
THE MESSENGER

A Pastor's Ponderings

There are very few things that can be said to be true of all people of every time and place. Few constants that connect every single human being across our species' great diversity and difference. One of those few constants, however, is our fallibility. Without exception, we all make mistakes; we all get things wrong. We are not omniscient or omnipresent and so there is always information that we do not possess when we make decisions. We all live our lives in a constant state of bombardment from new information and evidence. Inevitably, some of this information will challenge what we thought we knew or understood.

Sometimes these challenges are trivial, but other times they attack the very heart of our worldview. In these instances we have two options, we can either undertake the difficult work of deep self-examination and deconstruction or we can simply ignore the new information no matter how strong the evidence is that our previous ideas, thoughts, decisions, or entire worldviews were mistaken. If it wasn't obvious, human beings tend to be far more fond of the latter option.

Today, the consequences of our resistance to self-reflection and change are coming home to roost. Not only are people struggling to undertake the necessary self-reflection and growth, they are doubling down on their mistakes or misconceptions.

It certainly damages our pride when we are forced to admit that we are fallible. It may even impact our social credibility, but confessing our errors and owning up to them as soon as we realized we have erred is always preferable to doubling down. Doubling down may help us avoid short term discomfort, but makes the consequences of our errors even more difficult to face once they have ballooned tomorrow.

Doubling down is a term that originated in the world of gambling, which describes high risk-high reward situations. You might win twice as much, but you may also lose twice as much. Just as the house always wins in gambling, reality always prevails in life. Thus we must be very careful we are not betting against reality because we will lose. And right now people are losing quite a lot.

By failing to take ownership of our mistakes as soon as we recognize the error, we only multiply our hardships and the hardships of others. As Christians we need not be ashamed of our fallibility. Truthfully, we should be the ones most ready to

confess our mistakes or errors because we should have the deepest understanding of forgiveness. Once we have experienced the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ, we ought no longer fear the judgement of others. For while people will certainly judge us more harshly, we understand that the criticism of mere mortals means nothing when compared to God's grace and mercy.

Since God can forgive us, we should be able to forgive ourselves and trust that people of goodwill will also be able to forgive us once we confess and repent. This means we cannot simply own up to our mistakes, but also change our ways and make amends, as much as we are able, for the harm our errors may have caused.

As a species we need to stop doubling down when we get things wrong or make a mistake. None of us need be shocked when we err or when someone else does, because to be human is to be fallible. We need to let go of our fragile egos and our delicate pride. As Christians we all need to redouble our efforts in seeking after the humility that is fundamental to our calling as people of faith.

So whether you find yourself in need of forgiveness or asked to give forgiveness, let us be kind to one another and ourselves. For the forgiver will soon enough find themselves in need of the forgiveness of others. When we sin, we ought not keep sinning to cover it up. We must break the cycle. We must not be afraid to follow after a better way.

It would be wonderful if no one ever made a mistake or erred in understanding, but that is not the world in which we live. Our fallibility is our great equalizer, so we should always err on the side of forgiveness, understanding, grace and mercy. All people will get things wrong. All people will make mistakes. The only difference that matters is how we choose to respond. Do we ignore our mistakes, do we even double down to maintain the flimsy facade of infallibility, or do we own up to your errors and allow yourself to change and grow. The choice is yours, but I believe our world is in desperate need of more people who are willing to grow.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Rev. Christopher J. McCloskey



Blessing of the Backpacks

If you are headed back to school this fall, you are encouraged to bring your backpack/school bag to 10am worship on Sunday, September 7th. They will be blessed as a reminder that God is with us at school. This is not only for elementary school students, but also middle school, high school, and college students as well as for teachers, aides, librarians and all other educational support staff.

CRAZY Family Fun CARNIVAL

Sunday, September 7th

following 10am Worship

Bounce house, Carnival games, Prizes and more!

Invite a friend, a neighbor, a cousin.

