

THE MESSENGER

A Pastor's Ponderings

I have always found that evolution of language to be utterly fascinating. Over time some words so transmute themselves that they barely have anything in common with their origins. This is because language is all about use. If a word stops being useful, relevant or descriptive it must evolve or die. However, from time to time words are revived once they have been resigned to simply holding space in the dictionary. These resurrections usually occur because the world has changed to make these forgotten words useful again or because these words are reimagined in the current context.

I am not aware however of any commonly used words ever reverting back to a previous form while still in popular use. Once a word has taken on a new meaning that is useful and relevant there is no looking back. However, I think sometimes reclaiming older understandings of words has the potential to correct some of the madness of our modern age.

One such example I would like to place before you is the word, resolution. It is a word heard ad nauseam this time of year. As a new calendar year begins, suddenly we are all expected to have or make a New Year's Resolution. Frequently, this resolution has to do with self-betterment or improvement exemplified by January being the most lucrative month for most gyms. Rarely however are these resolutions ever as resolute as we would hope. Chiefly because our resolutions are not often very grounded in attainability and sustainability.



The understanding of the word resolution meaning a 'steadfastness in purpose' or 'a final decision' is a rather modern one. For most of its existence beginning in Latin, then in French before entering English, resolution meant to 'reduce something down to a simpler form.'

In our modern world of busyness, stress and anxiety, I think we need this ancient form of resolution to be embraced as today's most urgent resolution. I believe we all need to be resolved to focus on simplifying our lives. All of our lives are too complicated, messy and overcommitted. We need

to stop and reevaluate all the stuff that we do. We need to stop and ask ourselves if our priorities are in alignment with our actions. I think we need to look at the lives we have and ask ourselves if it can be simpler.

Our bodies, minds and spirits were not designed for the hectic pace of modern life. We are driving ourselves mad. I think we need to reimagine

our lives and understand that many of the constraints upon us are self-imposed.

So as we enter into this new year I challenge you to take a look at your life and deconstruct it a little bit at a time. Start to chip away at its edges and see what easily falls away. I encourage you to think about reshaping your life in a simpler form. While not universally true, simpler is almost always better.

But whatever your New Year's Resolution happens to be, may God bless you with the strength to be steadfast in your goals and gracious to yourself if you fall short.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Rev. Christopher J. McCloskey

A New Year Begins!

We are pleased to welcome new consistory members who will be ordained and installed to their offices on January 5th, which begins our new year! This church has 7 councils that coordinate the various ministries of the church. Consistory members help to lead the councils, but *congregational members are needed as well*. Please review the following councils and see where you might be able to lend a hand.

Admin Council - This council is responsible for monitoring and planning financial and personnel matters for the church which include Stewardship, Communication, and Fundraising. This council is led by Debbie Perretta and Don Bowers.

Building and Grounds Council - This council is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of our facility. This council is led by John Ackner and Lee Poremba

Christian Education Council - This council is responsible for preparing educational programs for children and adults. This council is led by Becki Okpoti-Jarcznski and David Schalekamp.

Congregational Care Council - This council is responsible for the care of our congregation including funeral meals, weddings and home communion as well as health and wellness. This council is led by Pam Walsh.

Fellowship Council - This council is responsible for planning and preparing various activities for the congregation to enjoy fellowship together. This council is led by Sue Penn.

Mission Council - This council is responsible for coordinating and planning our many mission activities. Many hands are welcome and needed! This council is led by Laura Bull and Bill Shave.

Worship Council - This council is responsible for planning for worship services, communion, etc. This council is led by Paul Munson and June Coryer.

Faith Formation

Jan. 5 - Faith formation for K-12th grade

Topic: *Epiphany*

Jan. 12 - No faith formation

Jan. 19 - Family/Intergenerational learning experience

Topic: *Baptism*

Jan. 26 - Faith formation for K-12th grade

Topic: *The Lord is your strength*

Camp Fowler Summer Registration 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 SCOTIA2025.

Hope to see you all at camp this summer!

Talent Show!

Come one, come all, Scotia's Got Talent! On Saturday February 1st, 2025, Fellowship Council will be hosting a talent show! If you like to sing, dance, tell stories, read poetry, play an instrument, do magic tricks, or have any other talents to share, we'd love to have you perform! Sign up sheets will go up the first week in January for any of you who would like to be a part of the show! Stay tuned for more information in the church bulletin and Constant Contact.

