
The Rev. Christopher McCloskey, Pastor

THE MESSENGER

I believe that it is essential for the church to be a confessional body. To be confessional simply means to have confessions. Confessions are theological documents usually written by a group of people that speak to a specific church tradition or a specific event in the world or both.

The Presbyterian Church (USA), of which I am a member, has a Book of Confessions which contains 12 confessional documents. 2 are ancient confessions, 6 are reformation confessions and 4 are modern confessions. The ancient confessions are the Nicene and the Apostles' Creed. The reformation confessions are the Scots Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Second Helvetic Confession, the Westminster Confession of Faith and its Shorter and Longer Catechisms. The modern confessions are the Theological Declaration of Barmen, the Confession of 1967, A Brief Statement of Faith and the Belhar Confession.

While the two ancient confessions, the Nicene and Apostles', are nearly universally accepted by every Christian church as foundational, the reformation documents are where we really start to see some significant variation from tradition to tradition. The Reformation beginning in 1517 was a time where Christians across Europe were working to clearly articulate what they believed as many broke from the Roman Catholic Church in protest.

Given that the Presbyterian movement began in Scotland it is only appropriate that their founding confessional document was called the Scots Confession. This confession was joined with the Heidelberg Catechism as the chief confessional standard for the Presbyterian church for about a century until the Westminster and its Longer and Shorter Catechisms displaced them. The Second Helvetic, meaning Swiss, Confession was never a confessional standard in the Presbyterian church, but it is a wonderful, and exhaustive exposition on virtually every tenet of Calvinism written by the theologian Henry Bullinger. Interestingly enough this confession was originally meant to be a part of his last will and testament meant to be read at the time of his death.

The Dutch too were busy writing confessions around the same time. Instead of the Scots Confession they wrote the Belgic Confession, which theologically speaking is remarkably similar to the confession of the Scots. It is called Belgic in reference to the low country that today includes both the Netherlands and Belgium. Like the Presbyterians, the Dutch also adopted the Heidelberg Catechism to accompany their confession. Later the Canons of Dort was adopted as a third confessional standard as a reaction to the influence of the theologian Jacob Arminius who questioned the fundamental tenets of Calvinism.

During this same time the Lutherans wrote and adopted the Augsburg Confession. Later the Methodists and Baptists would write many confessions. Even the Roman Catholic wrote their own confessions in order to clarify their own position in opposition to the rise of Protestantism like the Tridentine Creed.

In the modern era confessions continue to be written including the Barmen Declaration denouncing Hitler and Nazism, and the Belhar Confession denouncing apartheid in South Africa, which is the fourth confessional standard of the RCA. Many ecumenical bodies and conferences have also written confessions, including the Accra Confession written by the World Communion of Reformed Churches of which both the RCA and the PCUSA are members. The Accra Confession was written in Accra, the capital city of Ghana, in 2004. It was written in response to the many economic and environmental injustices facing our world today. This confession, like all of the confessions I have listed, is easily accessible online and I commend them to you for study and reflection.

As a member of the RCA you are a member of a confessional body, so I encourage you to explore the marvelous resources that our Christians forebears have composed and adopted. Allow them to help to guide and aid you as you strive to follow the often difficult path of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Sincerely Yours,
Rev. Christopher J. McCloskey

Renew Bible Study: will begin reflections from the book, Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas. According to Plough magazine, this book, which is Ecumenical, has fifty devotions which invite the reader to contemplate the great themes of Christmas and the significance that the coming of Jesus has for each of us – not only during Advent, but every day. The book includes writings by John Donne, Meister Eckhart, Dorothy Day, T.S. Eliot, Gustavo Gutiérrez, Eberhard Arnold, G.M. Hopkins, Martin Luther, Edith Stein, Thomas Aquinas, Dorothee Soelle, Philip Yancey, and others.

Classes are led by David Walsh and Sunny Baldwin, and meet weekly on Tuesdays from 12:00-1:00pm, begin November 27, and go through Epiphany. Each week, 3 readings will be selected to discuss. All are welcome to participate as able. The book is available new and used online. For assistance with obtaining the book, getting the Zoom link, or questions contact Sunny Baldwin, 518-320-4532, or at csunnyb@nycap.rr.com.

