

THE MESSENGER

From Pastor Christopher's Desk . . .

While we, by the grace of God, are no longer in the midst of a pandemic, the lessons learned from this time of hardship continue to manifest, and will continue to be discerned for many years, if not decades, to come. The pandemic and its forced slow-down allowed many to reflect upon their priorities in a way that most rarely had the luxury, privilege or opportunity to do before. I would argue that our culture of busyness is perfectly and purposefully designed to keep us so exhausted that we do not have the time or energy for this kind of deep reflection.

Collectively there was a realization in the lives of most people, that they didn't actually like the busyness that had been forced upon them. People realized that there had been a steady increase in what the world and society expected of them. There was no sense of work-life balance anymore for most. They realized that they were no longer working to live, but living to work. The expectation to be ever more productive continued to grow and grow, until the pandemic offered an off-ramp. People were able to get off the treadmill for a moment and they realized how drained they were, physically, mentally and spiritually.

I have not been surprised to see many workers pushing against a return to 'normal.' For they realized that normal had long ago conspired to exploit them. People now wanted a new normal. In response, some have called modern workers lazy and entitled, but I think they have simply realized that they do not want to work themselves into an early grave.

This realization has also popularized the term 'self-care.' This is the practice of regularly setting aside time to rest, relax and care for one's body, mind and spirit. As a pastor, I wholeheartedly support this movement, but as a Christian I simply call this something else - sabbath.

Sabbath must be at the center of our faith lives and we must prioritize the ability of others to sabbath as well. We must remember that the climax of the creation story is not the creation of humanity, but the hallowing of the Sabbath.

Sabbath is not contrary to Christ's call of sacrificial service because we cannot give of ourselves if the

well is empty. We sabbath in order to sacrifice and serve. While sabbath must be kept from becoming self-indulgent, I would say that most Christians, myself included, struggle to embrace the obligation to rest. And when we do, we must remember that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath. That while he broke many Sabbath customs, Jesus still honored the Sabbath by resting.

On multiple occasions, Jesus withdrew from the crowds and prayed off in a quiet place (Mark 6:30-32, Luke 5:16, Luke 6:12). Jesus, we must remember, is fully human, and his body like ours requires rest. Jesus required time alone to think and pray. This fact must free us, as followers of Christ, to embrace time to think, rest and pray. We must embrace sabbath and we must fight for other people's right to sabbath as well even if they just call it self-care.

While there are a multitude of reasons many working aged people do not come to church, a prominent factor is that they are exhausted. Sunday's are one of the few days, maybe the only day that they can sleep in and recharge. And as a pastor, if you miss worship on Sunday because you need that rest, I say good. But what I would rather see is the creation of a culture where everyone has enough time to sleep, rest and self-care throughout the week, so that on Sunday's they feel they can get to church. Many folks are working 50, 60, 70+ hours a week, and this is unsustainable and wrong. And frankly I cannot fault these overworked people for not making it to church on Sundays. Labor practices and policies in this country must allow people to have time for self-care, to have time to sabbath.

Just like our salvation which is a gift from our God through our Lord Jesus Christ, sabbath is not earned, it is given, it is commanded. People should not have to earn time to rest. We should not blame the employees who often work lower wage jobs, who not too long ago we called essential, and tell them to get better jobs. It is our Christian obligation to not only rest ourselves, but to make sure that every human being has the ability to embrace their God-given right to rest.

- Pastor Christopher McCloskey

Mission Corner:

The Dutch Fair will be here before we know it! This year it is on the calendar for Saturday, September 16th. from 9:00AM-3:00PM. **The Mission Shed** (new name for the Green Shed) will be open to accept donations on three Sundays after both the 8:00AM and 10:00AM church services for an hour each time. The dates it will be opened are August 27, September 3 and September 10. It's time to start cleaning out your closets!

Acceptable items: Gently used clothing and shoes, linens, small household items, books, toys, jewelry (can be brought to the office anytime).

Non acceptable items: Candles, office supplies, TV's, computer monitors, chachki decorations, figurines, gold rimmed china.

Kristen Shave and Laura Bull are the chairwomen of this year's Fair. Please thank them when you see them for taking this important role on.

If you can help out in an area, please contact Laura Bull, Kristen Shave, Sue Pitts, or Linda Naumowicz. We are always looking for volunteers to help sort donations, set up, work the day of the Fair and clean up. Teenagers, this is a great way to get some community service hours needed for school!

This year will be the — Dutch Fair. Let's all help to make it a great one!

