

The Rev. Christopher McCloskey, Pastor

THE MESSENGER

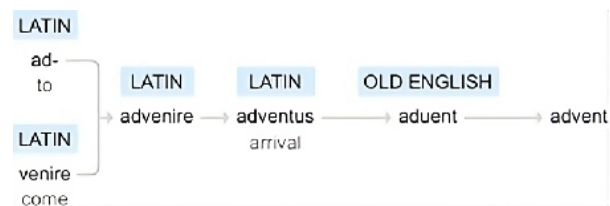
From Pastor Christopher's Desk

Most people have heard of biology, ecology and theology, meaning the study of life, the study of our home aka the earth, and the study of God, respectively. Yet I am willing to bet that most are similarly unfamiliar with the word etymology. It can be deduced however that this word also has to do with the study of something. As with the previous terms, etymology is the combination of two Greek words, with the suffix *-logy* coming from the word *logos* literally meaning word, thought, reason or plan, plus the subject being studied. In the case of etymology, the object being studied is *etymos* or truth, specifically being the truth behind or origin of the words we use.

Linguists estimate that at least 30% of the English language has its origin in Greek, with at least 5% coming directly from Greek and the other 25% coming indirectly through Latin. Given that relatively few people study archaic Greek or Latin, this means that up to 30% if not more of the words we use on a regular basis have hidden truth behind them obscured by a foreign language. Yet etymology helps us cut through this language barrier within our own language. With the vast knowledge of the internet at our finger tips all we have to do is search the etymology of 'fill-in-the-blank' and a whole new world of understanding is unlocked before our very eyes.

When it comes to 'church' terms far more than 30% originate in Greek as it is the original language of the New Testament and Latin with it being the singular official language of the church for centuries (and as with their mythology, the Romans borrowed/took/stole the vast majority of their language straight from the Greeks). Unsurprisingly then, the term Advent has its origin in Latin.

So what then is the hidden truth or origin behind the word Advent? Advent comes from the prefix *ad-* meaning "to" and the word *venire* meaning "come." Thus Advent means arrival specifically our time of preparation for the arrival of the Christ child on Christmas Day.



It is possible that this reveal seems rather anticlimactic as it is rather intuitive, but in studying etymology we also can reveal the hidden connections between related terms. For example, advent's connection to the word adventure, meaning that which is about to come or arrive. It seems like it might be more fitting to call the season we are about to enter Adventure rather than Advent. So as we sit at the threshold of December, I wonder what magnificent adventure is in store for us in the weeks to come?

I wish you all a wonderful, joyful and adventurous holiday season. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely Yours,

~ *Pastor Christopher*



Snow Closing Policy: What happens when there is 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 in-person Sunday morning schedule or day and evening programs. Most-likely, in the event of a snow closing on Sunday, due to our ability to live stream or offer worship online, a service will still be available online even if the church is closed. 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.



Poinsettias: Help us vest our sanctuary for Christmas by making a donation to our Flower Fund towards the purchase of poinsettias, and flowers throughout the year. You may make your donation in honor or in memory of a special person or event. Dedications will be printed in our Christmas bulletins.

The poinsettias will be distributed to shut-ins or those we wish to remember this season after the Christmas Eve service. Please submit your donation and dedication slip (see pew pocket) by Monday, December 18.

Advent Season Choir - Would you like to join the choir for the Advent season? Rehearsals for December's music will start on November 30. Please send Sue Fedak a note via the church office so she can have music ready for you!

Congregational Meeting – Sunday, December 10

A Congregational Meeting has been called for Sunday, December 10, following the 10:00am worship service. The purpose of the meeting will be to elect new members to the consistory, and the 2024 nominating committee. The following individuals have been nominated to serve on the consistory in 2024: Laura Bull, John Ackner, David Schalekamp and Paul Munson. Even though these are the individuals that have been selected by the 2023 Nominating Committee, nominations can be made from the floor. The 2024 Budget will be presented and an advisory vote will be taken. A year-end report on the state of the church will also be presented. All active confessing members have voice and vote, but anyone interested is welcome to be present for the proceedings.



