

THE MESSENGER

A Pastor's Ponderings

April marks my one year anniversary as your pastor. As I have reflected on my time here thus far, I am truly astonished by how fast a year flew by and how much has changed, not only in my life, but also in the life of this congregation in such a short amount of time. I am truly humbled by and grateful for all the love and support that I have received from this community of faith. I continue to give thanks to God for leading me here and I look forward with great hope and anticipation towards a very long tenure in this place.

Within a year's time, my wife and I moved twice, bought a house in the village and began to make this place our home. We have enjoyed being closer to family in Connecticut and exploring all of the wonderful things the capital region has to offer.

Things have been no less eventful in the life of this church. There have been multiple staff transitions; saying goodbye to some and welcome to others. I have updated the aesthetics and content of the church's website, though it is still a work in progress. I have overseen the updating of many church policies including the church's bylaws. I have added new elements to worship including sign language and new songs. Design Committee initiatives have continued to move forward like the

installation of a little free food pantry and a digital sign in the lobby. The education wing and Brink Hall now have air conditioning!

I have so far baptized a baby and will be marrying a couple in our sanctuary on the first weekend in May. This month we formally welcomed three new members and I expect we will be welcoming more new members in the near future. I have had the honor of presiding over nine funerals since my arrival. I have spent numerous hours making pastoral and hospital visits. I have the joy of singing with the choir each week. I have led two Bible Studies. And so much more...

I am so grateful for all of your willingness to walk with me through so much change and as the future inevitably brings more change, I hope that you can continue to trust me to lead you. I believe with all of my heart that the future of this congregation is bright! It is a privilege to lead such a compassionate, caring and philanthropic community. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of you.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Rev. Christopher J. McCloskey



Story Time
with Uncle
Kent

Welcoming
New Members:
Debbie, Sandy
and Peggy



THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Pentecost this year falls on Sunday, May 19th. We will mark the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the church with the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion at both 8am and 10am Services. Remember to wear red!

Little Food Pantry Ribbon Cutting Ceremony - following 10am worship on Pentecost, we will celebrate and officially open our new little free food pantry.



An Apology for the Live-Stream - Over the past month, due to technical difficulties, the 10am worship livestream has malfunctioned causing the stream to be unwatchable. Please accept our deepest apologies. Work is being done to identify and address the issue. We thank you for your continued understanding. Please know that your worshipping experience is very important to us.



Let's Stay Connected! If you aren't on our Constant Contact email list, this is a great time to add yourself, so that we can all stay connected! Please go to the church website: firstreformedscotia.org, and click on the "NEWSLETTER" tab. If you scroll all the way to the bottom, you will need to click on "JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST." From there, you just fill out your information, and click "SIGN UP." We look forward to hearing from you.



"Renew" Bible study - Meets Tuesdays at noon via Zoom. The Renew Bible study will begin studying The Call: The Life and Message of the Apostle Paul by Adam Hamilton on May 14 at 12 pm by Zoom. In this 6 week study, we will follow Paul as he spread the gospel through what is now Greece and Turkey. Come explore with us as Hamilton shows how indispensable Paul was to both the early Christians and to our world today. Books are available online. For assistance or to obtain the Zoom link, contact Sunny Baldwin at 528-320-4562.

HVAC Installation Complete: It is with great joy that we announce that the installation of the new HVAC system has been completed. The project came in under budget and we will be able to enjoy a more comfortable space this summer, which is expected to be a hot one. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to support this project.

Spring Clean up Thank you - a very special thank you to everyone who came out this month to help clean up our grounds for spring.

Thank you from Sandra Suits: Thank you sincerely for the correspondence over the past few months for the uplifting notes and cards from friends and especially the Caring and Sharing group. The encouraging words and prayers have been such a comforting experience. The Easter tulip plant was gorgeous. Thanks to Ann Armstrong for the delivery. It is now planted and thriving in the garden. Bless you all for your kindness.

Flower Garden Help Needed: We continue to look for people willing to care for the church's garden beds. This is a terrific way to help us make a positive impression on the many people who walk through our church campus or who drive past on Route 50. Please call the church office, 518-370-4751, and let us know that you can stop by from time to time to weed.



