

The Rev. Jason White, Lead Interim Pastor

THE MESSENGER

From Pastor Jason's Desk:

Lent

Lent. It begins Wednesday February 22.

Many churches no longer observe this fourth century tradition. Perhaps it's a bit too old-fashioned, or even too medieval for many denominations in America these days. And even among those traditions, like ours, which do honor the season, rarely do we offer as much enthusiasm and expectancy as we do during a season like Advent. There are no presents at the end after all, no real parties to speak of along the way, and the songs are usually in a minor key. And giving up things or making promises for a different kind of living, didn't we just try that with New Year's resolutions?

However, penitence, sacrifice, and contemplation are the words of Lent. But we don't really wait anymore, or take time to humble ourselves or reflect. Most of us don't even go on retreats anymore, living in a world where delayed gratification is viewed with suspicion and everyone from politicians to advertisers promise that we really can have it all.

Lent. Who needs this?

Each year, whatever my feelings approaching Lent may be, the same answer comes whispering back: I do. Maybe I need time to focus, to get my mind off of my vocation, my social life, my future (and a hundred other things to which I look for meaning), and center myself in meaning itself. Maybe I need time (is forty days really enough?), to clear my head of the distractions which any involved life in this world will necessarily bring and redirect myself. Maybe I need the opportunity (perhaps deep down I even crave the opportunity), to clear my eyes of the glaze of indifference and apathy that comes from situation after situation where I feel helpless, so that I can again fasten my eyes on the

almost unbearably bright revelation of God, the source of divine wholeness wrapped in the form of Jesus.

And maybe (perhaps this takes the greatest amount of imagination of them all), Lent really isn't mine to do with whatever I desire. Perhaps Lent isn't even the Church's to insist upon, or not take part in. Perhaps Lent isn't any of ours, to scoff at or to observe. Maybe Lent is God's. Maybe Lent is God's gift to people starving for meaning, for courage, for comfort, for life.

If we can imagine that Lent is not ours at all but is God's, then maybe we'll also begin to recall (at first vaguely but then more clearly), that we are not ours at all, but are God's.

Seen this way, Lent reminds us of whose we are. The sacrifices, the disciplines, the space for contemplation are all God's gifts to us to remind us who we are. God's adopted children, God's treasure, so priceless that God was willing to go to any length and any depth to tell us that we are loved, that we have value, that we have purpose. Yes. I need Lent. I need an absence of gifts so that I might acknowledge the Gift. I need a time to be quiet and still, a time to crane my neck and lift my head, straining to hear again what was promised me at Baptism: "You are mine! I love you! I am with you...always!" I need Lent to remind me of whose I am, so that come Easter, I can rejoice and celebrate with all joy and anticipation, knowing that by making room for Christ, I'm making room for new life, and greater ability to acknowledge and understand my value and purpose in the eyes of God.

~ Pastor Jason

Search Team Update:

The Search Team continues to be making very good progress through the search process. We are feeling very hopeful that we are on the right track as we continue to move along the road to finding our next pastor here at First Reformed Church Of Scotia. We ask for your continued prayers and patience as we continue working very diligently to reach that goal.

Thank you, Your Search Team

Worship - February 2023:

February 5 - Communion - Preaching: Pastor Jason, John 2:1-11

February 12 - Preaching: Dr. Lou Smith

February 19 - Transfiguration Sunday - Preaching: Pastor Jason, Matthew 17:1-9

February 22 - Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30pm

February 27 - First Sunday of Lent

Lent 2023

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 22, 2022.

We are preparing the special worship events that are listed below.

Ash Wednesday - February 22, 6:30pm Service

Second Sunday in Lent - March 5, Communion

Palm Sunday - April 2

Maundy Thursday - April 6, 6:30pm Service

Good Friday - April 7, potential Scotia Churches CrossWalk

Easter Sunday - April 9, Sunrise Service and regular services

Adult Bible Study:

These are the two adult studies that are currently meeting.

