

# THE MESSENGER

## *A Pastor's Ponderings*

Nothing changes the fundamental calling of a Christian. No matter whether it is day or night; spring, or summer, winter or fall. No matter if it is during good times or bad. No matter what others say or do; the fundamental calling of a Christian remains the same.

Our calling is to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God. Our calling is to seek after and magnify the good. Our calling is to reject what is evil and resist what is wrong. Our calling hasn't and doesn't change.

As the year 2024 draws to a close, I call on you to reflect on your fundamental calling. I call on you to dig deep and reconnect with God and the virtues, values and principles our Creator places before us. For our Lord knows what is good and what is good for us.

As 2025 dawns, we, as a community, are called to bind ourselves ever closer together. If we choose to face the world alone, we will fail. For we were not made to do it alone. We as Christians must be willing to deepen our connections and widen our commitment. In this time when it might be tempting to withdraw and hide ourselves away, we must resist.

While I do not know what tomorrow will bring, I can still shape the unknown future through the commitments that I make. And you too have this power. I already know where I will be most Sundays next year, God willing and the creek don't rise. I already know where I plan to lay my head. I already know that I will be spending much of my time next year loving and praying for this community. I might not know the future, but I do know where I will stand.

The Christmas season is all about the revelation of the Incarnate Word. This season is all about remembering that God stands with us. That God turned not a blind eye to our sinfulness and suffering, but sent to us the Son. And it is our fundamental calling, during this season and every season, as Christians, to stand in solidarity with God's great love. To stand in solidarity with the oppressed, the marginalized, and the poor. To remember that Immanuel was not born in a palace, but in a manger. To remember that God came to overcome, not condone, our hatreds and our fears.

Ever since that first Christmas, God's calling has remained the same. For the truth of our calling is fully revealed and affirmed in every aspect of the birth, life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our calling is to love. Not just those that love us back; not just those who look like us. We are called to love all and to actively work to herald the coming of God's kingdom by dismantling all divisions and repairing the breach.

In 2025, our fundamental calling has not changed. And I am committed to walking by this community's side as it continues to strive to love, and welcome, and hope. So much has been accomplished in 2024, but now is not the time to rest on our laurels. There is still much work to do. Let us continue to live our calling and show the world the power, strength and courage of faith.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

*Rev. Christopher J. McCloskey*

Another year is dawning:

Dear Father, let it be,  
In working or in waiting,  
Another year with Thee;  
Another year of Progress,  
Another year of praise,  
Another year of proving  
Thy presence all the days.

Another year of mercies,  
Of faithfulness and grace;  
Another year of gladness  
In the shining of Thy face;  
Another year of leaning  
Upon Thy loving breast;  
Another year of trusting,  
Of quiet, happy rest.

Another year of service,  
Of witness for Thy love;  
Another year of training  
For holier work above.  
Another year is dawning:  
Dear Father, let it be,  
On earth or else in heaven,  
Another year for Thee.

- F. R. Havergal

## Christmas Eve Worship

At 5:30pm the children and youth of our congregation will present a Christmas pageant. 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. We look forward to worshipping with you on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Whether you are worshipping here or elsewhere on Christmas Eve, may you be filled with the light of love, peace, joy and hope!



## Advent Season Choir

The Advent season will soon be upon us, and with it, the joy of all things festive. Whether you are a seasoned virtuoso or a shower singer, dust off your instruments and join the music program for Christmas Eve service. We'll be filling the air with a sound that'll make Scrooge smile. Please reach out to Hunter to get involved.

## Advent/Renew Bible Study

This year the group will meet three times in December: Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, Monday December 9<sup>th</sup> and Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. The sessions, which will be led by David Walsh and Sunny Baldwin, will all meet at 12 noon via Zoom. Readings will be selected each week to discuss from the book, Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas. Anyone interested in participating is welcome! For the reading schedule and Zoom link, contact Sunny Baldwin at 518-320-4562 or [csunnyb@nycap.rr.com](mailto:csunnyb@nycap.rr.com).

## General Synod 2025

Are you an ordained Elder? It is our church's turn to send an Elder as a Delegate to General Synod, which is the national gathering of the Reformed Church in America (RCA). It will be held in Tucson Arizona from June 5<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025. If selected, all of your travel and lodging expenses would be covered. If interested, please reach out to Rev. McCloskey or David Schalekamp, as soon as possible.



## Thank you from Spike

Thank you for all of your cards, letters, messages and prayers on the passing of my brother. Your love and support is truly appreciated.