Fresh Table Community Pop-up Pantry:

There is really good news in Scotia-Glenville! On the third Wednesday of each month there will be a FREE distribution of fresh produce, meat, and dairy products. Although normally scheduled for the parking lot of the First National Bank of Scotia, from 6:00-7:30 pm, make sure to check [Freshtable.org](https://www.freshtable.org) for location changes. No identification is needed - just show up and get what you need! It is called the Fresh Table

Community Pop-up Pantry. Please let your neighbors that need this fresh food know about this service. The dates are the following: May 15, June 19, July 17. This is sponsored by the Regional Food Bank and volunteers in our community.

Community Lunch Update: The Grab and Go lunch had 50 meals go out in April. We are at a total of 5320 so far. I would like to thank all the volunteers for their continued support of the meal. I would also like to thank the church and Pastor Christopher for supporting the community meal and our guests.

A bit of sad news, David from our meal has passed. He is no longer in pain but we will miss him. Also Kent Solomon passed away earlier in the month. Both men enriched our lives and it was an honor to know them.





Backpack Program: Here are some statistics about hunger in the US provided by the Regional Food Bank: 44 million people in the US have food insecurity. 13 million of these are children, which means 1 in 5 children across America do not have enough to eat. Hunger can affect children's health, development and well-being. The free breakfast and lunch programs in the schools help alleviate hunger but what happens during the week-ends, vacation periods, and over the summer?

The week-end BackPack program provides food to over 100 children each week for grades K-12 in Scotia-Glenville schools. We pack about 70 bags each week, Trinity Presbyterian packs up to 30, and the two churches share the costs of the Food Pantry at the High School, with 15+ students participating each week. We have offered extra food to 40-45 families for each of the vacation periods. We have recently learned that there will not be a summer lunch program at Collins Park this year. In order to help fill this gap, our Missions Council has approved additional distributions in June and early September. We have already been able to order free beef patties, 1 lb. packages of ground beef, hot dogs, sausage patties, and cheese for June.

These distributions, as well as the BackPack program itself, are only possible because of your generous support of money and time. Thank you to all for your monetary donations, as well as our many volunteers who pick up the food, pack the food and deliver the food.

June Garage Sale:

This year's date has been set for Friday, June 7th, from 9:00am to 3:00pm and Saturday, June 8th, from 9:00am to 1:00pm.

To raise funds for our local missions, we will be participating in two 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, you 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 Sharon in the office. If you would like to donate items for US to sell - see Sue Pitts for drop-off times.



May Mission of the Month: FRCS Emergency Food Distribution Program

Over the last several years, through our various programs, such as the backpack program and the free community meals, we have become known in the schools and in the community as a Church that can help people in need of food. The following are some examples of how we have been able to help:

A social worker from one of the schools called me to say that a new family had moved to the district. Because this was a result of domestic violence, the mother and two children were housed in a motel and asked if we could help them with food, an electric pan/hot plate, dishes and utensils. Of course we did!

A pregnant young woman came to the Church after an organization in Schenectady suggested she contact us. She had applied for food stamps but would not receive them for 2 weeks. She was hoping that we could help her. Of course we did! In addition to a large box of food, we also gave her milk and egg cards to Stewarts.

A single mother of one of the students in the backpack program had missed almost 2 months of work because she had to stay home with her daughter who had significant health issues. She called to say that she was out of food and could we help her? Of course we could! Her daughter is much better now and she just let us know that she no longer needs the bags of food each week. She was so grateful we were there for them!

We never know when our neighbors will need us to help, but we always know that we can.

