

THE MESSENGER

A Pastor's Ponderings

To respond to the large staff turnover we experienced this past fall, the Consistory formed a special Personnel Committee. This Committee was not only tasked with hiring new staff, but also with updating the church's staff policies and procedures in the hopes of ironing out the issues that the recent turnover exposed.

In February, the committee successfully hired a new Office Manager. Her name is Karen Shaffer. She has previously worked at the Canajoharie Library and Arkell Museum, the Amsterdam Free Library and the Evans Library at SUNY Fulton-Montgomery Community College. She continues to work part-time at the Johnstown Public Library. She is married to her high school sweetheart, Ben with whom she has a son, Aiden. She lives in Fonda with her two dogs, Oliver and Oscar.



Karen has already proved herself to be an incredible asset to the church and its staff. You are encouraged to stop in the office weekdays between 9am and 1pm to say 'hi.'

The committee is also at work hiring a new bookkeeper and is preparing to hire a new choir

director and choir accompanist. Diana has been serving as an interim choir director since November of last year, and will continue in this role until the end of the choir season in June. We have also been blessed with an incredibly talented choir

accompanist, Iida Nyman, who began around the same time. However, Iida plans to move to Europe this year, but will fortunately be able to also serve the choir until the end of the choir season in June.

I ask that you please keep the Personnel Committee in your prayers as they continue their very important work.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Rev. Christopher J. McCloskey

Holy Week 2026



Maundy Thursday

April 2nd

The Solemn Shadows: Tenebrae Service at 7:00pm

Easter Sunday

April 5th

6:30am (outside-weather permitting)*, 8:00am and 10:00am Services

*A continental Easter Breakfast will follow the 6:30am Sunrise Service in Brink Hall

Maundy Thursday

On April 2nd at 7:00pm you are invited to a very special Maundy Thursday Service. This Tenebrae service will feature our choir singing through the events of holy week. We will also be celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Communion in a slightly different, but deeply meaningful way. This is not a service you will want to miss!

Thank You to all who volunteered, baked cakes, bought cakes and ate spaghetti at our Fowler spaghetti dinner fundraiser! We raised approximately \$3700 to help kids to go to camp and experience a God filled community of faith and fun!

Men's Group Update

Our March meeting was quite informative and enlightening. Several topics were discussed, which will help us to define service and fellowship events going forward. The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 7th at 6:30pm in Brink Hall. ALL men are encouraged and welcomed at any of our "get-togethers"!!! And please, if you wish to share your ideas, do not hesitate to contact Bill Shave at wshavejr@gmail.com, or 518-573-1098.

If Bill is busy, contact Bob Baldwin at frcsmen@gmail.com, or 518-320-4561.

April Mission of the Month - Community Cupboard

Community Cupboard is one of the many ways that we here at First Reformed Church of Scotia are supporting our neighbors. Missions Council started this project two years ago because we knew people needed help but were uncomfortable asking. The Community Cupboard is a 24/7 cupboard located outside of Brink Hall. It is there to serve the local community. It is stocked with food and personal care items which are being replenished multiple times a day.

Who are we serving? ANYONE. Recently we had a guest at the cupboard who asked if it was ok to take food from the cupboard “if I don’t belong here.” Our response was “Yes, of course! Everyone is welcome here!”

We are responding to needs ranging from providing a package of oatmeal, a jar of peanut butter, a snack, a shelf-stable canned meal, to a tube of toothpaste. Occasionally, we have been able to provide prepacked easy to prepare meals including a recipe. The positive response that we get from these meals suggests that our guests are feeling the love with which they are created. So this is where we all come in. There is a place for everyone to be a part of this mission, so everyone can feel the love!

- You can shop – watch for the bulletin announcements with items that are in short supply and drop them off in the donation bins, or place them right in the cupboard!
- You can make monetary donations and volunteers will do the shopping.
- You can join the shopping team, helping to watch prices and make purchases.
- You can help to refill the Cupboard.
- You can share the food in the Cupboard with families that you know are in need. Help them to feel the love and support of our community when they most need it!

We invite you to stop by and see the Cupboard and our storage area in the mailroom by the office. We would be happy to arrange a time to give you a quick tour and answer any questions. Why do we do the Community Cupboard mission? The answer comes wrapped in this comment from a parent the other day. “You have all been a blessing to our family.”

We look forward to talking with you. Thank you.

Community Meal Update by Mark Holley

As spring has arrived, I am reminded of our guiding principle that we don't judge anyone who eats at the meal, and takes from our pantry. We don't walk in the shoes of the guest. We are to help any of our neighbors and love them.

