
THE MESSENGER

A Pastor's Ponderings

How do we measure value? Ask an economist and they would tell you that value is the price, usually denominated in the national currency, someone is willing to pay for a good or service. This price will vary depending on market forces like supply and demand, inflation, overall health of the market, etc.

Ask a philosopher however, and they will define value quite a bit differently. To a philosopher what the economist just described was something called extrinsic value. Extrinsic value has to do with what something is worth depending on what it will get you in return. Currency is the prime example of something with almost purely extrinsic value. With maybe the exception of a currency collector or a deranged billionaire, no one values money simply for what it is, namely a piece of paper with some markings on it. We value money insofar as it can get us other things that we want. If our currency no longer functioned as a medium of exchange, no one would care much about money at all.

Philosophers however are much more interested in something called intrinsic value, things that are valuable in and of themselves. Or to put it another way, value that is not measured in reference to something else. While some have argued that nothing has intrinsic value, some examples of things discussed in this category are beauty, happiness, and pleasure. Famously Plato and other ancient Greek stoic philosophers argued

that virtue or character is the pinnacle of intrinsic value. Other ancient thinkers offered up love or the good as other intrinsically valuable things.

Whether or not you find this distinction helpful, I encourage you to think about what you value and why. Recently a political scientist wrote an article arguing that America is currently suffering with a crisis of values. That while the undergirding of the American mythos has always focused on the pursuit of the extrinsically valuable embodied by the American dream, this mythology was always balanced by a seeking of the intrinsically valuable. Americans have historically seen themselves as a force, or at least striving to be a force, for good in the world. This academic argued that we have lost a connection with this tension and that all our society cares about anymore is the extrinsic, leading to a chaotic tailspin that has resulted in the political crisis we find ourselves in today.

I find myself agreeing that the remedy to what currently ails American culture is deep self-reflection on what we value and then a plan to pursue what we come to understand as having the greatest intrinsic value. So if you continue to hope for a better and brighter tomorrow, I encourage you to begin by taking a look in the mirror and asking yourself this simple question - what do I value and why? Happy contemplation!

Sincerely,

Rev. Christopher J. McCloskey, Pastor

Lent & Holy Week 2024



Ash Wednesday

February 14th, 2024

Drive Thru Ashes 7:00-9:00am

Evening Service at 7:00pm

Maundy Thursday

March 28th

Service of Communion and Contemplation at 7:00pm

Good Friday

March 29th

Service of Shadow at 7:00pm

Easter Sunday

March 31st

Sunrise Service, 8:00am and 10:00am Services

Assessment Information - As you may, or may not be aware, our church pays assessments as a member of the Reformed Church in America. For 2024, we have been “assessed” an amount of \$104 for each member of our church. This is a budget item and something we pay yearly. If you are willing and able to help cover this cost, please submit a separate payment to cover your assessment (over and above your pledge). It would be greatly appreciated. Please mark clearly on your check and/or payment that this is for your assessment so that it is recorded correctly. Thank you for your consideration.



Talent Show - The Fellowship Council is hosting a talent show on Saturday evening, February 3rd, at 6:30pm. Please join us for a fun evening of entertainment.

Our New Church Secretary - We are pleased to announce that Sharon Gaunay has become the newest member of our staff here at First Reformed Church of Scotia as our Church secretary. She is a long-time resident of Scotia and is actively learning about all the things a Church Secretary does. Sharon is in the office Monday through Friday from 9:00am-1:00pm. If you are around, take a moment to introduce yourself to her. She has some “big shoes” to fill but she is doing a great job and learning lots of things about this church. She can be reached at email office@firstreformedscotia.org or by telephone at (518)370-4751. If you have a question and she doesn't have an answer, she will definitely find you the information.



Heating and Cooling Project Information Session - Join us on Sunday, February 25th during coffee hour after the 10am service to learn about the planned improvements to the church's heating and cooling system. Important information will be shared about the need for the work, what will be done, the cost, and how it will be paid for.



Community Lunch - The community meal and grab and go lunch hit a major milestone on Saturday January 27th, 2024. We have served a total of 5,038 meals since the program's inception. Thank you to all who are involved in this endeavor and deep gratitude to the congregation for its support. A big thanks goes out to the volunteers.



The meal for February 24th will be tacos. We will be serving from 10:30am to 12:00pm.

A Retreat Fund has been established at our church in order to help defray the costs of people attending church sponsored retreats and to be able to offer a scholarship to folks who might not be able to afford attending a retreat. The women of our church have established the fund and donations have already begun to be received! If you wish to contribute to this fund, please submit your donation clearly marked “Retreat” and we graciously will accept it and apply it to our Retreat fund.

Winter Warm-Up Sale - Our first sale of the year will be held Friday, Feb. 9th & Saturday, Feb. 10th in Brink Hall from 9:00am-2:00pm. Donations will start being accepted on Sunday, February 4th. Items we are looking for: housewares, clothes, books, jewelry, baked goods, clothing (warm/seasonal) & toys. Jewelry donations are also being accepted for the Winter Sale. Please drop off at the Church Office any day from 9:00am - 1:00pm.