Renew Advent/Christmas Bible Study - If you can Zoom and are interested in an Advent/Christmas study, this is the study for you! Last week, the group began reading Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas. Classes are led by David Walsh and Sunny Baldwin. There are daily readings, from more than forty authors, and each week 2-3 readings are selected to discuss. We meet weekly 12n-1pm, on varying days. For the schedule and Zoom link, contact Sunny Baldwin at 518-320-4562 or csunnyb@nycap.rr.com.



Hanging of the Greens & Meal - You are invited to join the congregation in preparing our sanctuary for the Christmas Season. The Hanging of the Green will take place on Sunday, December 3, following the 10:00am worship service. You are invited to help prepare our sanctuary for Advent. This time will not only be spent decorating, but also crafting as well. Afterwards, we will be treated to a wonderful Middle Eastern meal provided by friend of the congregation Rami Saidam.

Thank You's -

From Mark Holley: I would like to thank Walter and Walt Pfuntner, and the Beukendaal Fire Department, plus the Thomas Corners Fire Department and Wayne Penn and assistant. They were instrumental in delivering meals to our guests during the Thanksgiving meal. We are blessed to have wonderful firemen in our church community.

EDUCATION CORNER:

Advent Devotionals and Advent Calendars - Are available for all to enjoy. They are available in the narthex and the Brink hall lobby.

COOKIE BAKE ! All ages are welcome to join Miss Diana on Monday December 4th at 7:00pm to bake and decorate cookies for this year's Cookie Walk. Join us in the church kitchen for some holiday fun while baking for a mission!



Women’s Retreat 2024 January 12-14 -

We’ll be joining together in the comfort of Chi Rho Lodge at Camp Fowler Friday dinner through Sunday morning. The cost for 2024 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!

Want more information contact Miss Diana education@firstreformedscotia.org
 *Make checks payable to First Reformed Church of Scotia

Youth Group for December -

- Sunday December 3 at 11:30- Hanging of the Greens - come help get our church ready for Christmas. Food will be provided by Rami and his Family.
- Sunday December 17 at 11:30 - Christmas Party - join us for some holiday games and snacks!



Sunday School -

The month of December we will focus on advent and getting ready for our Christmas eve service/Pageant. All children and youth are invited to participate in the pageant. Please let Miss Diana know if you want to be part of this wonderful tradition. Please be aware, attending Sunday school the month of December would be helpful but is not mandatory.

Camp Fowler summer registration is now open!

Register online at campfowler.org
 We ask that you only pay the deposit so that FRCS scholarship can be applied. Scholarship code is SCOTIA2024.
 Hope to see you all at camp this summer



Christmas Eve Worship -

This year Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday thus the schedule for that day is a bit different than a typical Sunday here at FRCS. There will not be an 8:00am service, but for those wishing to celebrate the 4th Sunday of Advent you are invited to join us for worship at 10:00am. That evening at 5:30pm the children and youth of our congregation will present a Christmas pageant as we rejoice in our children leading us worshipping our newborn King. The traditional evening candlelight service will begin at 8:00pm following a musical prelude beginning at 7:30pm, a half hour of music will be presented by members of the church, including instrumental and vocal solos, organ pieces and music for choir and handbells. We look forward to worshipping with you on the 24th, be it once, twice or even three times. But however you spend your Christmas Eve, may this most holy of nights be filled with light, love, joy and hope!



The Mission of the Month for December - Over the Bridge Outreach (OTBO):

Over the Bridge is a ministry started by our very own Doug Bartling before the Pandemic, that's focused on:

- Sharing Jesus Christ through actions of love, by giving hope to ALL people regardless of their race, gender, beliefs, sexual orientation, or background.
- Providing encouragement and inspiration to all who they come in contact with.
- Feeding the hungry, clothing the poor, being a friend to the lonely, a crutch to the addicted and a motivator to the helpless - all in the name of Jesus.
- And so much more....

