Luncheon: This year our annual Valentine Luncheon will be held on Sunday February 18 at noon in Brink Hall. All seniors are invited to come and share a soup lunch with our FRCS youth. We'll share a meal, get to know each other, play a game or two and maybe sing some songs together. Be sure to sign up on the board next to the Pastor's office so we know how much food to prepare. See you then!



Youth Group families, please check out the bulletin board to sign up for volunteer opportunities for this event.

FRCS Men's Fowler Retreat: We have reserved Pine Lodge for our annual retreat February 9-11. There is still space available if you you would like to have a great time and some men's fellowship. Sign-up outside of Pastor Megan's office. The cost, including food (five meals) and lodge, is \$50.

Tom Falcon and Bob Baldwin will be co-coordinators for this event. If you see either one of us in the halls or in Brink Hall, don't hesitate to speak with us about the event. If you wish to contribute ideas or volunteer for anything that may enhance our event, please contact Bob Baldwin at 518-374-9276 or at baldyone@nycap.rr.com.

Kids Hope USA News - Life Together is Life at its Best:

How might an elementary student describe an 'Active Listener'? One can imagine a student telling of someone doing jumping jacks while listening to music, or a harried mom 'listening' while making dinner for the family as the dog barks to go outside. Kids Hope students get to experience the real form of 'active listening' and see that modeled for them each week.

Mentors are patient listeners who can ask a question in the peace and 'one on one' atmosphere of the mentor hour each week. Kids Hope students receive the gift of an adult who will listen without interruption until the student finishes speaking. Mentors' genuine interest in the student allows for follow up questions. Students learn about eye contact, how to read facial expressions and how to articulate their thoughts. These acquired skills are invaluable for life.... during a job or college interview, working out relationship issues with friends, parents or caregivers and eventually, a significant other or spouse.

All children benefit from questions other than, "How is your day going?" Kids Hope mentors are trained to ask questions like, "Tell me about how you were kind to someone today?" or, "Did anyone do something nice or helpful for you today?", "What was your favorite activity during gym (or quiet time or recess)? Or, "What is one interesting fact you learned today?"

Through active listening, mentors show support for their Kids Hope student, and for the student's education. To be listened to improves a student's self-esteem, and a mentor's listening has been demonstrated to have a positive impact on a child's academic achievement. This is another way Kids Hope mentors show they care and work through God's grace to help ALL students succeed.

Labyrinth Link - Lenten Meditation Room:

During Lent at First Reformed Scotia, we will be providing a Meditation Room for prayer, meditation, labyrinth and reflection. You are invited to use this space during church hours M-F and on Sundays from 8-12. We are pleased to utilize the space and peaceful views of Lakehill Library for this Lenten practice. Along with a labyrinth, provided by Pam Walsh, we will have a variety of smaller labyrinths for personal use, reflective journaling resources, candle prayers, shared prayer wall, art station and relaxation area. We hope you find this spiritual opportunity a helpful resource during your contemplation this Lent. Contact Kristin Bodden with questions or suggestions.



Fowler Spaghetti Supper & Cake Auction:



Save The Date: Saturday March 24 from 4:00-7:00!

Come support our campers and enjoy delicious food, great company and take home an amazing cake! We will be hearing from some campers through the coming weeks as we get their perspective on the benefits of Camp Fowler and how it has helped shape their lives. Volunteer opportunities and ticket sales will be posted shortly; think about taking part in this fun and important event, help serve, bake a cake, or come and eat.

Fowler Summer Camp:

Registration- Registration for Camp Fowler in Speculator, NY is open online at campfowler.org. Check out the Camp Fowler bulletin board for details on weeks available. Register early to secure your date!



Scholarship- We will again award scholarships this year to our FRCS campers. We have a short scholarship application to make registration easier for our families. See the Fowler board for details. We'll know just how much we can award following our Fowler Spaghetti Supper in March. See Kristin Bodden with questions.