Thank you!
Your Mission Council

Community Meal:

The community meal for June had 82 meals go out and the grab and go lunch for July had 42 meals served. We are at a total of 4,213 meal so far.



I wanted to thank Pastor Christopher for blessing the meal. It is wonderful to have his support for this program. I would like to thank my volunteers for the beautiful card and gift. I truly appreciate you all.

We are having pulled chicken sandwiches and potato salad in July for the Community Meal.

Up coming events: the second annual Chili Cook off will be October 27, 2023. The Thanksgiving meal pick up delivery will be the 21 and 22 of November.

God Bless you all. ~Mark

August Mission of the Month:

Fowler Ministries - The Mission of the Month for August is Camp Fowler Ministries. Camp Fowler located near Speculator, NY does not receive direct financial support from Albany Synod. The annual budget for the camp is at least \$150,000, which is raised from churches, organizations and individuals who share its vision for ministry. One goal of Fowler is to keep the fees affordable for the children who attend. Camp Fowler is an important part of the life of this congregation. We contribute and receive incredible benefits from this partnership. Won't you consider the importance of this ministry and give generously to the August offerings?

August Communion Offering:

Scotia-Glenville Food Pantry - Outside of the support given to the Scotia-Glenville Food Pantry by the Regional Food Bank, there are other food items needed by the community that have to be purchased. By us also giving funds directly to SGFP, it allows them to better serve our neighbors.

Kid's Hope USA:

I am so excited to start as your new Kids Hope director. I have started training and planning for the 2023-2024 school year but I need your help! We need mentors and prayer partners! If you love kids and want to have a fulfilling and amazing experience contact me. Want to learn more? Contact me. I'm happy to meet with anyone and share this experience of changing the world one kid at a time. Thanks for trusting me with this awesome program!

Diana Ackner

education@firstreformedscotia.org



Looking for Sunday School teachers and helpers for 2023-2024

Our Sunday School program is slowly growing and we need "all hands on deck" to make it happen. If you care for our youth and would be willing to teach or help out even one Sunday please contact Diana Ackner education@firstreformedscotia.org or 518-428-2914(cell)

Save the Date!

Sat. Sept. 9th - MOVIE NIGHT

Sun. Sept. 10th - SUNDAY SCHOOL STARTS WITH
CRAZY FUN CARNIVAL EVENT



Ice Cream Social:

The results of our ice cream favorites poll are now in and it certainly was a close race. For most of the race, the choices were running almost neck and neck. The last ballots changed the outcome and at the last minute "Ice Cream Sandwiches" came from the middle of the pack and went on to win the race. Amazingly, "Orange Creamsicles" and "Chipwich" ended up tied for second and third place! For those that prefer gluten free, Orange Creamsicles and Stewart's vanilla ice cream will be available. Now all that's left is to enjoy our selections at our Ice Cream Social, August 6 after the 10 am service, hopefully on the plaza. Hope to see you there!



Camp Fowler Letters To Campers:



We have so many campers attending Camp Fowler this summer, it's going to be amazing! Consider writing letters to those taking part and the volunteers from our church as well. Check out the Fowler bulletin board for information on who's attending which weeks and send a quick note saying hello. It's always fun to get mail... and they get to "Kiss the Moose" if they get 3 letters!!! Please note that Fowler has a new address for camper mail.

Send mail to: Camp Fowler

Camper Name (Week #)

P.O. Box 207

Lake Pleasant, NY 12108

Photo Booth: While you're at the Ice Cream Social don't forget to stop by and get your picture taken, if you haven't already!

BackPack Program:

As was noted in the July Newsletter, the annual cost per bag for the weekend backpack program will likely increase this year from the current \$228 per year. It is estimated that the total cost for the program will be \$15,960 for our current 70 students. Some may view the bag of food each week as a "nice" addition to the family's food supply, but the unfortunate reality is that, for many families, this food is absolutely essential. We do not know the children who are receiving bags, but we have gotten to know some of the parents through our periodic distribution. An example of a family in need is a phone call I received recently from a mother of a 14-year-old Middle School student. She explained that she needed food even though she was a working single parent. Her daughter has a severe illness, requiring dialysis, which resulted in her missing school 60 days this past year. When the mom has to stay with her daughter, she does not get paid. We can never know the circumstances of the individual families, but their gratitude is obvious. These are people in our community who need our help. If you are able to make a donation, please remember to put "backpack" on the memo line of your check. You can be certain that your money will be put to good use.