Communications Committee:

The Communications Committee has been meeting over the past five months to discuss ways to improve communication within the congregation and with our larger community. The committee consists of Patrick Beauchemin, Mike DeMasi, Tina Haldeman, Nancy Passer and Pastor Christopher. They welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Here's a summary of what's been accomplished so far:

- A large, flat-screen TV was installed in the lobby of Brink Hall that will be available to our congregation and members of the community to post announcements. Pastor Christopher is finalizing policies and procedures for using the digital display. Church staff are being trained. This project was done at minimal cost to the congregation. IT consulting, installation and training were provided at no expense.
- An ad will appear in the Glenville Senior Center's November/December newsletter, 'Senior Moments' inviting everyone to join us for Advent and Christmas services.
- An article featuring Pastor Christopher was published in The Times Union the week of September 18. Notice of his installation and an invitation to join us also appeared in the community notes of The Daily Gazette.

Design to Delivery: An Update

The Design Team has been renamed the Design/Delivery Team. Our congregation is moving from dreaming and designing our future, into delivering on our proposed Initiatives. Last Spring, the Team proposed six Initiatives and asked the congregation to invest their time in delivering. The following is a list of activities to date.

- The **Communications Team** built a very creative list of actions. The Church has publicized our activities in more news outlets, and is working on new digital means of informing folks both inside and outside our congregation.
- **Creative Worship Team** advanced a set of proposals for worship and music. Much of these are on hold until the Church fills a permanent Choir Director position.
- The **Food Pantry Team** is finalizing design and implementation of a 'Little Food Pantry' to be installed outside our building.
- The **Bible/Book Study Team** worked with staff to implement three such study sessions this year, with an emphasis on opening access by holding the sessions at different times of day.
- We have had preliminary discussions with staff about the two other Initiatives – Expansion of Free Meals and Mission Shed Thrift Store. Look for more information in the coming weeks.

Many thanks to all those who have signed up to work and invest their skills in our Initiatives!

Volunteer Thank You: Your Mission Council is hosting a special coffee hour for everyone who has graciously volunteered throughout the years. Please join us to honor you for a special coffee hour on Sunday November 12 in Brink Hall after the 10:00 service. The Mission programs of our church would not be possible without your dedication and time spent to carry them through. Please come and sit a spell with us. We want to say thank you for being the very special people that you all are! The Mission Council

Flower Fund: Do you want to remember a special event? An anniversary? A relative's birthday? A baby's arrival? A memorial? A gift of \$50 (suggested donation) to the Flower Fund provides beautiful flowers for a given Sunday's Worship services. Please call the office or sign up in person at church.

Thank you, ~The Worship Council

Olde World Santa: You can help the Backpack Program and make a wonderful holiday gift in a class being offered by Patty Marre to make an Old World Santa. For \$30.00 you will be provided all the supplies you need and step by step guidance during this class. All proceeds go to the Backpack Program.

If you have a glue gun please bring that along with you and if you have any questions you can call Patty at 518-421-6862. There will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the hallway. Class will be offered at 2 times on Tuesday November 14, in Brink Hall. Deadline to sign up is Thursday November 9.



Mission's Corner

Mission of the Month, November 2022: Schenectady City Mission. Founded in 1906, the Mission is dedicated to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed. Their ministries are seeking to comprehensively meet the needs of the poor in a manner that dignifies and strengthens the individual, the family, and the community. Their goal is to provide not only HELP for today, but HOPE for tomorrow. They meet people's basic needs like food, shelter and clothing. Providing these life essentials are at the core of who they are. The Mission provides spiritual guidance, counseling, training, classes, life and job skills training and so much more! The Mission does not receive government funding, so they couldn't do any of this without the generous support of concerned individuals, churches and businesses

All Saints Day Offering (November 6): Joan Nicole Prince Home is for the Joan Nicole Prince Home (JNPH). Located in the Village of Scotia, the Joan Nicole Prince Home provides 24 hour bedside care for two residents at a time in a homelike environment. It is staffed primarily by volunteers and the care provided consists of laundry, meals, personal care, cleaning and support to our residents and their families. The JNPH is not a medical facility and it is run independently by the Schenectady Community Home, Inc. The Home collaborates with Hospice who provides the medical management for the patients as they do for anyone receiving hospice care in their own home environment. The volunteers and staff of the JNPH become the "surrogate family" for residents.