- The “Renew Bible study” that meets via Zoom on Tuesdays at noon resumed in January and currently is studying the Upper Room. During Lent, the Upper Room will be “paused” as they study, Pauses for Lent, which can be found from numerous sources online. New learners are always welcome! This group continues to meet via Zoom on Tuesdays, 12:00--1:00. Contact Sunny Baldwin, 518-320-4562, if you have questions or for the Zoom link.
- A new group, Disciplines 2023, began at the end of January. This book has daily devotionals that follow the lectionary. They currently are meeting in Memorial Lounge on Mondays at 11:30. Please feel free to join in anytime! Questions? Contact Sunny Baldwin at 518-320-4562.

February Mission of the Month:

Our Mission of the Month for February is Bethesda House – Bethesda House is committed to the principle 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.



Communion Offering - Schenectady Community Ministries (SiCM) Celebrating over 50 years, this is a partnership of multiple congregations for ministries of social service and social justice. With financial support and volunteers from its members and others, it serves thousands of high-need individuals and families every year. It addresses public health needs such as food insecurity and nutrition education, racism and diversity concerns, and summer recreation through community collaborations and exceptional services and programs.

Youth Group

High School students are welcome to stay in church and join Miss Diana after worship (11:15ish) to have an informal chat about the sermon and any other topic you want to discuss. Please feel free to invite a friend or mentor. We will meet in Memorial lounge. Questions? Just contact Miss Diana.



NEW TIME 6:30pm-8:00pm

Jan. 22nd - Games and scavenger hunt
 Jan. 29th - Spare Time (Clifton Park) Families are welcome
 Feb. 5th - Make soup for luncheon
 Feb. 12th - Valentines Luncheon 11:30 - 1:00
 Feb. 19th - School vacation - no meeting
 Feb. 26th - School vacation - no meeting
 March 12th - Baking cakes for Fowler dinner
 March 18th - Saturday 4:00-7:00pm, Fowler Spaghetti Dinner



Valentine Luncheon

Sunday, February 12
 11:30-1:00

Come join the youth of our church for a meal and fun & games
 Open to everyone!

Lent Adult Bible study

Starts March 1st and will meet every Wednesday during the season of Lent. We will meet in person or virtual via zoom. More info to come.



CAMP FOWLER

Missing your camp friends? Missing your home away from home?
 Need something to do over February break? Might we suggest Winter Camp!?

2 nights and 3 days of pure winter fun at camp. You'll stay in cozy Chi Rho lodge, explore the wintry woods and frozen lake during the day, eat delicious home cooked food from the fabulous new cook, Aunt Jen, and spend time with all your camp friends. What more do you need??

Winter camp is for 6th-12th graders and costs \$175. It takes place February 19-21.

Sign up on the Fowler website: <https://www.campfowler.org/wintercamp>

Also, Summer camp registration is open and filling fast so don't hesitate to register today!

Health & Wellness Note:

Every February is Heart Health Awareness Month. Recently, the collapse on the football field of Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin following a hard hit to his chest and subsequent cardiac arrest brought emergency responders running to do cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to help restart his heart.



After Damar's cardiac arrest, the Editor of the Harvard Health Blog, Francesca Coltrera, wrote an article about the importance of knowing CPR. When a heart stops beating (cardiac arrest), receiving even a simplified, hands-only version of CPR can at least double a person's odds of surviving. Yet fewer than half of people who have cardiac arrest outside of a hospital receive CPR from someone nearby. And since four out of five cardiac arrests happen at home, the life you may save with CPR is more likely to be a loved one or someone you know rather than a stranger. Here are the CPR basics to know for adults.

Two key features that someone is in cardiac arrest are:

- **Not responding.** No reaction if you loudly say, "Are you okay?" and firmly shake a person's shoulders.
- **Not breathing normally.** Check if their chest is rising and falling or put your face close to their nose and mouth to listen for the sounds of normal breathing. Labored, irregular breaths that sound like snorting or gasping aren't normal breathing, and can't provide the brain with adequate oxygen.

Know how to do hands-only CPR

1. First, call 911 — or better still, tell someone nearby to make that call. Put the phone on speaker so you can start CPR and receive instructions from the emergency operator.
2. Next, place the heel of one hand on the center of the person's chest, right over the breastbone and between the nipples. Put the heel of your other hand directly on top. Lace the fingers of your top hand through the fingers of the bottom hand.
3. Position your shoulders directly above your hands and push down, keeping your arms straight. Push hard: use your body weight to compress the chest at least two inches.
4. Do the compressions repeatedly, aiming for a target of 100 to 120 pushes per minute.

