

# THE MESSENGER

## *A Pastor's Ponderings*

There are always *at least* three sides to every story – your perspective, my perspective and the truth. And this is the case when only two people are involved, add more people to any interaction and things only get increasingly messy. When we speak we have to be mindful that the intent with which we speak is not always the message received. Communication is a particularly tricky thing. Since we cannot read one another's minds, every interaction has the chance to lead to miscommunication, misunderstandings and hurt feelings. The fact that we ever communicate successfully at all is, in my opinion, a miracle.

However the possibility for miscommunication, misunderstandings and hurt feelings becomes exponentially higher, if not a certainty, when we have heard about any story second hand. In the legal system this is called hearsay and is inadmissible as evidence because the legal system recognizes how unreliable such testimony is. The Bible simply calls this kind of testimony gossip (Prov 11:13 & 26:20).

Scripture again and again encourages us to only ever use our words to build each other up and to never tear one another down (Eph. 4:29, 1 Thess. 5:11, Rom. 1:19). Often when we hear gossip, especially gossip that is meant to harm or degrade another person's character or reputation, we are required as Christians to at the very least ignore it and ideally shut it down. We certainly need to make sure that we do not make ourselves a party to such talk for in so doing make ourselves complicit in harming another.

If a situation unfolds that we were not present for, but is impacting us, it is essential that we seek out the perspectives of *all* parties involved before we come to our own conclusions. For when two or more people share their perspective, which is necessarily biased, the truth is usually somewhere in between. This is the abiding difficulty of being in relationship as a community – honoring everyone's perspective while always seeking after the truth.

Sadly, we tend to believe what we want to believe before we have all the information. We tend to readily accept information that confirms our opinion or supports our 'side' and reject everything to the contrary. But this kind of thinking only creates deeper isolation and polarization, which in turn leads to more and more opportunities for miscommunication, misunderstandings and hurt feelings. When we are hurt our natural human tendency is to share that hurt – to cause others to hurt especially the person or people we hold responsible for our hurt. It is the responsibility of us all to be a part of bringing these cycles to an end.

Miscommunication, misunderstandings and the hurt feelings that often accompany them tend to reinforce themselves creating an ouroboros (a mythological snake that eats its own tail) of destruction. Interestingly enough when a real snake starts to eat its own tail, the solution is simple. Take a little hand sanitizer and put it in their mouth and they will spit out their tail. In this analogy, the hand sanitizer is truth, grace and understanding. It is our willingness to be patient with one another and to treat others as we would have them treat us, or even more importantly to treat them as Jesus has treated us.

This is a high standard, a high bar to reach, but as a community of faith it is something we all must strive for. So let us make sure that when we speak that we are as fully informed as possible. Let us not speak out of emotion, but only out of truth. Let us not engage in gossip and always assume the best of one another.

It is so tempting to jump to conclusions. We love the rush we feel when we passionately take a side. We love to feel like we unquestionably know what is right and true, and thus who is in the wrong.

But there are *at least* three sides to every story – my perspective, your perspective and the truth. Let us all with kindness, compassion, patience, understanding, mercy, and grace seek after the truth.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

*Rev. Christopher J. McCloskey*

## Time Change

Don't forget to fall back an hour on Sunday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> as DST comes to an end. We will be 'falling back' or 'gaining' an hour.



## Renew Bible Study

Beginning November 4<sup>th</sup>, the group will be studying *What Do You Fear?: Insisting on hope this Advent* from Sanctified Art. According to their website: "This Advent series takes seriously the angels' message and trusts that Christ's birth truly is good news of great joy for all people. The resources look closely at the fear and terror looming in the

background during the time of King Herod and invite us to consider the fears we hold now. Fear can divide and paralyze us and even be used as a tool for oppression. But what if we formed a different relationship with fear? Can we acknowledge fear without letting it rule us? Might we catalyze our fears into love and action? What if naming our fears helps us see more clearly how God is breaking in and where God is at work?"

The group, led by Sunny Baldwin, continues to meet at 12 noon on Tuesdays via Zoom. Anyone interested in participating is welcome! For the reading schedule and Zoom link, please contact Sunny at 518-320-4562 or [csunnyb@nycap.rr.com](mailto:csunnyb@nycap.rr.com).

## The Rippling Effect of Charity by Susan Damon

Thank you to everyone who supported this Fall's Quilt Raffle and a special thank you to Judi's Sew-N-Sew Group who generously donated the handmade quilt to be raffled. The Missions Council, inspired by the quilt's bright and playful colors, decided that the funds raised should go to support The Reading Is Fun Program. This local non-profit provides Schenectady area elementary students with extra reading support so they have a solid foundation on which to flourish.