May Financial Update

As of 4/28/24				
	Annual Budget	YTD Budget	Total to Date	Over/Under
Congregational Giving	\$ 227,000	\$ 74,910.00	\$ 69,051.42	Under 8%
Other income - includes draws from investments	\$ 202,240	\$ 118,654.14	\$ 129,703.00	Over 9%
Total Income	\$ 429,240	\$ 193,564.14	\$ 198,754.42	Over 2%
Total Expenses	\$ 583,358	\$ 193,564.14	\$ 130,304.00	Under 22%
HVAC Project		\$300,000	\$285,550.00	Under 5%



Health and Wellness Note: It's possible that you have never heard of Garden Meditation Day. This day, which encourages everyone to take time for one's self and relax, is celebrated each year on May 3. Meditation doesn't always have to take place cross-legged on the floor in a dark room. Working in the garden, tending to the plants and flowers or resting quietly on a bench all count as meditation because they are restorative to the soul and a refreshing way to embrace nature. This day reminds us that just like children, adults occasionally need a "timeout" to relax, be rejuvenated, and get in touch with nature. In addition meditation also benefits our mental health, which can include tranquility, better concentration, greater self-esteem, and even increased pain tolerance.

These are the top health benefits:

- **Increase exposure to vitamin D:** This increases calcium levels, which helps strengthen the bones and immune system. Gardening is an excellent way to get sun exposure, just be sure to wear sunglasses and sunscreen.
- **Can decrease dementia risk:** A 2006 study found that gardening could lower dementia risk by about 36 percent. Researchers found that physical activity, particularly gardening, can cut down on the incidence of dementia for aging adults.
- **Is a mood-booster:** A Netherlands study found on CNN suggests gardening combats stress even better than other hobbies. Participants engaged in a stressful task and then were instructed to read inside or go outside to garden for a half hour. The gardening group said they were in a much better mood, with blood tests revealing lower levels of stress hormones.
- **Aerobic exercise:** You may not realize it, but gardening is an aerobic exercise that's actually enjoyable because you don't even realize you're working hard. Reaching down, pulling weeds, and lifting tools use muscles to achieve, which helps with flexibility, stamina, and core strength.

So on May 3rd or anytime this summer, pause and do some gardening, visit a garden, or meditate close to nature. Take time to breathe in the positivity and improve your health at the same time.



CROP WALK 2024: Sunday, May 5th. The CROP Hunger Walk will be hosted at the Rotterdam Community Center, 705 Curry Road, Schenectady, NY, 12306. Registration starts at noon and the opening ceremony will begin at 1:00 pm. It's not too late to join us and donations are always welcome. Contact Miss Diana for any last minute questions.

Attention All Graduates: In next month's issue of The Messenger (June 2024) 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 at 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!



Youth Group Calendar

Sunday, May 5 - Crop Walk - 1:00pm

Saturday, May 25 - Camp Fowler 70th Anniversary celebration at Camp - 10:00am-4:00pm

Sunday, June 9 - Youth Sunday Service and Breakfast

Camp Fowler's 70th Church Picnic

Come enjoy at day at your camp!

- 10am Tours and Boats
- Noon Lunch*
- 1pm Sing-a-long and Dedication
- 2pm Enjoy the grounds
- 4pm Depart

Saturday, May 25th • 10am - 4pm

152 PELCHER ROAD, LAKE PLEASANT, NY 12108



May Anniversaries:

- Bob and Laurie Cooper 11**
- Jim and Mary Lynne Davidson 16**
- David and Laure Bicknell 17**
- Robert and Priscilla Harvey 19**
- Bill and Diane Faubion 19**
- Fran and Nancy Landry 23**
- Ken and Elaine Willcox 26**
- Lonnie Hojnacki and Martha Gilgore 30**

May Birthdays:

- Katelynn Conroy 5**
- Elaine Willcox 7**
- Denise Lansing 10**
- Margaret Holley 14**
- Ron Shaw 17**
- Ken Swain 19**
- Phyllis Beck 24**
- Mark Graber 26**

- Steve Mathes 6**
- Laure Bicknell 9**
- Bobbe Nelson 13**
- Emilee Rosenberg 15**
- Ann Armstrong 18**
- Bill Faulkner Sr. 21**
- Dave Bicknell 24**
- Alicia Hermance 29**

- Martha Eberle 7**
- Benjamin Doyle 9**
- Madalena Crisci 14**
- Linda Shaw 15**
- David Miller 19**
- Alex Gilgore 22**
- Edward Graber 26**
- Steve Warfield 29**

Address Service Requested

First Reformed Church of Scotia
224 N. Ballston Avenue
Scotia, NY 12302
(518) 370-4751