ALL are welcome!!

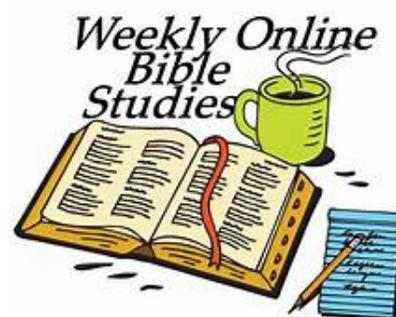


Faith Formation for Kindergarten - 12th grade will begin on Sunday, **September 7th** at 10:30am (½ way through worship). Come join Miss Diana for a time of worship, learning and fun. Our year will be centered around “The Book Of Belonging” by Mariko Clark; an inclusive bible storybook for kind and contemplative kids of all ages.

Renew Bible Study

This group meets weekly on Tuesdays at 12 noon via Zoom. Beginning September 23rd, the group will resume studying Entering the Psalms: Meeting God in Scripture, which is a study that identifies the different types of Psalms and how they relate to our current lives. The books cost \$5 and are available from Diana Ackner. The schedule is as follows:

- September 9th, 12 noon- There is an optional make up session for the Intro and Chapter 1.
- September 23rd, 12 noon- The full group resumes to start studying with Chapter 2. Contact Sunny Baldwin at 518-320-4562 or csunnyb@nycap.rr.com with questions or to obtain the Zoom link.



Pastor's Adult Education Series

Rev. McCloskey will be offering a brief adult education series this fall entitled "Early and Medieval Women of Faith." The class will gather on Tuesday evenings at 6:00pm on September 23rd & 30th and October 7th & 14th. We will be studying Perpetua of Carthage, Egeria of Spain, Hildegard of Bingen, Elisabeth of Schonau, Mechthild of Megdeburg, Beatrijs of Nazareth, Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe. Don't recognize many, most or all of these names?

Then come learn about these amazing women of faith!

Women
of FAITH

Budget Update



Following the 10am worship on Sunday September 28th, our Treasurer Jerry Haldeman will give a brief Budget Update in Brink Hall. He will review our income and expenses so far this year as well as projections for the remainder of the year.

Conversation Project Chat

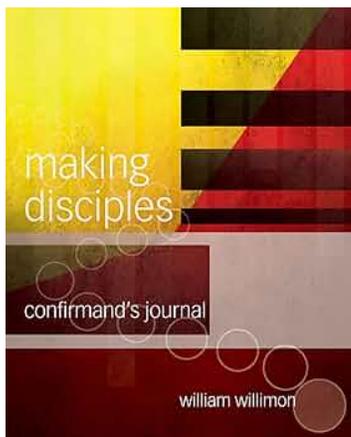
September 28th @ 11:30am

the conversation project

Have you had a conversation about your end of life wishes with your family? Do you have a health care proxy? Have you organized your personal papers? Have you submitted your file for your end of life service with Pastor Christopher?

We can learn from each other as we traverse these sometimes-difficult conversations.

Grab a cup of coffee and come share what worked and didn't work for you. We will meet in Memorial Lounge on September 28th after church.



Confirmation Class

All 8th-12th graders are welcome to join us for this mentor based learning experience. The first session will begin October 19th after worship. All materials will be provided. Contact Miss Diana for a timeline and information.

All Saints Day



This year the congregation will commemorate All Saints Day with a special service on Saturday November 1st at 7:00pm in the Sanctuary. March of this year marked 5 years since the COVID-19 lockdowns began. So much has changed over the course of these 5 years including the passing of many beloved friends and family members. The service will include reading of the names of those who have gone on to heavenly glory. Often the names are only for those that passed in the previous year, but at this service you can submit the names of loved ones to be read no matter when they died. Keep an eye out for your opportunity to submit names in the near future.