Renew Bible Study

The group will resume weekly meetings on Tuesday, January 14 at 12 noon via Zoom. The group will be reading The Road, the Rock and the Rabbi: My Journey into the Heart of Scriptural Faith and the Land Where It All Began by Kathy Lee Gifford, who has been a lifelong student of Scripture to increase her knowledge of God. She states that it wasn't until she began studying the biblical texts in their original Hebrew and Greek-along with actually hiking the ancient paths of Israel, that she found the fulfillment of those desires. The readers will follow Kathy on her tour of Israel using the book, a study guide (optional) and a DVD. The Rock is Jesus, the Road is the roads of Israel that she travels to reach dozens of ancient landmarks and historical sites, and the Rabbi is God's Word. Messianic Rabbi Jason Sobel will offer additional content and insight into the Hebrew language, culture, and heritage.

Contact Sunny Baldwin at 518-320-4562 or csunnyb@nycap.rr.com to order the resources, the Zoom link or more information.



Emergency Paperwork Workshop

Do you have a resolution this year to get your paperwork organized? Can family members find important documents or is it like a scavenger hunt? Are your medications listed and accessible for family and emergency personnel if they are needed in a hurry? The Congregational Council is offering a workshop to help you organize your paperwork "in case of emergency". Join Lynn Makrin on Sunday, January 19, 2025 after worship to learn about an organization system called NOK box (Next Of Kin) that she uses for all her family members. We will also share information about the Vial of Life and other emergency tools. For more information or to let us know if you will attend this workshop, please contact Pam Walsh.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet Sunday, January 26th. Grab a drink from Brink Hall and then meet us in the Memorial Lounge at 11:15. Bring your questions, a medium sized crochet hook, scissors, and your finished or unfinished shawls so we can practice making fringe.



Backpack Program Update by Linda Lewis



As the calendar year ends, there is much to be joyful and thankful for in the Backpack program! The Thanksgiving distribution was very successful, with a turkey and a large box of food for 48 families. One family was able to cook a turkey this year because of the assistance of a good Samaritan in our congregation who repaired her oven that had been broken for 4 years and she could not afford to call a repair person to fix it.

We received a \$3,000.00 donation from the Glenville Rotary! We will use this money to give families Stewart's milk and egg cards EVERY week instead of every other week, as is recommended by the Regional Food Bank. The Cookie Walk was a huge success, raising almost \$3,000.00. Thank you to all who baked and to all who bought the many delicious treats. Our very own Laura Bull appeared on Channel 6 news at 6:30 and 7:30 am to explain the good cause this supports!

Our December distribution provided food to 51 families, including a box of food, 2 whole chickens, 3 lbs of ground beef, 2 lbs. of hot dogs, 2 dozen eggs and fresh yogurt. Keith Buhrmaster, of Buhrmaster Farms, donated a pick-up truck FULL of apples, potatoes, onions, squash and many other vegetables left over from his season----just ask Bill Faulkner, Jr. about it. A special thank you to the many volunteers who sorted and packaged this bonanza of fresh produce!

We look forward to the New Year of serving our community with weekly bags of food and extra food whenever needed. Thank you all for supporting this effort!

Community Lunch Update by Mark Holley

We had two very successful holiday meals. The Thanksgiving meal had 103 meals go out with 21 dinners put in the freezer for emergencies. I want to thank all who were involved. It ran so smoothly and the guests loved the meal. The Christmas meal had 88 meals go out. We also gave out 30 bathmats, 2 bath towels and washcloths.

We are at a total of 6,408 meals. I have so many people to thank for helping keep this important mission going. From my core of volunteers that care about our guests as much as I do to Miss Stephaine who helps to coordinate the Thanksgiving meal deliveries. The fire departments of Thomas Corners Wayne Penn, and Walter Pfuntner of Beekudal. There are numerous others who played a role to help make this meal work and you are very much appreciated.

Here's to 2025. No matter what happens God will be with us guiding and helping us to love our neighbors.



Women’s Retreat 2025: Last Call

There is still room! We’ll be joining together in the comfort of Chi Rho Lodge at Camp Fowler January 10-12. The cost for 2025 is \$170 per person and includes meals, room & board. Please note that if we don’t get 24 participants the cost will go up. We’ll provide a program including faith focused discussions, games, crafts, fun and more!

Want to join the fun? contact Miss Diana ASAP at education@firstreformedscotia.org.