We are also in need of volunteers! Please see Sue Pitts if you can help, or call her at 518-370-1964. Thank you, from the Missions Council!

Health & Wellness Note - February is National Heart Month. According to the Harvard Medical newsletter, diet, exercise and other lifestyle choices are risk factors that increase the chance of developing heart disease. These same risk factors are also closely linked to the risk of developing atrial fibrillation, frequently called afib. Researchers continue to study how lifestyle changes can reduce the incidence of afib. Besides taking your medications as ordered and other standard afib treatments, here are actions that can help you live a healthy and active lifestyle:



- If you smoke, quit.
- Control high blood pressure.
- Get treatment for sleep apnea, if you have it.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Don't drink alcohol, or consume only in moderation. (At most one drink per day for women, and two for men.)
- Keep your cholesterol and triglycerides within a healthy range.
- Get regular exercise.
- Get recommended vaccinations for the flu, pneumonia, and COVID, especially if you have heart disease.
- Make sure to check with your doctor or pharmacist about any new medications you are taking, including over-the-counter remedies and herbal supplements. Sometimes these can interact in a harmful way with warfarin, direct oral anticoagulants, or rhythm-controlling drugs.



February Mission of the Month: Over the Bridge Outreach (OTBO) 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....

If you would like more information regarding this important mission of First Reformed, or would like the experience of riding along with Doug, please contact the church office.

Offering Envelopes

Once again, 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 and the Brink Hall Lobby.

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.

Youth Group Calendar of Events

- ❖ Sunday, February 11th - Valentine luncheon for congregation 11:30am-1:00pm
- ❖ Sunday, February 25th - Sledding and Wintergames 11:30am-12:30pm



Valentine Luncheon

Sunday, February 11th, 2024

11:30am-1:00pm

Come join the youth of our church for a meal and fun & games

Open to everyone!



Backpack Update: The need for food for the families in Scotia-Glenville continues into the New Year. We are fortunate that many organizations and individuals in our community recognize this need, and donate generously to our food programs. I attended a meeting of the Glenville Rotary on January 26th to receive a check for \$1500.00. These funds will help provide milk and egg cards to students **weekly**, instead of every other week, as recommended by the Regional Food Bank.

Members of our congregation are busy preparing for our WINTER WARM-UP sale on February 9th and 10th, with some of the proceeds going to the food program. We are hoping to make enough profit so that we can schedule an additional distribution of extra food in June. Because Easter is early this year, our last scheduled distribution will be at the end of March. This would mean that families would not be offered extra food until Thanksgiving, **7 months away!**

We are again asking for donations of kid-friendly cereal for our February distribution (2/15). We need at least 60 boxes by Monday, 2/12. You can put them on the counter by the windows in the kitchen. Thank you in advance for your donation. We already have **free** chickens, ground beef, hot dogs and sausage in our freezers and **free** cheese and eggs in the refrigerator! We also are hoping to provide fresh fruits and vegetables, along with a large box of food.

Youth Winter Retreat - February 18-20th for grades 6-12. There are still openings. Need information? Contact Diana or look on the Camp Fowler website, www.campfowler.org. You need to sign up on the Camp Fowler website directly.



Fowler Spaghetti dinner & Cake auction

Save the date: Saturday March 16th 4:00pm - 7:00pm

It's that time of year again! Plans are being put together 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 and offering them at our auction!

75th Dutch Fair Information Session - Following 10am worship February 4th, there will be an informational meeting about this year's Dutch Fair.

Lent Bible Studies

"Renew" Bible study, meets Tuesdays 12:00-1:15pm via Zoom, will be studying Susan Robb's book, *Remember: God's Covenants and the Cross*. Using biblical history and personal stories, Rev. Robb leads readers through the covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David followed by the new covenant established on Maundy Thursday. The Lenten story culminates with an examination of the cross as another example of God's promise for a new world. Kindle and book versions are available online. This six week course begins February 20. If you would like more information or the Zoom link, contact Sunny Baldwin at csunnyb@nycap.rr.com, or 518-320-4562.

Lent Bible study led by Pastor Christopher will meet Wednesday from 6:00-7:00pm starting February 21st. This study will coordinate with the devotional based on the life and faith of Peter. Please let Pastor Christopher know if you plan on attending.



Calendar: *February 19-23 No school* Winter Break

Mentor Corner

Please **contact Diana** to schedule a mid-year chat with you and your child. If you are doing something really cool that might be a great time to come see you. Let me know when would be a good time within the next month or so.

Prayer Partner Corner

We have a lot of sickness going around. Please pray for good health for your mentor, child and yourself. Stay healthy everyone!!

Thank you all for your efforts!!
Happy Valentine's Day!!

FEBRUARY

On the January Anniversary list Bub and Janet Bekkering's anniversary on January 21st was missed. Please let us know if you do not see your special day included.

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

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