With your help, the raffle ticket sales raised \$557, which exceeded our \$500 goal. This was then matched by the Missions Council and resulted in a total donation of \$1,114. This amount was then matched yet again by The Reading Is Fun Program's Literacy Match Program run by the Wright Family Foundation bringing the final donation total to \$2,228. This is quadruple the amount that was initially raised with raffle ticket sales!

Thank you again to all those involved and for your participation in this fundraiser, it made a significant difference in supporting local child literacy and connecting with the surrounding community!





## All Saints Day Service

This year the congregation will commemorate All Saints Day with a special service on Saturday November 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

## Consecration Sunday and Thank You Coffee Hour

On Sunday, November 9<sup>th</sup> we will be celebrating Consecration Sunday. During the service, 2026 pledges will be formally dedicated during worship. Following the 10:00am service, there will be a special Thank You Coffee Hour to celebrate everyone who has given service to the church and its mission over 2025.



## Usher's Workshop

Pastor Christopher will be leading an usher's workshop and training session on November 9<sup>th</sup> following church service. We welcome new volunteers to this important position of greeting our congregation and helping to run our weekly services!

## Christ the King Sunday

Every year, Christ the King Sunday marks the last Sunday in Ordinary Time before the beginning of a new liturgical year with Advent. On Sunday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, we will mark the occasion with the Celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion.



## Thanksgiving Eve Service

On Wednesday, November 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm, we will celebrate our annual Thanksgiving Eve service. All are welcome!

## Thank-Yous!

- ★ Tom & Jane Lansing send their sincere thanks for the beautiful dahlias, a favorite flower of the Lansings! They were delivered to us by another favorite, Bill Shave! Thanks to Bill, Missions Council, and everyone at FRCS!
- ★ Mary Grumbling is very thankful for the meals she received recently from the Meal Train.
- ★ Robert Curtis is very grateful for the Chicken & Biscuit dinner which was delivered to him.



***ALL* are invited to our  
annual Congregational Family fun day  
at the Mabee Farm  
Sunday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> from 3:00-6:00pm**

Save the date! We'll have lots of fun playing games, walking the nature trail, playing with animals, eating smores, fall crafts and much more.

## **Mission of the Month: The Deacons' Fund**

Our November Mission of the Month is our Deacons' Fund. Our Deacons' Fund enables us to respond to local emergency needs as they arise. The Deacons' Fund also enables our pastor and Board of Deacons to respond to the emergency needs of people connected to our congregation.

## **Community Lunch Update** by Mark Holley

The community meal will be providing a Thanksgiving meal on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November. Anyone who wants or needs a meal please let Mark know by November 10<sup>th</sup>. The meal includes turkey, stuffing, gravy, corn, sweet potatoes, roll and a whole pie.

We will need 125 pies for this meal. Anyone who can make or donate a pumpkin or apple pie can drop them off in Brinks hall on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November. They will be greatly appreciated by our guests!

A word of thanks to Bill Faulkner Jr and Richard Doyle for helping to assemble the new storage cabinets in Room One. Thank you for all of your time and hard work.

## **Backpack Program Update** by Linda Lewis

We are off to a new year for the BackPack Program! We started packing bags on Wednesday, October 8th, which were delivered to schools and directly to homes on Thursday mornings. We averaged 75 bags each week last year and have started this year with 54. We expect this number to increase as school staff get to know new students.



We are already planning for our first distribution of boxes of extra food for Thanksgiving. Hannaford Market in Glenville has again agreed to provide 20 FREE turkeys and sell us 20-25 more at their lowest price. Parents are already asking about this distribution. BJ's will give us a \$50.00 gift certificate to be used for fruit to include in the boxes.

We look forward to another successful year of helping children and families in the Scotia-Glenville community.



## Operation Christmas Child

Families and individuals can make fun and meaningful memories by packing shoebox gifts for children in need! What a great way to start a Christmas tradition that emphasizes giving—as the Lord says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). There's nothing like the personal touch of shopping for and filling shoe boxes together to ensure that boys and girls around the world receive quality gifts as they hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**We Need You to pack a shoebox!**

Step 1. Get a shoebox from Miss Diana or from home.

Step 2. Get Instructions on how to pack a box.

Step 3. Go shopping - this is the fun part!

Step 4. Pack your shoebox.

Step 5. Label your box. Miss Diana has labels.

Step 6. Leave the completed shoebox on the cart next to Miss Diana's office at church with a \$10 donation, if possible, for shipping cost. Need boxes by **November 17<sup>th</sup>**.

Have more questions? Contact Miss Diana at [education@firstreformedscotia.org](mailto:education@firstreformedscotia.org).