2024 End of the Year Financial Update

As of 12/30/24				
		Budget	Year to Date	Actual to Date
Congregational Giving		\$227,000.00	\$227,000.00	\$258,134.00
Other income		\$109,558.000	\$109,558.00	\$251,431.00
Income draw from Fenimore for HVAC		\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00
Total Income		\$586,558.00	\$586,558.00	\$759,565.00
Expenses		\$586,558.00	\$586,558.00	\$524,951.00
HVAC Project			\$300,000.00	\$296,597.00
Total Expenses				\$821,548.00



Happy New Year! For many people the beginning of the new year comes with the setting of resolutions. For many, the default resolution often revolves around shedding those extra pounds we carry. But, what would happen if we shifted our focus towards a more holistic approach? Holistic resolutions help us reach into the essence of our wellbeing, encouraging us to take a wider look at our resolutions. It involves embracing a lifestyle that promotes overall wellness, nourishing not just our bodies but also our minds, hearts, and spirits. This year, instead of fixating on a specific weight target, consider making holistic resolutions that can include other facets of our life. These are some ideas from SELF magazine:

- **Mindful Living:** Cultivate mindfulness in your daily routine. Practice being present in each moment, savoring what you are doing throughout the day. This could involve mindful breathing exercises, meditation, or simply taking time each day to appreciate the beauty around you.
- **Emotional Wellbeing:** Prioritize your mental and emotional health. Set goals that focus on building resilience, fostering positive relationships, and finding healthy outlets for stress relief. Some activities to consider are journaling, therapy, or regular check-ins with loved ones.
- **Skill Development:** Instead of a rigid weight loss plan, aim to enhance your intellectual growth. Learn a new skill, take up a hobby, or enroll in a course that piques your interest. Engaging your mind in continuous learning contributes to a sense of fulfillment and personal growth. Perhaps you want to run a 5K race, what are the actions to take first?
- **Connection and Community:** Foster meaningful social connections. Whether it's strengthening existing relationships or branching out to make new friends, building a supportive community contributes significantly to overall wellbeing. Find an activity you can do with friends.
- **Financial Wellness:** Set realistic financial goals that align with your values. This could involve creating a budget, saving for a future endeavor, or investing in experiences that bring you joy.
- **Environmental Consciousness:** Consider resolutions that promote environmental awareness. Small changes in your daily habits, such as reducing waste or choosing sustainable products, contribute to a healthier planet and, in turn, a healthier you.

By embracing holistic New Year's resolutions, we can change our perspective to a more comprehensive approach to wellbeing. This year, prioritize self-love, personal growth, and a balanced life.

Here's to a Happy New Year filled with holistic transformations that go beyond the scale!



Mission of the Month: Kids Hope

January is National Mentoring Month, and FRCS is celebrating the life-changing relationships with students at Sacandaga elementary school through Kids Hope USA. This month recognizes the faithful commitment of volunteer mentors who show up week after week to show students they are loved and cared for. In Kids Hope USA programs, that one hour can make a big difference. Students can experience an improvement in academic skills and reading, feel a sense of greater confidence, and better social/emotional behaviors. Kids Hope USA is a national mentoring organization that connects community-focused churches with their neighborhood elementary schools. These school-based mentoring programs equip and mobilize volunteer mentors to go into the schools to enrich the lives of students through one-on-one relationships. Standing alongside parents, teachers, principals and counselors, Kids Hope USA mentors show kids they are valued and loved. Together they play games, read, do schoolwork, talk and much more. This intentional time helps provide the student support, motivation and confidence to learn and achieve.

Through the power of relationships, kids build resilience and a brighter future. Let's thank the following mentors:

Diana Ackner, Barb Aldi, Jeff Austin, Carol Ahl, Diury Alvarado, Marty Gilgore, Vicki Hayner, Peg Kniskern, Carol Leitze, Linda Lewis, Laurel-Le Lipski, Sheryl Pelkey, Donna Richards, Bill Shave, Diane Skibinski, Jeff Taft. And our Sub mentors: Sunny Baldwin, Richard Doyle, Sandy Lunstedt, Linda Willoughby.

January Anniversaries:

Joe and Cathy Deamer 1
Wayne and Susan Penn 15
Bub and Janet Bekkering 21
Mike and Susan Torelli 22
Kirk and Linda Willoughby 30

January Birthdays:

Kevin Beauchemin 2
Jessica Crisci 6
Chris Grumbling 9
Brittney Schaefer 12
Tom Lansing 18
Bob Grumbling 21
Sally Knutson 24
Duane VanPatten, Jr 26

June Coryer 5
MaryLynne Davidson 6
Sharon Gaunay 11
Connor Kilgallen 16
Sue Pitts 18
Lucy Trbovich 22
Cindy Taft 25
Tom Bodden 28

Jacob Crisci 6
Naomi Faulkner 6
Barret Germain 12
Sunny Baldwin 17
David Gonyea 20
Bradley Coryer 23
Claudia Garrison 26
Rebecca Penn 28

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