

THE MESSENGER

Christopher's Corner

When people turn to God in prayer, they often petition for a great many things: help, support, strength, healing, forgiveness, mercy, and love, just to name a few. We are constantly looking to God for intervention and often this comes in the form of interruption. And God's intervention is often very disruptive. God's strength disrupts human weakness. God's mercy disrupts human shame. God's healing disrupts human illness. And God's love disrupts everything from hatred and fear to doubt and suffering.

As much as we pray and hope for God to disrupt these negative forces in our lives, these disruptions often have side effects that are not always as welcome. In disrupting guilt, pain and sin, God also tends to disrupt our daily lives and our carefully laid out plans. God's intervention rarely shows up when, where and how we would like it.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, had prayed often for the salvation of her people. She had prayed that God would send a shepherd to gather them back together and lead them into righteousness and peace. I don't think Mary realized that with these prayers she was volunteering at her young age to carry God's Son especially before she had a human husband to protect her. Yet with grace and even joy, Mary accepted God's disruption to her life.

Moses had prayed that his people would be freed from the yoke of slavery in Egypt. He prayed that God would send someone to let the people go and remove the lash from their backs. But when God told Moses that he was that someone, he objected. Moses argued that he was too poor of a speaker to be a leader. Yet God was successful, as God always is, and Moses' life was never the same again.

Saul had prayed that God's will would be done through him. He had prayed that God would make him righteous in all of his ways. Yet as he led a crusade of persecution against the young church, he was interrupted. Jesus appeared before him, and showed him the light. He took a new name, Paul, and found himself wandering across the known world preaching the Way of Jesus. This was not the plan, but it was still the answer to Paul's prayers. For in this God's will was indeed done.

Scripture is full of stories of lives interrupted, lives disrupted: David, Jonah, Ezekiel, Nehemiah. One of my favorite examples of an interruption is the prophet Amos who in the fourteenth and fifteenth

verse of the seventh chapter of his book is recorded as saying "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, a dresser of sycamore trees, and the Lord took me from following the flock and the Lord said to me 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'" Being a prophet wasn't a part of Amos' plan. He was a shepherd, but God 'took' him from among his sheep and sent him out.

Our God is so wonderful and amazing that God is willing to interrupt our lives, and disrupt our plans. And likely we will not always appreciate it, at least not at first. But we will learn that being interrupted by God is so much better than being left to our own devices. So I pray that you will open your heart up to God and let yourself be interruptible. When God places a calling on your heart that would 'mess up' your plans and your comfortable habits, find the strength to say 'Yes Lord, here I am.'

As your new pastor, it is indeed my deepest hope that, no matter how busy, I will always be interruptible. So, be a holy interruption in my life. Knock on my office door. Call, email or text me. Please, tell me when you or a loved one is sick or hurting. Honor me by allowing me to be with you when you are in need.

If you are listening, God will interrupt your life. God will disrupt your plans. And this is exactly the kind of intervention we are praying for, whether we know it or not.

Rejoice, for God disrupts cycles of sin and evil. God disrupts pain and death. God disrupts systems of hatred and fear. And God will disrupt you because God loves you too much to leave you where you are. Let God take you where you are meant to be and make you into who you are meant to be.

Maybe now is the time to call that old friend or that relative with whom you have grown distant. Maybe now is the time for you to be a holy interruption in someone else's loneliness. Maybe now is the time for you to disrupt the social isolation caused by the past few years. Maybe now is the time for you invite someone to go to church with you so that their life might be interrupted too.

God is knocking! God is calling!

Will you answer?

~Pastor Christopher

Congregational Care - Check-In!

As we welcome people back after the pandemic, are there individuals or families that you have not seen at the 8:00 or 10:00 service that you have previously seen at church? If there are, the Pastor and Congregational Care Council would very much appreciate you giving those names to us, so we may follow-up and reach out to them. Thank you on behalf of the Congregational Care Council, Karen Faulkner (518-399-5736)

Village Wide Garage Sale: Every year, the Village of Scotia holds a Village Wide Garage Sale. This year's date has been set for Saturday, June 4, from 8:00am to 5:00pm. To raise funds for our local missions, we will be participating in 2 ways:

- We will be renting spaces for a small fee, to those that wish to sell their items, but not at their own house or apartment. We advertise, you bring your items, staff your tables and keep what you make. All remaining items must go home with you.
- You can donate items on our list (still being developed) for the church to sell to benefit the church and our local missions. We staff and sell the items. All remaining items will be stored for next sale.