Volunteer Opportunities- Do you want to be a part of the Fowler family? They need you! Check out campfowler.org for details on how to get involved as a cabin counselor, kitchen helper and more.

Lent 2018:

Lent is a season in the Church Year dedicated to preparation and repentance, anticipating Jesus' death on Good Friday and resurrection on Easter. During Lent, we often engage in practices that help us turn toward God and surrender those things that draw us away from God. This year, we will give special attention to the practice of prayer, with the guidance of the Psalms.

The Lenten season will begin on Ash Wednesday, February 14. All are invited to an evening worship service, at 6:30pm. Those who find it meaningful will be able to receive a mark of ashes as a sign of repentance and as a sign our mortality. Let worship on Ash Wednesday help you begin an important and faithful Lenten season.

There will also be Lenten devotionals available for personal study, and small groups beginning in Lent as an opportunity for learning in community. To learn more, see "From Pastor Jason's Desk."

We also encourage you to take note of these important dates in the Lenten Season:

March 25 - Palm Sunday

March 29 - Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service, 6:30pm

March 30 - Good Friday "Cross Walk," 9:00am

April 1 - Easter Morning Worship

Celebrating 200 Years!

On Sunday, January 21, 2018, we began a year of celebration in commemoration of our 200th anniversary as a congregation. Many enjoyed a tasty breakfast and time of fellowship in Brink Hall between the 8:00 and 10:00 worship services. A new logo on the bulletins, new banners and paraments dressed the sanctuary in a spirit of celebration. Our worship helped us recall our beginnings with a litany of historic moments, hymns and anthem with deep roots in our Reformed Tradition, and a call to keep listening for the voice of God as we look to the future.

As the celebration continues, here are some exciting things to look forward to:

T-Shirts with our anniversary logo will soon be available for order! The shirts will be short sleeve in a medium grey color with simple artwork placed on the left chest. Watch the bulletin for information about when you can see the T-Shirt artwork proof and place your order during coffee hour or after the 8am service. The shirts will be available in both adult and children's sizes and ready for pick-up in mid-March.

A commemoration service is planned for Sunday, November 18, 2018. This special worship service will be the high-point of our year of celebration. Many special guests will be invited to worship, as well as a reception to follow. Please save this date on your calendars and plan to participate in this historic and exciting occasion!

A SPECIAL THANK YOU to the members of the 200th Anniversary Committee for their continuing efforts: Sunny Baldwin (chair), Nelson Austin, Sheila Dort, Claudia Garrison, Russ Garrison, Patty Marre, Nancy Passer, Linda Schaefer, Pam Walsh, and Pastor Megan.

We also want to thank Bobbie Nelson and Lee Poremba for the creation of the stunning new banners, paraments, and pastoral stoles that will be used throughout this celebration year!

Pastoral Needs: If you or someone you know in the church is hospitalized or has emergent needs, please let Pastor Megan know. We have a strong web of care here at First Reformed, and it's important to us to know how we can support you as your church. It is far better to let us know multiple times, than for us to miss an opportunity to provide prayer and support. You may call the office at (518) 370-4751 or send email to pastormegan@firstreformedscotia.org.



From Pastor Jason's Desk:

This year the month of February kicks off our season of Lent. It is a 40-day preparation period, symbolic of Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness facing temptation, and the people Israel wandering and wondering in the desert for 40 years. We take on that similar posture of wondering and reflecting on our lives, and ultimately our union with Christ. It is a time we need. It is a time to listen, to focus, to breathe, to seek, and to be challenged. Therefore it is a gift from God; A 40-day gift waiting to be unwrapped anew each morning. Maybe you'll unwrap dormant spiritual practices that lead to wholeness and fullness. Maybe you'll unwrap blessings, being renewed in the knowledge of Christ's presence in your life. Maybe you'll unwrap new ways to hear, to be truly present with those you love and want to know better. Maybe you'll unwrap the Holy Spirit, releasing it out of hidden depths to breathe new life into your lungs, giving you energy for another step, another story, another meaningful practice, another conversation with someone in need, or someone who offers what you need. Blessings to you in this time.