To be better informed, watch a video to help understand the steps.

Knowing what to do in an emergency is invaluable. There are one-minute hands-only CPR videos from the American Heart Association that can help you learn the steps and the right speed for compressions. Also, CPR classes are offered through community education, hospitals, workplaces, and the American Heart Association. The hands-on practice of a CPR class can give you a better sense of the correct pressure and timing for compressions. Don't delay, **YOU COULD SAVE SOMEONE'S LIFE TODAY!**

The Buildings and Grounds Council thanks...

the congregation for your patience while the men's and women's bathrooms near Brink Hall were closed for renovations. Although the project took longer than expected, we are thrilled to see them open again and handicapped accessible. We're also pleased to announce the work cost less than what was budgeted. None of this would have been possible without your financial support. We thank our contractor, MR2 of Burnt Hills and Sara Madison, an architect in our congregation who did the drawings. While every project is a team effort, three people in particular were instrumental: Richard Doyle spent countless hours for more than three years planning, coordinating and shepherding the renovations from concept to completion; our sexton, Paul Retersdorf, stayed on top of the project; and our church manager, Vicki Hayner, ensured the ball got over the goal-line in the end.



Stories and Soup:

Save the Date! Sunday, March 5, following 10:00 am Worship. Come hear stories, yarns, and myths told by master storytellers! Uncle Kent Busman will be one of the folks entertaining us with his stories. Join us for a light soup lunch. Bring a friend!



Community Lunch:

My experience working in a grocery store has opened my eyes to the problem that face many of our community members: What can be bought to sustain families and still pay rent and utilities.

Many will try to afford the basic food necessities needed to feed families but rising cost of eggs (\$4.89 a dozen) have forced many to go without or severely curb what they eat.

I'm going to have a table at the community meal that will help with basic needs. It will have bags of toiletries for all genders. We need donations of full size shampoo, bars of soap, shaving cream, feminine hygiene products, soft toothbrushes and large tubes of toothpaste.

With these donations people will be able to use their money to buy much needed food for their families. I will have box by the office and I will check it each week.

Thank you for your continued support of the Community Meal and Grab and go lunch. ~Mark Holley



Offering Envelopes:

This year we will **NOT** be providing "numbered" offering envelopes. We **WILL** have offering envelopes available for your use, however, in making your pledge or financial offerings. These envelopes are available in packages in the Narthex or at the Main entrance.

Please make sure (especially if you are putting cash into the envelopes) that you put your name on the envelope so that we may credit you appropriately for your annual giving statements.



February Anniversaries:

Shawn & Heather O'Shea	14
Linda & Richard Lewis	21



February Birthdays:

Tina Haldeman	1	Sophia DeMasi	9	Yvonne Boyd	17
Kim Pierce	1	Ryann Pelkey	9	Norma Hamm	20
Mark Holley	2	June Shaw	9	Viktoriya Falcon	22
Simon Trbovich	2	Lynn Makrin	10	Hannah Greeley	22
Jason White	2	Ellen Schultz	11	Chris Bodden	23
Amanda Faulkner	4	Wesley Kohout	12	Terri McKenzie	23
Jason Bull Jr.	5	Terry Paulson	12	Emmett Hollenbeck	25
Mark Rahn	7	Jessica Kohout	13	Sara Madison	26
Walter Pfuntner Jr.	8	Michelle Pierce	15	Maggie Pfuntner	27
Emma DeMasi	9	Sue Torelli	16	Julia Penn	28





Spaghetti Supper & Cake Auction:

Save The Date: Saturday March 18, 4:00-7:00pm.

We are again putting together plans for spaghetti supper and cake auction to support Fowler Ministries and camper scholarships. Details are still being put together, but put on your thinking caps for those cakes, and test out those recipes. We look forward to seeing them!



Address Service Requested

First Reformed Church of Scotia
224 N. Ballston Avenue
Scotia, NY 12302
(518) 370-4751