New Members Classes

It was with joy that this congregation received 3 new members on Palm Sunday of this year. These individuals had completed a brief course of study (two 2 hour classes) led by Pastor Christopher earlier in the spring. There were a number of other people who expressed interest in joining the church at that time, but who were unable to attend the classes due to busy schedules. Rev. McCloskey is willing to offer another series of classes (two 2 hour classes) this Fall if there is interest. If you are interested in being a part of a Fall cohort, or have any questions, please reach out to him.



KIDS HOPE USA is one caring adult mentoring an at risk child one hour every week. When kids feel loved and valued, they are better able to learn, grow and succeed. Another important piece of this program is the prayer partner that each mentor and student pair have praying for them. We are entering our 15th year of this important ministry and we need your help! The list of kids who want and need mentors is growing. You can make a difference in a kid's life! Volunteer today! If you are interested in becoming a mentor or a prayer partner or want to learn more, contact Miss Diana, education@firstreformedscotia.org.

Community Meal Update by Mark Holley

Currently the Community Meal Program has served a total of 7,252 meals to date.

One of the summer highlights was the Polish fest in July. We had polka music, desserts, cabbage rolls and pierogos. We served a total of 96 meals.



It was a truly successful meal with our guests leaving full and happy. Thanks to all the volunteers for their support. We had fun making the cabbage rolls and the polka music was awesome!

Backpack Program Update by Linda Lewis



It is difficult to believe that school is about to start! We have one more distribution of the large boxes of food scheduled for Thursday, September 11th, with free eggs and free sliced cheese already ordered. This distribution was scheduled because the regular Backpack program doesn't start until mid-October. We recently received a notice of the price for the 2025-2026 school year and were relieved to see that the price per child for the year was increased by only \$16.00, which comes to \$289.00 per child. We had previously had increases of \$40.00 two years in a row! Last year, we averaged 75 students each week, which will cost \$21,675 this year. This does not include the 4 vacation distribution costs or the extra 4 summer distributions we are providing. Many working families in our area are struggling with price increases in food, utilities, rent/mortgages, and general expenses. We are grateful that your generous support allows our church to continue to support them. Thank you!

Mission of the Month: Scotia-Glenville High School Food Pantry

While most Backpack programs only provide bags of food on the weekend for elementary aged students, our Church provides food to students in **ALL** of the schools in the district. The food in the bags for the regular Backpack program is determined by the Regional Food Bank at a set cost per bag, but the Food Pantry is run differently. There is a designated space in the high school and students can choose the food that they need. A number of students are not living at home and "couch surf" at friends' houses, bringing food from the pantry with them. The coordinator at the pantry also packs food for a number of students each week and the students either take the food home or we deliver the food directly to their homes. This past year, 8-10 students had food delivered, 7-9 took food home, and an unknown number picked up food when needed. This September will begin the sixth year for the Food Pantry, which unlike the Backpack program that begins mid-October, begins the **first** day of school. Please designate on your donation that you want to contribute to the HS Food Pantry to support our High School students in need.



76th Annual Dutch Fair

The Dutch Fair will be here before we know it! This year's Dutch Fair will be held on Saturday, September 20th, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. It's time to start cleaning out your closets!



What We Will Accept:

- Clean, gently used clothing and household linens, towels, & bedding.
- Everyday Household items such as kitchen supplies, small electrical appliances and tools. *(Plates, bowls, and glasses must be dishwasher and microwave safe)*
- Small furniture *(end tables, small bookcases, etc – must be easy to lift and store)*
- Toys
- Books
- Jewelry *(Donations can be dropped off at the office, M-F, 9:00am-1:00pm)*
- Sporting Goods

What We Will NOT Accept:

- Monitors, TVs or computer screens.
- Computers, printers, keyboards or stereos
- Tires
- Large or upholstered furniture
- Candles or cosmetics (new or used)
- Office supplies



Nothing musty, moldy, or broken!