I have seen many who can't afford food at the grocery store and have to leave half of their cart behind. They are embarrassed and most importantly hungry. The rising cost of gas and food have left many to use our pantry and the meal to supplement their nourishment.

Please remember that we are simply following God's command - to bless our neighbors.

Backpack Update by Linda Lewis

We are busy getting ready for our April distribution of the boxes of extra food that we offer to families in the backpack program before each vacation. Last year, in addition to the 4 vacations during the school year, we also offered extra food in late May, July, August, and early September, before the regular program started in October. We will be considering whether we can do this again, but with the increase in prices of everything, the need will be greater than ever. The price for each student has been \$289.00 per year and this may also be increased, but we will not know this until late August. We are currently packing 59 bags at a total cost of \$17,051 and each vacation distribution costs about \$1,000.00. We do receive some grant money but this is not guaranteed. We are proud to say that we have never said "no" to a student or limited the number of bags per family.

We sent home a notice in all of the bags about our church hosting the Scotia Fresh Table Pantry on March 18th and it was reported that 30 new families came for the free food. We believe that some of this number was from the backpack program. A total of 152 households, representing 473 individuals, came for the fresh produce, meat, dairy products, and other items available, demonstrating the growing need in our area.

Your support of the BackPack Program continues to be needed and is gratefully appreciated.

Over the Bridge

URGENT NEED: A homeless couple in Schenectady has recently found an apartment but have no furnishings. They and their young daughter are sleeping on the floor on comforters that we gave them through Over the Bridge. If you have anything that you can donate, please email Linda Lewis at lriscotia@aol.com or text her at 518-949-1228. Furniture, bedding, household items, etc. are needed!

Renew Bible Study

This group will be reading The Upper Room, a devotional booklet available for free at church. There are daily readings, suggested scriptures and a discussion guide to assist our discussion. This study will begin Tuesday, April 14th, at noon via Zoom. For questions and a Zoom link, contact Sunny Baldwin, at 518-320-4562 or csunnyb53@gmail.com.

Bible Study - Led by Miss Diana

Tuesdays at 6:30pm April 14th - May 19th

Christianity and World Religions

Please let Diana know if you are interested so we can order you a book.



April Faith Formation

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|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| April 5th | No Faith Formation | Happy Easter! |
| April 12th | Second Sunday of Easter | <i>All of us are witnesses</i> |
| April 19th | Third Sunday of Easter | <i>God's promise is for EVERYONE</i> |
| April 26th | Fourth Sunday of Easter | <i>People in need</i> |

Regional Youth Group

Sunday, April 19th 4pm - 6pm

First Reformed Church of Scotia

All MS and HS Students Welcome

Come enjoy a meal and fellowship with Middle School and High school kids from churches around the area. Meet new friends, play games, sing songs and have FUN!

Mission Trip 2026

Who: All High School Students
When: Sun. June 28th-Thurs. July 2nd
Where: Reformed Church of Highland Park, New Jersey
Why: To spread God's love

Interested? Want to know more?

Contact Miss Diana

518-428-2914 (cell)

education@firstreformedscotia.org



Genealogy Group

The genealogy group will be meeting again on April 1st at 7-9pm in Brink Hall. For those who attended, they discovered that I had computer problems. Don't worry, I fixed them. The topics will be the same as in March, but with a slight twist to (1) Getting Organized; (2) Types of Documents; and, (3) Old and Contemporary Glossaries. AND as always, time for questions relating to your issues. If you have not previously attended, no worries...you are always welcome at any time. This time we will be in Brink Hall so that we can use the big screen for viewing details. Remember to bring your thumb drive to download documents shared during the evening as well as other sessions that you have missed.

The remaining Spring meetings will be on the first Wednesday of the month. So, put May 6th, and June 3rd in your calendar.

If you have questions, please contact me, Bob Baldwin via email

Robert.baldwin.acctrng@gmail.com or text 518-320-4561.

The more, the merrier!



SAVE THE DATE: Paint & Snack for The American Cancer Society

There will be a Paint and Snack event in Brink Hall on Thursday May 14th from 5pm - 7pm. This is being put on by a Scotia-Glenville Relay For Life Team and 100% of the funds raised will go to the American Cancer Society. Adrienne Hall, owner/operator of Adrienne's Artistic Experiences will lead the class to create a painting in the style of Monet's Water Lilies. All materials are included as well as hearty snacks and treats. Looking for an experience for a Mother's Day gift? This could be perfect! \$45 per person.