Health & Wellness Note:

Recently the NY Department of Environmental Conservation became a cooperating member of "BearWise," which is a multi-state campaign focused on educating people on how to live responsibly with black bears across the country to ensure that no matter where people live, recreate, or travel, they receive consistent and effective information on how to prevent human-bear conflicts. Black bears are most active throughout the spring and summer months. Although black bears have a natural fear of humans, they can act or become aggressive if surprised, approached, or become emboldened by human food sources. The campaign, developed by bear biologists, promotes and provides information on the "BearWise basics" when at-home or out in bear country.



These are the "BearWise" At-Home Basics to avoid attracting bears:

- never feed or approach black bears;
- secure food, garbage, and recycling;
- remove bird feeders when bears are active;
- never leave pet food outdoors;
- clean and store grills and smokers; and
- alert neighbors to bear activity.

"BearWise" tips when recreating or vacationing in bear country:

- stay alert and together;
- leave no trash or food scraps;
- keep dogs leashed;
- camp safely; keep food, medicines, toiletries in a Bear-Resistant Canister at least 100' feet from your campsite; (Standard coolers are not bear-resistant!)
- know what to do if you see a bear; and
- carry bear spray and know how to use it.

Lastly, if you are experiencing a human-bear conflict, even after following the BearWise basics, [contact the regional DEC wildlife office](#) for guidance/assistance. Stay safe and enjoy!

August Anniversaries:

James and Rebecca Penn	6	Michael and Lynda Benedict	15
Dave and Pam Walsh	6	Christine and Nick Stryjek	15
Steve and Amiee Warfield	7	Ken and Michele Swain	18
Peter and Glenda Lewis	9	Ron and June Shaw	22
Cheryl and John Miller	9	Keith and Lynn Makrin	26
Bruce and Barbara Wurz	11	Patrick and Allison Beauchemin	28
Tom and Chris Bodden	12	Alex and Rebecca Ayers	29

DUTCH FAIR - This year's Dutch Fair is Saturday, September 16, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.. If you have managed an area in the past, please let us know that you are willing to do so again this year. If you would like to help in any area - contact us as well! This year our event chairs are Laura Bull, 518-369-4180 and Kristen Shave 518-370-4751. So far, we have confirmed the following area leaders:



- Bake Sale: Linda Lewis
- Books: Martha & Bill Eberle
- Craft Fair: Kristen Shave
- Cinnamon Buns & Coffee Bar: Mark Holley
- Clothing:
- Jewelry: Ann Armstrong (*Please bring jewelry to the office to be secured.*)
- Kiddie Fair: Christina Stryjek & Cindy Tygert
 - Ponies by: Ponies For Hire, Susan Mason, Altamont, NY*
 - Pumpkins from: Burhmaster Farms*
- Kitchen: Linda Naumowicz & Mark Holley (Hot Dogs, Pizza & Such)
- Linens & Things: Jane Brehm
- Media: Don Bowers
- Pick-A-Pocket Lady: Kristen Shave
- Plants: Fern & Stan Lee
- Toys:
- White Elephant: Jane Lansing & Phyllis Beck

We will start accepting donations in late August. Items being accepted: Clothing, Linens, Children's Toys & Games, Everyday Housewares (microwave or dishwasher safe glasses & plates, cookware, small appliances), Books, Jewelry, Fall & Christmas decor, Antiques/Collectables. Plants: Please wait until the week of the fair and place in the secret garden.

A REMINDER ABOUT DONATIONS: If it's chipped, broken, not cleanable, or missing a cord or pieces, please save us the dumpster room, and dispose of it at home. - *Thank you!*



August Birthdays

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5 - John Sheehan | 20 - Linea Kilgallen, Aaron Madison,
Margaret Parker, Sophia Pierce |
| 7 - Joyce Murray, Bowden Stryjek | 21 - Olivia Munson |
| 9 - Barbara Graber | 22 - Alex Atchley |
| 10 - Lori DeMasi, Fern Lee | 23 - Abbey Naumowicz |
| 12 - Rylan Beauchemin | 24 - Rebecca Jarczynski-Okpoti |
| 14 - Victoria Dykstra, Barbara Robinson | 26 - Michael Marré |
| 15 - Karen Squires, Jennifer Westervelt | 27 - Tee Munson |
| 16 - Bill Shave, Jr. | 28 - Amy Grumbling |
| 17 - Nancy Landry, Jack Pierce, Miles Torelli | 30 - Emily Kohout, Lillian Rooney,
James Rooney, Patrick Beauchemin |
| 19 - Russ Garrison | |

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Address Service Requested