Community Meal: The September community meal served chef salads and strawberry and blueberry cups. We also had oatmeal cookies and homemade applesauce. Nothing was left and all were very happy with the meal.

The grab and go meal had turkey and cheese sandwiches, chips and homemade cookies from Vicky, as well as pizza. Again we didn't have any leftovers. We are at a total of 4,629 so far.

We are having the Chili Cook-Off was on October 27, and the Community Meal the next day was chili as well. Each patron of the Friday night chili cook-off received 10 - 3oz portions of chili, cornbread, salad, and dessert, for just \$15, as well as a chance to vote for their favorites. Results will be announced soon!

The Thanksgiving meal sign-up has gone well. We have 66 meals signed up for so far. We are capped at a hundred meals. If anyone would like to make or buy a pumpkin or apple pie, please sign up or let me know. You can send me an email at: holleydad11@gmail.com.

I would like to thank Judy Swain and the women's guild from Scotia United Methodist Church, who made Blessing mix bags for the thanksgiving meals and are also making some pies. Thanks so much!

God Bless. ~ Mark



BackPack Program: We are off and running for another year of delivering bags of food to area schools and directly to some families! We are starting out packing bags for 70 students: 8 at the High School; 21 at the Middle School; 19 at Glendaal; 19 at Glen-Worden; and 4 that are Home Schooled. There are an additional 8 students at the High School that take food home, using the school food pantry. Trinity Presbyterian packs up to an additional 30 bags that are delivered to Lincoln and Sacandaga. So that means that potentially 108 students receive extra food to share with their family every week-end! The Regional Food Bank includes milk and egg cards good for a gallon of milk and a dozen eggs within the \$273.00 cost per bag for every other week-end. We looked at our budget and decided that we can again include these cards every week, thanks to your generous contributions in the past.

The Regional Food Bank reported in a recent newsletter that they "anticipate providing bags to over 6,000 children across 250 schools in 2023-2024. Last year's Back Pack Program distributed 1.8 million meals to hungry kids, helping them meet their potential." Thank you all for being part of this incredible effort.

Health & Wellness Note:

It's probably fair to say that if given a choice, most of us would prefer to stay in our homes rather than move to a facility EVER. For that to be possible, there are some things to consider about your home and your healthcare needs.

If you're planning to stay in your home as long as possible, here are some steps you should take. Consider your health, the safety of your home, and the resources available in your community. The following questions can help you think this through. If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, talk with your doctor. Share the answers with your family and consider reaching out to an aging-in-place specialist who might also be able to help determine if remaining in your home is a safe option for you.

HERE ARE QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. Do you have any physical health conditions that might limit your mobility, such as arthritis?
2. Do you have any conditions that could affect your mental function, such as Alzheimer's or another type of dementia?
3. Does your home have features that could make it hard to get around safely, such as stairs, narrow doorways, or poorly lit areas?
4. Would home modifications be too expensive for you to afford?
5. Do you live alone?
6. Do your children or other family members live more than 30 miles away?
7. Do you live beyond walking distance from parks and other safe recreational areas?
8. Are you responsible for all the care and maintenance of your home, including gardening and snow removal?
9. Have you stopped driving?

SO BE SURE TO SHARE YOUR ANSWERS AND MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION FOR YOU!

Hats & Gloves Needed:

Donations of new or handmade mens, women's and children's winter hats and gloves needed for distribution to our community lunch and backpack recipients. Donations may be dropped off between 8:30a.m. and 2:00p.m. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Cookie Walk: We will hold our 7th COOKIE WALK on Saturday, December 9, 2021 from 11:00-2:00p.m. (or until sold out).