If you would like to volunteer please contact Laura Bull.. We are always looking for volunteers to help sort donations, set up, work the day of the Fair and clean up. Teenagers, this is a great way to get some community service hours needed for school! If you have managed an area in the past, please let us know that you are willing to do so again this year.

We will be accepting donations! Clothing, Linens, Books and Media can be donated starting Sunday September 7th from 8:50am-9:50am at the Mission Shed, September 14th after 10am worship in Brink Hall and Monday-Thursday from 9-1 in Brink Hall.

Vendor Applications can be found on the church's website (firstreformedscotia.org) under Calendar & Events → 2025 Dutch Fair.



Health & Wellness Note: Recently there's a cocktail, called the "cortisol or adrenal cocktail", that's trending on TikTok and Instagram. Not familiar with this drink, we did a little investigating and here's some information that could be helpful to know before you try one.

What is Cortisol? It is a steroid hormone produced by the adrenal glands, and it is involved in many bodily functions, including regulating metabolism, blood sugar, blood pressure, sleep-wake cycles and immune responses. When our bodies perceive a threat or stressful situation, Cortisol levels naturally rise.

What is a Cortisol Cocktail? Dr. Michael Ruscio, a health provider and researcher, describes it as a non-alcoholic drink believed to support adrenal gland function and potentially reduce stress. It's typically made with orange juice, coconut water, and sea salt, and sometimes includes lemon juice, cream of tartar, magnesium powder, or other ingredients. Influencers claim the Cortisol cocktail can lower stress hormones, boost energy and balance your body's adrenal function.

Is there evidence that this drink actually lowers cortisol and reduces stress? While the ingredients are rich in vitamins and electrolytes, there's currently no strong scientific evidence that it directly lowers cortisol levels.

Are the Cortisol cocktails safe? Even if they don't offer health benefits, cortisol cocktails are harmless on the whole. Their ingredients aren't different from those in many whole foods or even other electrolyte drinks.

Who should avoid cortisol cocktails? If you live with any of these medical conditions, talk to your doctor before trying cortisol cocktails.

- Kidney disease. If you have certain stages of kidney disease, you may need to avoid high-potassium foods, which are in these drinks.
- Diabetes. Orange juice's sugar content can be a concern if you have issues with blood sugar regulation as the sugar can raise your blood sugar.
- Conditions requiring fluid restriction. If you have heart failure or another condition that means limiting your fluid intake, cortisol cocktails aren't for you.

Overall, there is no proof Cortisol cocktails decrease stress. Unless you have certain medical conditions, you can enjoy them as an enhanced electrolyte beverage.

Consult your health care provider if you have any questions.

September Anniversaries:

- Kenneth III and Jennifer Willcox 3**
- Mike and Mary Jane Crowley 5**
- Karen and Mike Trbovich 5**
- Jason and Maggie White 13**
- Tom and Liesl Falcon 19**
- Mike and Patty Marré 20**
- Andrew and Emily Kohout 22**
- Walt and Nancy Pfuntner 24**
- Ed and Linda Naumowiz 26**
- Bill and Amanda Faulkner 28**

September Birthdays:

- Linda Willoughby 3**
- Brian Schaefer 8**
- Angelia Hoffman 12**
- David Walsh 16**
- Joshua Rosenberg 18**
- Karen Trbovich 21**
- Jillian Bull 24**
- Joanna DeSilva 25**

- Kristen Faubion 7**
- Susan Hoefler 10**
- Betty Lauer 13**
- George Squires, Jr. 17**
- Jennifer Willcox 19**
- Bill Faubion 22**
- John Pierce, Jr 24**
- Trudi Thun 25**

- Marian Gilgore 7**
- Doug Shaw 11**
- Paul Retersdorf 13**
- John Ackner 18**
- David Schalekamp 20**
- Karen Wentworth 23**
- Margo Snyder 24**

Address Service Requested

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