Here are a few things to look forward to in February:

Lenten Small Groups: Keep an eye out for information about our Lenten Small Groups. There will be multiple small groups to choose from during our Lenten season, each with a specific leader and topic. All of these groups will run 5 or 6 weeks at specific times. Please consider joining a small group. There will be sign-ups placed on bulletin boards with information about each small group.

Lenten Devotionals: If you are unable to join a small group, perhaps a devotional is right for you. A few years ago Camp Fowler created a Lenten Devotional, and they have been brought back for this year's season. The devotionals will be in the Narthex and near the main office.

There are many opportunities for our kids and older students too:

Kids Choir: The Kids Choir will begin practices on Sunday February 25, from 11:15-11:30. We'll practice at that time each Sunday leading up to Palm Sunday, March 25, when our Kids Choir will sing in worship. The Kids Choir will also sing in church on Pentecost, Sunday May 20. Practices will be announced in the April Newsletter.



Confirmation Sessions: Confirmation sessions for Middle and High Schoolers will begin on Sunday February 25. Each session goes from 11:30-12:15. Parents have received a schedule, but there is also one posted outside Pastor Jason's office. Please see him with any questions.

Youth Group Meetings: We will hold our first Youth Group meeting on Sunday February 25, from 4:00-5:30. We will hang out and play some games at this meeting. Parents have received a schedule, but there is also one posted outside Pastor Jason's office. Please see him with any questions.



For a couple Mission Items:

Souper Bowl for SICM: Sunday February 4 is Super Bowl Sunday. The 4th is one more chance to give extra coins, bills, or non-perishable food or household items to support SICM. People will be at the sanctuary doors following the 8:00 and 10:00 services to collect money, and there will be bins and cans in Brink Hall as well, to drop money or goods that you bring in.

Helping With All Our Hearts: On Sundays February 11 and 18, students will be located at a table in Brink Hall selling hearts to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House. They will be selling red hearts for \$1 and gold hearts for \$5. You may sign a name on the hearts, or put a short prayer or message, and they will ask you if you would like to have your heart hung up in the church, or take it with you. Please consider taking part to support a helpful organization.



Health & Wellness Note:

Health & Wellness Note: February is "Heart Awareness Month." Heart-healthy living can help prevent you from developing heart disease, or if you already have the disease, to keep the disease from worsening. These are some goals to develop:

- Diet- Eat healthier by choosing to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy, and fish. Also, aim to eat less foods with high sodium, added sugar, saturated fat or high total fat.
- Physical Activity- Once cleared by your provider, aim to exercise 90-150 minutes a week. If you are just starting, walking could be the easiest way to begin and requires no equipment.
- Weight- Stay in a healthy weight range for your height so that there is less stress on your heart.
- Stress management- Speaking of stress, learn ways to manage stress so it lessens its impact on your health. This can include physical activity and relation techniques.
- Sleep- Be sure to get enough, usually 7-8 hours/night for adults. It may mean scheduling it into your night and letting other activities wait.
- Medicine- take it EXACTLY as your provider prescribes unless you contact him/her first.
- Smoking- plain and simple- DON'T! or if you do QUIT!
- Check resources: Tips on reducing saturated fat can be found on the CDC's web site: <http://cdc.gov/nutrition/everone/basics/fat/saturatedfat.html>
- Or information about heart disease on the Mayo Clinic web site: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20353118>

Thank You Notes:

Since we published the last issue of The Messenger we received the following thank-you notes and letters. They are posted on the tack strip outside of Pastor Megan's office. Read and enjoy them there for yourselves.



From Linda Schaefer:

A sincere "thank you" for your cards, prayers, food, calls and kindness during my recovery from surgery. PS: I can't wait to be able to drive again!