To register and save your spot contact Diane Skibinski: dskibins@gmail.com



BE A HERO: Give Blood

Every two seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood. There is no substitute for blood. The Red Cross is the single largest provider of blood products in the U.S. At the heart of the Red Cross mission to ensure a safe and reliable blood supply is the voluntary blood donation.

Learn more about what blood is used to treat and blood donating at redcrossblood.org. Come join us on April 28th, Noon-5pm in Brink Hall as we donate to save a life. Appointments can be scheduled on line at redcrossblood.org/give or by calling 1-800- 733-2707.

Spring Clean Up!

The Building & Grounds Council has scheduled our annual Spring Clean Up Day for Saturday, April 18th from 8am to 12pm. You are not required to be there the whole time, if you can give an hour that's more than enough. You are encouraged to bring with you gloves, rakes and any other tool you might have to help make our grounds look nice. Coffee and donuts will be provided. There will be tasks for people of all different abilities: weeding, raking, picking up sticks and litter, trimming bushes and trees, and more. Many hands make light work! We hope to see you there!



Health and Wellness Note

Spring is here and in some households spring cleaning begins. As you do this, it's important to identify poisons and store them away from children, adults and pets. According to WebMD, these are items we may not are hazardous:

1. **Bleach**- can irritate your nose, skin, eyes, and throat. On your skin, it causes a red rash. If drunk, it can cause nausea and vomiting, and damage the stomach and esophagus. When mixed with ammonia, it releases very toxic fumes!
2. **Drain Cleaner**- besides burning your skin and eyes, it can damage your liver, digestive tract, and kidneys. Swallowing drain cleaner can kill you! Be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions to protect yourself!
3. **Carpet Cleaner**- fumes put you at risk for cancer, liver damage, dizziness, nausea, and appetite loss.
4. **Ammonia**- is a corrosive that damages or destroys things it comes into contact with. Large exposures burn your eyes, nose, and throat. Smaller amounts cause coughing and irritation of your nose and throat. Don't mix with bleach!
5. **Air Fresheners**- have chemicals such as formaldehyde, petroleum distillates, p-dichlorobenzene, and aerosol propellants, which can be harmful. Since they are flammable, never use them near an open flame!
6. **Laundry Detergent**- has enzymes that get the dirt out of the clothes, but are toxic to us. Large amounts can cause asthma attacks. Sometimes children mistake Pods for candy and try to eat them.
7. **Antifreeze**- is made of ethylene glycol, which makes you dizzy when you breathe its fumes. Swallowing it can cause severe damage to your kidneys, heart, and brain, or even kill you. It is particularly poisonous to children and pets. Always use gloves when you handle it. Better yet, swap it out for antifreeze with propylene glycol, which is less toxic.
8. **Insect-Control Products**- include flea and tick treatments for a pet, bug sprays, or bait traps for pests. Most are full of nasty chemicals. Avoid petting animals for twenty-four hours after applying treatments.
9. **Paints (oil and latex)**- give off fumes that cause headaches and can irritate your eyes, nose, throat and skin. Solvent-based paint fumes are often fatal when people huff them for a high. It's best to open windows for ventilation.

So this spring, remember to move those poisons for a healthier home!



April Anniversaries

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|-------------------------|----|-------------------------|----|
| Jerry and Tina Haldeman | 16 | Sue and Al Fedak | 24 |
| Jeff and Kathy Reynolds | 17 | Sarah and Aaron Madison | 26 |

April Birthdays

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|---------------------|----|------------------|----|
| Judson Hoffman | 3 | Helen Graber | 13 | Ethan Schalekamp | 23 |
| Jeff Reynolds | 4 | Walter Pfunter III | 14 | Kathe Sheehan | 25 |
| Evelyn Torelli | 4 | Bill Eberle | 15 | Jane Lansing | 27 |
| Linda Lewis | 6 | Alena Willoughby | 17 | Ashley Zappone | 29 |
| Seneca Willoughby | 7 | Jordan Zenner | 17 | Skye Faulkner | 30 |
| Amiee Warfield | 9 | Katherine Makrin | 18 | Beth Hoffman | 30 |
| Paul Rooney | 11 | Bob Baldwin | 20 | Emily Taft | 30 |
| Allison Beauchemin | 12 | Nancy Pfunter | 20 | | |
| Peg Foster | 13 | Cheyenne Willoughby | 22 | | |

Address Service Requested

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