Christmas Eve Offering - Regional Food Bank (5 Local Entities) -



The Regional Food Bank has been helping to feed the poor and hungry in our communities since 1982. It is the only organization of its kind in northeastern New York. The Food Bank collects large donations of food from the food industry and distributes it to charitable agencies serving hungry and disadvantaged people in 23 counties. From Plattsburgh to Newburgh, in urban, rural, and suburban communities, the Food Bank provides over 30 million pounds of food a year to 1,000 agencies.



Cookie Walk - Our 7th Cookie Walk is on Saturday, December 9 from 11:00-2:00p.m. (*or until sold out*). Come purchase delicious cookies for all your holiday gatherings and gifts, to support the Food Distributions for our S-G Backpack Program Families!

Could you donate cookies to the Cookie Walk? We ask that you bake 5 pounds of the **same cookie** (this is equal to about a triple or quadruple batch). Please drop your cookies off by Thursday, December 8, between 8:00a-6:00pm OR Friday, December 9, 8:00am-3:00pm. *This is important* – so we can prepare for the event. Please remember to tell us the name of your cookies, and indicate if it contains nuts. (*Form and further instructions are also available on the church website.*)

We also need helpers for the day-of! See the sign up sheet or call the church office.



Come see Gingie at this year's cookie walk!

Community Meal - I am finding it hard to express in words how full my heart is with the wonderful response to the Thanksgiving Meal. The support from baking pies (our church, Scotia United Methodist, and the friends of Laura Bull) to making blessing bags, to prepping the meal, the organization of the take out containers... the working together to make a difference in the lives of our guests, I am in awe.



The wonderful volunteers who gave of their time and talent to help with this meal. It was not only our members but individuals from the community that helped. Thank you for your love, care and support now and all through the past five years. Our guests reap the rewards and benefit from your efforts. We have a strong commitment to helping and loving our neighbors from our Consistory, Our Pastor, Missions council, and members. I'm honored to be a part of First Reformed Church of Scotia.



We have a unique treat for our December Meal. Kristen Shave has organized with *Lasagna Love* to provide the meal. We will have tossed salad, garlic bread and pie to round off the meal. Thank you to Kristen for spearheading this endeavor.

We will not have a grab and go lunch for December.



On a final note we have given 4,844 meals out so far. The need is great and growing. As we count our blessings let us remember our neighbors who struggle to put food on the table.

Have a blessed Holiday season. ~ Mark



BackPack Program - We had our second food distribution of the year on November 16th to 45 families in the Scotia-Glenville area. We had added a distribution at the end of September because the actual Backpack program of weekly food would not begin until mid-October. Families were very appreciative, as always. Hanaford Market in Glenville donated 23 whole turkeys and we were able to purchase 22 additional turkeys at \$0.49 lb. We were able to order **free** potatoes, apples, peaches, and grapes from the Regional Food Bank. The box of food included stuffing mix, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, gravy, mashed potato mix, canned vegetables, pasta and sauce, rice, pancake mix and syrup, canned fruit and other staples. Most families were able to pick up the food at church, but our dedicated volunteers also delivered many boxes to families.



We will be doing this distribution again for December and we are asking for donations of kid-friendly boxes of cereal. We usually pack 45 boxes, so we would like at least that many for the distribution. Cookies and snacks are also appreciated, since what child does not like a an Oreo cookie once in a while???



Year End Giving - Attention all of you who itemize your church giving when you do your income tax: The Internal Revenue Service has clear regulations about the way churches must report your charitable giving. For us to report your gift to First Reformed Church as a charitable contribution for 2023, we must receive it in the church office no later than Friday, December 30, or by mail in an envelope postmarked no later than Saturday, December 31. Please plan your year-end giving accordingly. Thank you.



Health & Wellness Note: This time of year many of us are trying to find the perfect gift for a special child. We search on the internet and in stores, but rather than purchasing a gift, we could give a priceless gift from our heart that might cost nothing.