From Sharon Jackson and family:

My thanks for the expressions of sympathy on the passing of my Mom, Elizabeth "Betty" Ehrcke, on January 1. The Church was such an important part of my Mom's life. Pastors Megan & Jason, Music Director, Choir and Organist made the memorial service very special. The volunteers who helped with the reception after the service were wonderful and so attentive to my family. Those homemade cookies were delicious! My thanks also go to Kristen & Lee for their help & those of you who gave memorial contributions to the church or City Mission in Mom's name. May the Lord Bless all of you at FRCS as you near the celebration of the church's 200th Anniversary!

From Sheila Dort:

Thank you to the many ladies that made our retreat so wonderful. Pastor Megan, Kristin B, Heather, Kristen S, Margo, Lynn, and Diana

From Barb and Bob King:

We would like to thank our church family for their support for Barb and Bob during his recent illness. We appreciate the prayers, visits, cards, and phone calls. The meals were very helpful and delicious!



Consistory Highlights:

On Sunday, January 21, our newest consistory members were ordained and installed. With promises, the laying on of hands, and prayers, each one made a commitment to serve faithfully and we, as a congregation, committed to offering encouragement and support.

Karen Faulkner was ordained and installed to her first three year term as Elder.

Lynn Makrin was ordained and installed to her first three year term as Elder.

Tom Falcon was ordained and installed to his first three year term as Deacon.

While she has already been ordained and installed, we are also deeply grateful to **Erin Parker**, who has committed to serve a second three year term as Deacon.

On Saturday, January 20, the consistory met for a 1-day retreat to begin welcoming the newest members and to begin looking ahead and identifying priorities for 2018. As part of that important work, the following officers were nominated and confirmed:

Richard Doyle will continue serving as the Vice President of Consistory.

Erin Parker will continue serving as the Clerk of Consistory.

Sunny Baldwin, Richard Doyle, Diane Faubion, and **Erin Parker** will serve as the Executive Committee.

David Schalekamp will represent FRCS as our Elder Delegate to Classis.

There was great energy in the room during the consistory retreat. It is a wonderful team of leaders and we are looking forward to another faithful year of ministry, together with each of you. Please continue to pray for your consistory members (a complete list of names is included in the bulletin each Sunday) - for wisdom in discerning, clarity in taking action, and courage in following wherever the Holy Spirit may lead.

Flowers: If you would like to sponsor chancel flowers in 2018, call the office. The normal cost of the two arrangements is \$50, but negotiations are possible. Larger arrangements are also possible through the florist.

**Thank you to our January flower sponsors:
Norma Hamm & Sue Pitts**



Sexual Harassment and Abuse:

We at First Reformed Church do everything we can to ensure that our people are treated with dignity and respect, and that everyone, especially children, are valued, protected, and cared for. To that end, our Board of Elders has established a policy on Sexual Harassment, and our Consistory has established a "Safe Sanctuary Policy" that helps us guard against child abuse. It is our practice to remind one another of these policies on an annual basis.

A copy of each of the above policies is kept in a binder in the Mailroom for your inspection at any time.

In light of recent events in the public and political arenas, our denomination, the Reformed Church in America, has also published a statement calling the church "to end harassment, abuse, and sexual violence against women and girls." The complete statement, titled "#WEARESPEAKING," can be found at rca.org.

Snow Closing Policy:

It's only February... So it bears repeating. What happens when there is a heavy snow? Our policy



is to hold worship whenever possible. However, if the Scotia or Glenville Police Departments declare a Snow Emergency and ask citizens to keep off the streets, we will comply and cancel our Sunday morning schedule or day and evening programs. If we do cancel our Sunday morning schedule, we will make every effort to announce our closing through the school closings network. Check the TV and radio stations to find out if worship is canceled if you are unsure.