**Advent Devotionals** Advent devotionals and calendars are available in the narthex and the Brink hall lobby.

## Mission of the Month: Scotia Relief

Scotia Relief is a community organization that promotes the practice of neighbors helping neighbors in the Scotia-Glenville community. They provide annual assistance to residents in need of daily living supplies. Assistance is provided in the form of vouchers for resources including food, clothing, heating fuel, and school supplies. Community residents, business associates, churches and local organizations contribute to Scotia Relief in support of their neighbors. This all-volunteer organization was formed during the time of the Great Depression and currently supports 50-60 families and residents annually.

## Annual Congregational Meeting

A Congregational Meeting has been called for Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, following the 10:00 am worship service. The purpose of the meeting will be to elect new members to the consistory, and the 2025 nominating committee. The following individuals have been nominated to serve on the consistory in 2025: Don Bowers, June Coryer, Debbie Perretta, Lee Poremba and Bill Shave. Even though these are the individuals that have been selected by the 2025 Nominating Committee, nominations can still be made from the floor. The 2025 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.



## Cookie Decorating

All ages are welcome to join Miss Diana on Sunday December 8<sup>th</sup> after worship 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!

## Poinsettias



Help us vest our sanctuary for Christmas by making a donation towards the purchase of poinsettias. 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 by Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>.

## Operation Christmas Child

This year we sent **37** boxes in support of Operation Christmas Child. Thank you to everyone who contributed!

## Cookie Walk

Our 8<sup>th</sup> Cookie Walk is on Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup> from 11:00-2:00pm. (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). Cookie drop off is December 13<sup>th</sup> between 12pm-5pm. 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. (Forms and further instructions are also available on the church website.) We also need helpers for the day-of!



## Christmas Eve Offering: The Regional Food Bank

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.

## Women's Epiphany Retreat 2025



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 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>**. The cost for 2025 will be **\$170** per person if we get 24 people. If we don't get 24 the cost will go up. Cost includes meals, room & board. Sign up with Miss Diana. We'll provide a program including faith focused discussions, games, crafts, fun and more! Talk to Miss Diana for more information.

## The Conversation Project

The first workshop of the Conversation Project was held on Sunday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> after the 10:00 am worship service. Thirteen people met with Pastor Christopher to learn about planning a memorial service and writing an obituary. Participants left the workshop with forms regarding the subjects discussed. This advanced planning work is a huge gift to your next of kin!

If you were not able to attend, the forms can be picked up in the church office, completed, and returned to church. Share some of your thoughts about your wishes with your family.

### Upcoming Conversation Project workshops:

January 19 - Emergency Lists and NOK (next of kin) boxes

February 23 - Advanced Directives with Dr. Giokas of Ellis Medicine



## The Prayer Shawl Ministry

met in October to provide education and encouragement for all our knitters, crocheters, and new folks who are interested in creating. We welcomed 7 new people since the meeting, which was so successful that a **Prayer Shawl Workshop** scheduled for **January 26<sup>th</sup> at 11:15 am in Memorial Lounge**. The purpose this time is to share tips on fringe making and other tips and tricks.



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Since 2008 our congregation has supported this ministry whereby volunteers have created hundreds of shawls while saying prayers for the recipient and those who surround them. These soft shawls help give someone a tangible example of God's love and care so they can wrap up in it and feel God's arms around them.

Please share your appreciation with the following shawl makers: Anita Brudos, June Coryer, Joyce Murray, Cheryl Pelkey, Sue Pitts, Ellen Shultz, and Trudi Thun.



## December Faith Formation Schedule

December 1 - Grades K-12 - Advent one: Hope Grows

December 8 - Intergenerational - Advent two: Peace grows

December 15 - Grades K-12 - Advent three: Joy Grows

December 22 - Grades K-12 - Advent four: Love Grows & *Pageant rehearsal*

December 29 - No Faith Formation - ENJOY!

## Camp Fowler summer registration is now open!

Register online at [campfowler.org](http://campfowler.org)

We ask that you only pay the deposit so that FRCS scholarship can be applied.

Scholarship code is SCOTIA2025.

Hope to see you all at camp this summer!



**Stewardship Update:** On behalf of the Consistory and Admin Council, we would like to extend a big thank you to everyone who pledged for 2025. Our giving was up 10% and we had 9 new pledges. If you have not made your pledge, it is not too late! Leave your pledge in the offering plate or mail to the Church Office. Thanks and gratitude to Kathe Sheehan who led this year's campaign.