## Faith Formation News

We continue to study the old testament using "The Book of Belonging"

Here are our plans:

November 2<sup>nd</sup> *Five Fearless sisters*

You belong

*Mabee Farm Fun Day 3-6*

November 9<sup>th</sup> *Judges*

Story of Deborah, Ruth, Hannah

November 16<sup>th</sup> *The Monarchy*

King David

November 23<sup>rd</sup> *Prophets*

Search for God

November 30<sup>th</sup>: Advent 1

*\*Kids sing in worship*

*Hanging of the Greens*

Can't make it to church? We have *online resources* on our website that are updated regularly. Go check it out!



## Advent 2026

That's right, I said advent. Believe it or not, advent will soon be here. Advent devotionals will be available by Sunday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>. This year's theme is "What Do You Fear? Insisting on Hope"

## Hanging of the Greens

We will be decorating our building for the Christmas Season on Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup> after 10am service. Plans are underway so save the date!



## Women's Retreat 2026

**January 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>**

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 from **January 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>**. The cost for 2026 is **\$200** per person and includes meals, room & board. Please note that if we don't get 24 participants the cost may go up. Scholarships are available. Sign up is first come first serve. Prepare for a weekend of faith-focused discussions, games, crafts, fun and more!

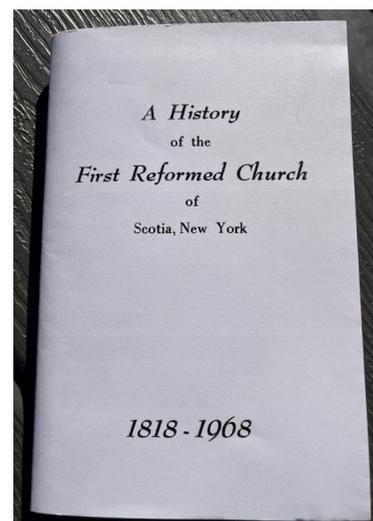
Want more information please contact Miss Diana at [education@firstreformedscotia.org](mailto:education@firstreformedscotia.org).

Please make checks payable to First Reformed Church of Scotia.

## Keep Our History Alive

*A History of the First Reformed Church of Scotia, New York 1818-1968* was written by my Dad, Donald Keefer, in 1968. He was the Scotia Village Historian at the time, and I was a little girl who fell asleep at night to the sound of his typewriter in the other room as he was writing it.

I have had the booklet reprinted and given them as a gift to you in his memory, because he always wanted our history to be known. I want it to be freely available, perhaps only asking for a donation for future printings, so it can always be made available to anyone who wants to learn our history. Perhaps someone will be inspired to take up a "part two" from 1968 forward.



With love, Katie Finnegan, Member at West Glenville Reformed Church



This month many people will be celebrating Thanksgiving, well-known as a yearly time to pause and think about what we are grateful for. However, there is a popular international tradition called “Thankful Thursday” where each Thursday people put their worries aside and share what they are thankful for weekly instead of yearly.

Focusing on gratitude doesn’t have to be difficult and has many health benefits. Acknowledging gratitude makes it easier to find the goodness in our lives and connect to something larger than ourselves. It can also help improve sleep, lower stress, improve heart health and positivity.

Below are gratitude exercises to get you started:

- **Journal:** Write down 3 things you are grateful for in a journal.
- **Gratitude Jar:** Write down what you are grateful for and place them in a jar. At the end of the month, or when you need a boost, read your gratitude slips.
- **Write a Thank You Note:** Think of someone you are grateful for and write them a note, a text, or an email.
- **Gratitude Walk:** Take a walk outside and listen to nature's sounds. Think about the things around you and in your life you appreciate.
- **Gratitude Meditation:** Spend 10 minutes reflecting on the positive things.
- **Posting a Thankful Thursday quote:** Post a quote on social media to inspire yourself and others. There are many ideas on the Internet. Focus on the quote for the week.

Just one simple change to your routine can make a world of difference! Here’s your first quote:  
**“Be positive. Your mind is more powerful than you think. What is down in the well comes up in the bucket. Fill yourself with positive things.” — Tony Dungy**

**November Anniversaries:**

**Joe & Kristen Bodden 27**

**November Birthdays:**

**Joan Grant 1  
Shannon Warfield 9  
Spike Ahl 17  
Rheana Gravell 18  
Philip Hermance 26**

**Al Snyder 2  
Maggie White 13  
Jay Harlow 17  
David White 20  
Karen Faulkner 29**

**Dave Wentworth 3  
Ken Willcox, Jr 13  
Jane Brehm 18  
Jim Pierce 22**

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