If you have interest in renting a space to sell your goods - you may go to our website and print a form or see Kristen Shave, in the office. If you would like to donate items for US to sell - see Sue Pitts for drop-off times.

Community Meal: The Community meal is for our community and serves all that are in that community. The mission is to have a meal with our neighbors that are struggling with food insecurities. Plus we have meals for anyone that would like a meal. If you like to share in fellowship and would enjoy a meal please come.

The grab and go lunch and the community meal are constantly growing and receiving new guests. The meal total so far is 3,832 lunches given out.

Thank you to all of the volunteers, Kristen, Paul and Vicky in the office and the church for the support of this meal.
~ *Mark Holley*

Mission of the Month for May: Is the weekend Backpack Program which provides backpacks full of food every Friday to hungry students in the Scotia-Glenville School District. It costs \$228 a year for each backpack. This year marks the 15th anniversary of the Food Bank's Backpack Program. From one rural school serving 30 kids to almost 200 schools across 20 counties with over 5,000 students served each Friday, the program continues to reach needy children to help them grow and thrive throughout the school year.

May Communion Offering: Scotia-Glenville High School Food Pantry

Backpack Program:

Over the years that we have conducted the Backpack Program, we have gotten to know a number of the families and their stories, especially when they come to the church to pick up the extra food for the vacation periods. These are just a few of their stories:

A single mom shared her circumstances. Her hours had been cut in half, and she was struggling to pay the bills. Her teenage daughter had recently completed her GED and found full-time employment and was trying to save money for college. One would think this was a positive for the family. Unfortunately, this extra income for the family meant that they no longer qualified for benefits from DSS! In her email to me, she stated "The backpack program has made it possible for my family to overcome financial difficulties and barriers and retain our house."

There are many stories like this, but I will end with this one: A father reached out to me personally to ask for food. He needed it delivered because he had recently had his right foot amputated. My husband and I made several deliveries to the home and recently heard the good news that he would now have a prosthetic. At the last delivery, he told my husband that he was so grateful for the backpack program that he wants to help with the deliveries when he starts driving again.

If you ever wondered if simply providing the backpacks and extra food has an impact on families in our area, these families (and there are many more) show that our true impact is greater than you can imagine. Thank you for your continued support.

~ *Linda Lewis*

Health & Wellness Note: If you have allergies, no one has to tell you that allergy season has started. Maybe this is why May is Asthma and Allergy Awareness month. Both asthma and allergies are considered to be chronic diseases. In the US, an estimated 25.2 million people, including 4.2 million children, have asthma, which can be life-threatening. While more than 100 million people are estimated to have allergies that affect 30% of adults and 40% of children. What is also alarming is the number is increasing!

For those with asthma reducing exposure to environmental factors is important for management of the disease. Since Americans spend about 90% of their time indoors, it is especially important to avoid indoor triggers- such as dust mites, mold, cockroaches, pet dander and secondhand smoke. It is also recommended that each person develop an asthma action plan with their healthcare provider. The plan should include what medical treatments to use and how to control triggers. Many times inhalers are ordered. If more than one is ordered, be sure to clarify the reason to take them and how often. Also, after each use, rinse your mouth with water in order to prevent thrush. For more information check: www.gov/asthma.

As with asthma, one of the best ways to control the disease is prevention, which means avoiding triggers, specifically your allergens, the substances that cause the allergic reactions. Those with allergies produce antibodies and then overreact to allergens- such as medicines, food, insects, latex, mold, pets and pollen. For example, it's not possible to avoid all outdoor air can be a challenge to avoid the allergen. If activities are outdoors, it may be difficult to avoid bees, wasps, grass and pollen. But there are steps you can take to reduce your chances of being stung and you can carry the medicine you will need if you are stung. It is important to prepare and have an allergy action plan.

With pre-planning and avoiding triggers, you don't have to let asthma and allergies interfere with your day-to-day activities at home, work or school. You can live a normal life despite having allergies. See your healthcare provider or allergist for treatment and guidance. Keep your medicine, whether inhalers or allergy reaction treatments, with you at all times so you can treat symptoms immediately.

By working with your healthcare provider and avoiding triggers, you too can lead healthier active lives!