Could you donate cookies to the Cookie Walk? We ask that you bake a MINIMUM of 5 pounds of the same cookie. (This is equivalent to a 3-4 batches.) Cookies can be made by individuals or in teams (of 4 or less) at the church in the commercial kitchen.

Place your cookies in a disposable container, to bring to the church.

We need smaller, colorful, attractive cookies. Ethnic cookies, festive Christmas cookies, are big hits. Huge or heavy cookies do not sell well. Fudge and bark would go well too!

Please drop your cookies off by Friday, December 8. Between 12:00-5:30pm. This is important – so we can prepare for the event. Please bring with you a description - telling us the name of your cookies, name of baker(s) **and indicate if it contains nuts.** The more we know about the cookies, the more we can talk them up to potential buyers! We will also need volunteers for the day of - so keep your eyes open for a sign-up.



Women’s Epiphany Retreat 2024



It is time for us to think about our annual Women’s Retreat! We’ll be joining together in the comfort of Chi Rho Lodge at Camp Fowler **January 12-14**. The cost for 2023 is **\$160** per person and includes meals, room & board. Sign up, first come first serve. We’ll provide a program including faith focused discussions, games, crafts, fun and more! See Miss Diana for more information.

Youth Group Calendar

- Oct.29 - 11:30-12:00 - Operation Christmas child fold boxes and pack and start to plan Hanging of the Greens
- Nov. 12 - 11:30-12:00 - Last day for Christmas shoeboxes
- Nov. 26 - 11:30-12:00 - Prep for Hanging of the Greens
- Dec. 3 - 11:30-12:30 - Hanging of the Greens
- Dec. 17 - 11:30-12:00 - Christmas party



Operation Christmas Child - The youth group would like your help. They are packing shoeboxes for Operation Christmas child. These boxes go to children who would not get a Christmas present if it wasn’t for us. We would like the congregation to help by donating Hats, Gloves and Socks. Monetary donations are also welcome as it cost \$10 per box to process and ship. A box is in the narthex for donations. See Miss Diana if you have any questions.

Advent 2024 - That's right, I said advent. Believe it or not, advent will soon be here. Advent devotionals will be available by Thanksgiving. This year's theme is “How does a weary world rejoice?”

Hanging of the Greens will be *Sunday December 3rd* after 10am service. Plans are underway so save the date!



Giving Report:

Here is how we have given so far this year. (January 1 - September 30, 2023)

	Annual Budget	YTD Budget	Total to Date	Over/Under
Congregational Giving	294,000	220500	186645	-15%
Other income	255,110	163477.50	217746	13%
Total Income	549,110	383977.50	404391	5%
Expenses	557,110	\$383,977.50	407098	6%



Mission Monday:

Save the Date: Monday, December 4

All children and youth are welcome to come bake and decorate cookies with Miss Diana. All cookies will be donated to our cookie walk on Saturday, December 9. More details coming soon.

Would YOU Like To Submit an Article to *The Messenger*?

We welcome your information and input. **Please submit your articles no later than the 20th of the month.** Articles must be e-mailed in MS Word, to Kristen Shave at office@firstreformedscotia.org. You are also encouraged to submit photos of church events! Please list all people shown in the photo. Thanks!

Announcements for the Sunday bulletin are due on Thursday by 10:00 in the morning.