## December Financial Update

As of 11/24/24					
		<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>YTD Budget</b>	<b>Total to Date</b>	<b>Over/Under</b>
Congregational Giving		\$ 227,000.00	\$ 208,840.00	\$226,446.00	Over 8%
Other income		\$ 109,558.000	100,793.00	226,069.00	Over 24%
Income draw from Fenimore for HVAC			\$ 250,000.00	\$250,000.00	
Total Income		\$586,558.000	309,633.00	452,515.00	Over 46%
Expenses		\$ 586,558.00	\$539,633.00	\$414,843.00	Under 13%
HVAC Project			\$300,000.00	\$296,597.00	Under 1.2%

### Community Lunch Update by Mark Holley

We had a fantastic chili cook off in October. I would like to thank all who donated chili, brownies, designer brownies and time to make this meal a success. We made over \$1600 and this will help to purchase the supplies for the Thanksgiving meal.

I appreciate all the volunteers that made this event happen and to the church staff that assisted us. I couldn't have done this without your help.

Cindy Tygert won the cook off and a plaque that was made by Patty Marre will be displayed soon. It will have our past winners on it. Thank you Patty for making this beautiful award plaque for the cook off.

### Backpack Program Update by Linda Lewis

Let me start by saying a great big THANK YOU to all of our volunteers for the amazing job they did with our Thanksgiving distribution! One group organized the food for the boxes of extra food (45), another group packed the regular weekly bags, others were busy packing 2 dozen eggs, sliced cheese, and yogurt, others picked up 45 turkeys at Hannaford and 225 lbs. of potatoes at Price Rite, and some were busy packing bags of apples and oranges, and frozen ground beef and hot dogs. And this was just the preparation for delivering the 73 regular weekly bags and 8 deliveries of all the extra food, as well as helping pack cars for those families picking food up at church! There were also 3 tables full of hats and clothing, blankets, books, cards, and other items, all offered free to families. A Happy Thanksgiving to all! So now we start preparing for the December distribution.





The holiday season is now upon us and with it comes more festivities and gatherings with friends and family. It also is the season when the frequency of COVID, influenza, and other respiratory infections increase. So this is the perfect time to improve our immune system before illness strikes. This system protects the body from infection and disease, including chronic diseases like cancer.

Following general good-health guidelines is the single best step you can take toward naturally keeping your immune system working properly. Below are tips to help you improve your immunity before you get sick:

1. **Don't smoke or quit if you do.** Smoking can make the immune system less able to fight infection.
2. **Eat well.** Include a diet that is high in fruits and vegetables. Choose lean proteins, whole grains and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products. Eating well also means limiting saturated fats, salt, and added sugars. Be cautious about taking extra vitamins and minerals, which can be harmful. Talk to your health care provider before taking supplements.
3. **Exercise regularly.**
4. **Maintain a healthy weight.** Obesity, defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more in adults, is linked to impaired immune functions. Safe ways to help maintain a healthy weight include reducing stress, eating healthy foods, staying within your daily calorie needs, getting enough sleep, and engaging in regular physical activity. Obesity may also lower vaccine effectiveness for numerous diseases, including influenza, hepatitis B, and tetanus.
5. **Get enough sleep.** Scientific evidence is building that sleep loss can negatively affect different parts of the immune system. This can lead to the development of a wide variety of disorders
6. **Cut back on alcohol.** Over time, excessive alcohol use can weaken the immune system.
7. And as always, **WASH YOUR HANDS.**

We wish you a very MERRY AND HEALTHY Christmas!

**December Anniversaries:**

**Bill & Natalie Monaghan 1**  
**Ron & Sharon Locke 9**  
**Barbara & Mark Graber 27**  
**Tom and Karen Pirigyi 28**  
**Paul & Kirsten Rooney 30**

**December Birthdays:**

**Carol Arnold 2**  
**Cathy Deamer 9**  
**Kathy Reynolds 10**  
**Mike Torelli 13**  
**Bob Cooper 15**  
**Ed Naumowicz 19**  
**Richard Crisi 23**  
**Henry Kohout 27**  
**Mike Atchley 30**

**Sandra Lundstedt 2**  
**Kristen Bodden 10**  
**Glenda Lewis 11**  
**Walter Clark 14**  
**Kelly Kilgalen 15**  
**Caroline Rooney 19**  
**Jesus 25**  
**Sarah Hoffman 29**  
**Richard Doyle 31**

**Sue Penn 3**  
**Mark Lansing 10**  
**Robert Hummer 12**  
**Randy Bekkering 15**  
**Faith Libby 18**  
**Joe Bodden 21**  
**Natalie Monaghan 25**  
**Pat VanPatten 29**

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