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Usher Help Needed - If you are willing and able to help with usher duties at the Sunday morning worship time, we need you! The duties are as follows:

- ▶ Greet folks arriving for church and pass out bulletins
- ▶ Direct anyone who needs them to the headsets or children's busy bags
- ▶ About 9:50 ring the bell. Switch is found in the Usher's Closet. Be sure to turn off.
- ▶ At 9:55am, close the doors in the front of the church on either side of the chancel Remain in Narthex to greet late comers
- ▶ During the Doxology, bring one plate up to the front and place on the communion table (leaving the other plate on the pedestal in the Narthex)
- ▶ Count the congregants in the sanctuary, balcony, and nursery before the children's message if possible. Note these numbers in the book in the Narthex.

Contact Tom Bodden or the Church Office and let us know your willingness to serve. Tom is setting up a schedule for May 1 - August 31.

Kid's Hope USA - As the school year comes to an end, I want to thank those members of our congregation who have continued to mentor students. Please thank the following people for their dedication to the kids at Sacandaga Elementary, who come every week to spend one hour letting their student know how special they are: Diana Ackner, Carol Ahl, Diury Alvarado, Marty Gilgore, Vicki Hayner, Linda Lewis, Laurel-Le Lipski, Sheryl Pelkey, Diane Skibinsky and Jason White. Sunny Baldwin, Richard Doyle and Linda Willoughby were also available for substituting.

We hope that in the coming year, with a new director in place, we can continue and expand this valuable program.



SAVE THE DATE!

Youth/Children's Sunday: Jun 11, 2023@ 10:00
A Pancake breakfast will be provided.

Youth Group Calendar

- May 7th - Crop walk?? 1:00-3:00
- May 14th - Tie Dye shirts 11:30-12:30
- May 21st - Youth Sunday planning 11:30-12:30
- May 28th - Memorial day - no meeting
- June 4th - Picnic at Miss Diana's camp 1:00-5:00
- June 11th - Youth Sunday & Pancake breakfast



Youth Group Year End Picnic

Sunday, June 4th 1:00 - 5:00 PM
Miss Diana's camp (About 50 minutes from church)
Games, kayaking, swimming, hikes/walks
Bring your family, Bring a friend, Fun for all
RSVP to Miss Diana by Memorial day. Directions will be sent to you.



Attention All Graduates: In next month's issue of *The Messenger* (June 2023) we want to publish the names of everyone in our church who graduates this spring from high school, college, graduate school, and trade school programs. Please help us make sure we don't miss anyone. Email the church office, (office@firstreformedscotia.org) **by May 20** and tell us the name of your graduate, the school issuing the diploma or certificate, and what the graduate's future plans are. Thanks for your help!



Contact our staff by e-mail at:

Pastor:	Rev. Christopher McCloskey	pastorchristopher@firstreformedscotia.org
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Family Ministry Coordinator:	Diana Ackner	education@firstreformedscotia.org
Director of Music:	Barret Germain	music@firstreformedscotia.org

Visit us online at: <http://firstreformedscotia.org>

Color a picture for your Mom!



May Anniversaries:

Bob & Laurie Cooper	11
Steve & Fran Mathes	15
Jim & Mary Lynne Davidson	16
David & Laure Bicknell	17
Robert & Priscilla Harvey	19
Bill & Diane Faubion	19
Fran & Nancy Landry	23
John & Kathy Lehman	23
Ken & Elaine Willcox	26
Lonnie Hojnacki & Martha Gilgore	30

May Birthdays:

5 Katelynn Conroy	13 Bobbie Nelson	22 Alex Gilgore
6 Steve Mathes	14 Madalena Crisci	22 Jill King
6 Shannon Sill	14 Margaret Holley	24 Phyllis Beck
7 Martha Eberle	15 Emilee Rosenberg	24 Dave Bicknell
7 Elaine Willcox	15 Linda Shaw	26 Edward Graber
9 Chris Almy	17 Ron Shaw	26 Mark Graber
9 Laure Bicknell	18 Ann Armstrong	29 Alicia Hermance
9 Benjamin Doyle	19 David Miller	29 Steve Warfield
9 Kirk Willoughby	19 Ken Swain	30 Matt Parker
10 Denise Lansing	21 Bill Faulkner Sr.	

Address Service Requested

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