Valentine's Day Word Search



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|-----------|----------|----------|-------|
| love | candy | caring | hugs |
| cupid | cards | February | pink |
| valentine | flowers | red | gifts |
| heart | kindness | kiss | roses |



FEBRUARY



Linda & Richard Lewis 21

Tina Haldeman	1	Michelle Pierce	15
Kim Pierce	1	Sue Torelli	16
Mark Holley	2	Yvonne Boyd	17
Simon Trbovich	2	Bill Wragg	17
Jason White	2	Kerry Balgobin	20
Amanda Faulkner	4	David Gonyea	20
Jason Bull Jr.	5	Norma Hamm	20
Kathie Balsler	6	Viktoriya Falcon	22
Walter Pfuntner Jr.	8	Hannah Greeley	22
Emma DeMasi	9	Chris Bodden	23
Sophia DeMasi	9	Jean Ellis	23
June Shaw	9	Terri McKenzie	23
Lynn Makrin	10	Emmett Hollenbeck	25
Joyce Gaudreau	11	Ellen Downing	26
John Pierce Sr.	11	Eleanor Marks	26
Ellen Schultz	11	Ali Gibson	27
Wesley Kohout	12	Maggie Pfuntner	27
Terry Paulson	12	Libby Farone	28
Jessica Kohout	13	Julia Penn	28

Please note: We list the birthdays and anniversaries of our church's local active members and friends. If we missed yours, please call the church office at (518) 370-4751. Thank you.

February Food Pantry:

Every week our bulletin lists the food most needed for the Scotia Food Pantry. Below are the items for this month. Please place your donations in the container in the narthex or in the one outside Brink Hall. What a great offering we would give if **everyone** brought in an item weekly!

There is **always** a need for bags and for monetary donations. Donations are used to purchase milk certificates and other items available at the Regional Food Bank for just 16 cents a pound. Make out your check to the First Reformed Church of Scotia and put "Food Pantry" on the memo line. Here are this month's theme:

Paper Products

Toilet Paper, Paper Towels, Facial Tissues, Paper Plates, Napkins



2017 Giving:

Here is a summary of how we gave for 2017:

(as of December 31, 2017)			
	Budget	Total to Date	Difference
Congregational Giving	\$348,700	\$331,756	-\$16,944
Other Giving	\$127,400	\$99,375	-\$28,025
Total Income	\$476,100	\$431,131	-\$44,969
Total Expense	\$476,100	\$437,875	-\$38,225
2017 Year End Deficit *		-\$6,744	

* Drawn from Reserve Fund

January Attendance:

* Please note, 2017 had 5 Sundays, 2018 had only 4

(as of January 28, 2018)			
	2018	2017	Difference
MONTHLY AVERAGE*	174*	183	-9*
YTD AVERAGE*	174*	183	-9*

February Calendar:

F Feb 2 **Groundhog Day**
SU Feb 4: **SOUP-er Bowl Sunday**
M Feb 5: **Staff Retreat - OFFICE CLOSED**
TU Feb 6: 5:30 **Worship Council**
7:15 **Care Team**
TH Feb 8: 6:00 **Schenectady Art Society**
6:30 **Q.U.I.L.T.S.**
7:00 **4-H**
F-SU Feb 9-11: **Men's Retreat at Camp Fowler**
SA Feb 10: 9:00 **4-H**
MO Feb 12: 11:30 **Caregivers Meeting**
7:15 **Admin Council**
TU Feb 13: 9:00 **American Sewing Guild**
7:15 **Missions Council**
W Feb 14: 6:30 **Ash Wednesday Service**

SU Feb 18: **COMMUNION**
12:00 **Valentine Luncheon**
MO Feb 19: **Presidents Day - OFFICE CLOSED**
7:15 **Consistory**
W Feb 21: 1:30 **Sharing & Caring**
M Feb 26: 7:15 **Care Team**
TU Feb 27: 1:00 **Scotia Home Bureau**

EVERY WEDNESDAY:
8:30 **Time of Prayer**
11:30 **Backpack Program**

EVERY THURSDAY:
9:00 **Mission Bells**
7:15 **Choir Rehearsal**

EVERY SUNDAY:
8:00 & 10:00 **Worship**

Address Service Requested

First Reformed Church of Scotia
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Scotia, NY 12302
(518) 370-4751