Debbie Gutfreund, an OCD and trauma therapist, teaches that the Hebrew word for raising children is “*chinuch*”, which is also the root of the word Chanukah; it means to begin a child on the path towards their ultimate purpose. Often we don’t recognize the children’s inner nature. So instead just any toy, we give a gift to them to help build them up according to who they are. These are ten unusual gifts we can give to our children this holiday to help develop their gifts and talents so that they can reach their full potential:



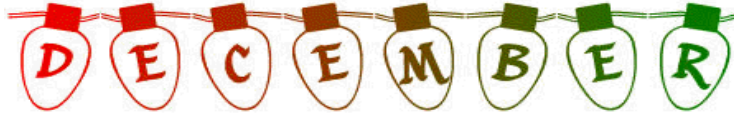
- 1. Attention.** Listen when they speak. Focus on what interests them. Ask specific questions about their thoughts and try to see the world through their eyes.
- 2. Unconditional love.** From an early age, children learn that the world appreciates them for what they do. We need to tell them how much they are loved no matter what happens.
- 3. Safety.** Make your home into a source of comfort and security, a place where they can expect warmth, peace and kindness. Establish structure, consistent rules, enduring values, meaningful rituals and routines, that the children can count on.
- 4. Wisdom.** Give children the opportunity to hear the Bible. This season share with them the Christmas story and the true meaning of Christmas.
- 5. Optimism.** Model a positive attitude for children by looking for the good in every situation. Show them how to focus on hope instead of despair. Teach them that when we fall it gives us the opportunity to get up again.
- 6. Health.** Teach children to eat nutritious foods, to sleep well, and to exercise. Help to instill a healthy respect for their bodies and all their senses. Teach them how to be responsible for caring for and protecting their bodies.
- 7. Support.** Be a source of encouragement and support for children. Talk to them at the end of each day without judgment and criticism. Cheer them on to develop their interests and to nurture talents.
- 8. Curiosity.** Teach children to be curious about the world. Encourage them to ask questions about anything and everything. Ignite within them a passion for searching and learning with an open mind.
- 9. Grit.** Show your children how to persevere when things are hard. Encourage them to get up when they fail and reward them after working at a difficult task. Work with them to find strategies to build up their resilience.
- 10. Competence.** Give your child the tools to function independently in life that includes how to plan, how to obtain skill, and how to take action. Teach him the value of building competence in a range of different areas but emphasize the areas where he is strongest.

This year, as you light candles, say a prayer for the children. The greatest gift that we can give our children is to recognize their unique light that they can bring to the world and to start them on their journey to bring that light into the world.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

All Ages Coloring Fun!





DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

Carol Arnold	2	Carol Troost	16
Sandra Lundstedt	2	Faith Libby	18
Sue Penn	3	Ed Naumowicz	19
Cathy Deamer	9	Caroline Rooney	19
Kristin Bodden	10	Dorothy Horstkkotte	20
Mark Lansing	10	Joe Bodden	21
Kathy Reynolds	10	Richard Crisi	23
Tanya Healy	11	Nickolai Swain	23
Glenda Lewis	11	Jesus	25
Robert Hummer	12	Natalie Monaghan	25
Mike Torelli	13	Henry Kohout	27
Walter Clark	14	Sarah Hoffmann	29
Randy Bekkering	15	Pat VanPatten	29
Bob Cooper	15	Mike Atchley	30
Kelly Kilgallen	15	Richard Doyle	31
Zachary Swain	15		

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES:

Bill and Natalie Monaghan	1
Ron & Sharon Locke	9
Barbara and Mark Graber	27
Dirk and Linda Francois	28
Tom and Karen Pirigy	28
Jim and Kim Pierce	29
Duane and Pat VanPatten	29
Paul and Kristen Rooney	30

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.

Address Service Requested

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 224 N. Ballston Avenue
 Scotia, NY 12302
 (518) 370-4751