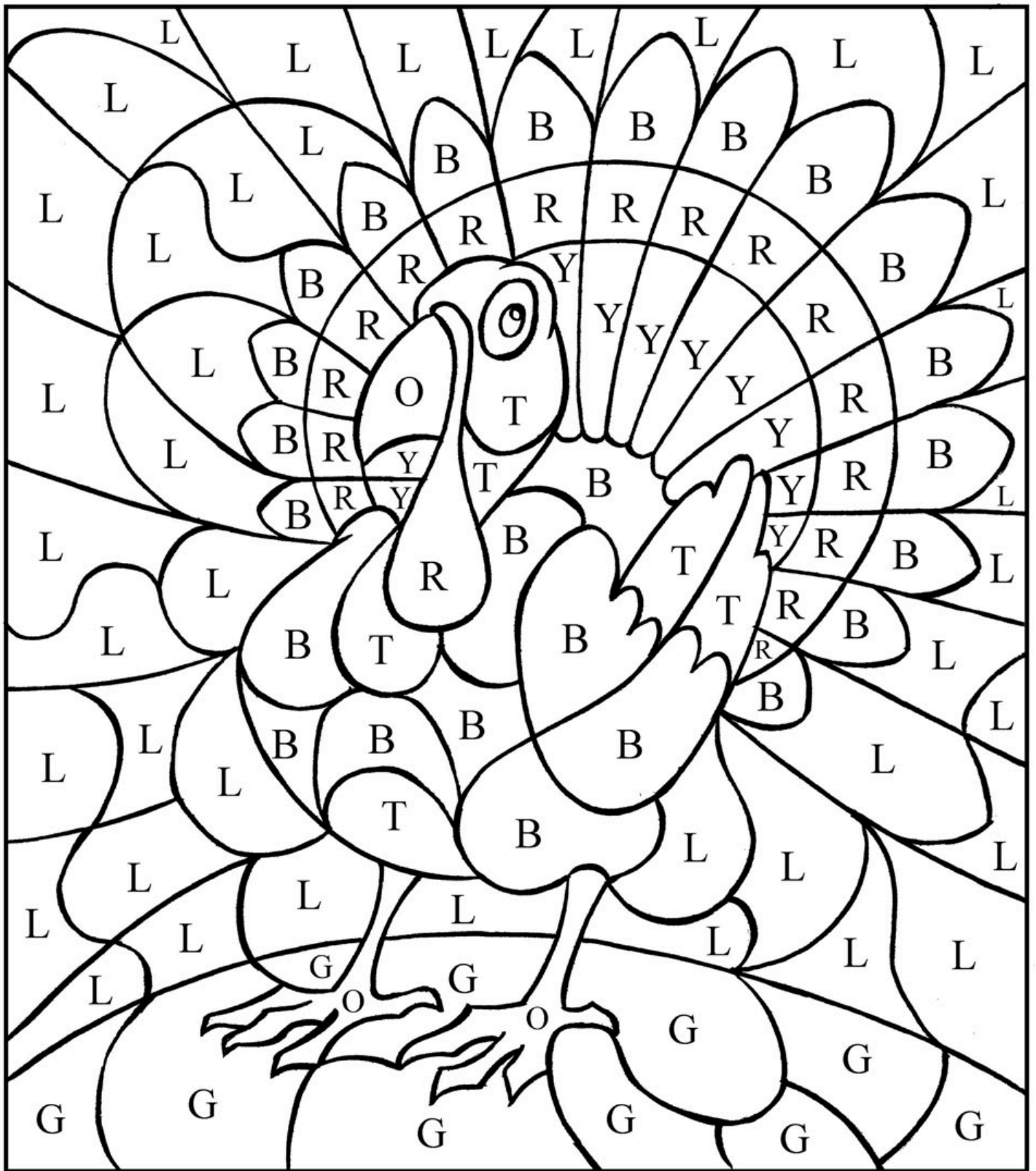
NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Ed and Dorothy Horstkotte	19
Joe and Kristin Bodden	27
Dan and Trudi (Thun) Ertel	28

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 • 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 or e-mail
 • office@firstreformedscotia.org. Thank you.
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NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Joan Grant	1	Maggie White	13	Rheana Gravell	18
Al Snyder	2	Ken Willcox, Jr.	13	David White	20
Dave Wentworth	3	Cheryl Conover	14	Jim Pierce	22
Shannon Warfield	9	Spike Ahl	17	Philip Hermance	26
John Lehman	12	Jay Harlow	17	Heather Kramer	26
Sandra Suits	13	Jane Brehm	18	Karen Faulkner	29



B = Brown T = Tan R = Red
 G = Green Y = Yellow W = White
 O = Orange L = Light Blue

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