

THE MESSENGER

A Pastor's Ponderings

America is a polarized nation. The only time in history this nation has been more polarized was prior to and during the Civil War. The polarization of the 1850s and 60s was largely geographically based as the industrial north and the agricultural south diverged dramatically both culturally and economically. While an urban-rural divide does broadly exist in our current polarization, today our polarization runs through our very neighborhoods. Even in the little village of Scotia, people of vastly different political opinions live next door to one another.

Sadly, we have become so fractured because many of us no longer talk with our neighbors or have a shared sense of community. We find people who agree with us and we stick with them. Our online spaces have become echo chambers where we only hear the opinions of those that already agree with us. And it is so much easier to dehumanize our political opponents, when we have no relationships with people who think differently than we do. Our social isolation makes it so much easier to descend into dangerous 'us' versus 'them' thinking.

Sadly, while it has long been the case that Sunday mornings are the most racially segregated time of the week in America, it has only been a rather recent phenomenon that Sunday mornings are becoming more and more politically segregated. This is both because many pastors have leaned into politics as a way of growing their flock and people have decided to leave their current congregations to find ones that are preaching their politics. Increasing evidence has shown that for religious Americans it is not their faith, but rather their politics that guides their most important life decisions including what church to attend. Research has shown that when religious teachings conflict with our politics, religious Americans are far more likely to follow their politics. Hopefully, it is no surprise to you

that I find this incredibly alarming. I am of the unwavering position that when Jesus' teachings conflict with our politics, then it is time to change our politics.

While it might not always feel like it, it is a blessing that this church has not lost its political diversity. Despite the fact that we do not all agree politically, we still gather to worship and fellowship with one another. And it is my fervent prayer that this congregation will be able to maintain this diversity. If this nation is to survive, there needs to be more places where people of differing political opinions can be together and recognize their shared humanity.

If this is to be the case, we must be guided by the opening of the fourth chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Here he writes "I...beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all." It is love that allows us to bear with one another through difference and it is love that leads us in paths of humility, gentleness and patience.

I ask that you meditate on these virtues for I think there are none currently more important than these. Even as life continues to be exhausting and trying, we as people of faith need to continue to seek after humility, gentleness and patience in our every interaction with one another. Let us never assume the worst of each other, but in a spirit of grace and forgiveness, assume the best. In this often harsh and cold world, let us be gentle with one another and ourselves.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Rev. Christopher J. McCloskey



Introducing LifeVac

LifeVac is a life-saving device that is proven to be the most effective way to help an adult or child during a choking emergency. It is so easy, almost anyone (age 18+) can use it. You can now find a LifeVac hanging on the wall near both AED stations in a bright yellow case. If you would like to familiarize yourself with how to properly use the device, go to [Lifevac.net/pages/lifevac-training](https://www.lifevac.net/pages/lifevac-training) and watch the training video, take a quiz, and print your certificate.

Funeral Receptions by Claudia Garrison

Our church has had a wonderful group of volunteers who bake, help set up, serve and/or clean up for funeral receptions. We happily provide this as a gift for church members after a memorial or celebration of life service in the Sanctuary. Brink Hall works well so that the family and friends may gather together. Beverages, cookies and other sweets, cheese and crackers, and sometimes fruit platters are all served with paper plates and cups and plasticware. Platters, punch bowls, etc., other things not eaten off of, are easily washed by hand by volunteers as well as used dish towels taken home to be washed, dried and returned to church. If families would like to enjoy a luncheon as well, it is their responsibility to get a caterer who will supply everything else which generally includes paper and plasticware.

If you are interested in helping in this way for future funeral receptions, please see me or sign your name to the list in the Narthex or Brink Hall lobby.

Men's Group Update

The FRCS Men's Group meeting of April had fifteen attendees. We are focused on service and fellowship; and, encourage more men to participate in this rejuvenated group. The next meeting will be Monday, May 4th 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.



Genealogy Group

The Genealogy Group will be meeting again on May 6th at 7-9pm in Brink Hall. The topics will be "Tools of the Trade" and "16th to 19th Century Occupation Titles". If you have not previously attended, no worries...you are always welcome at any time. Remember to bring your thumb drive to download documents shared during the evening as well as other sessions that you may have missed.

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!



May Mission of the Month - RCA Global Mission

RCA Global Mission exists to strengthen and grow the global church by supporting ministries of compassion, developing leaders, and sharing the good news. Through RCA Global Missions, this congregation specifically supports JJ Tenclay and Felipe & Janelle de Waard-Silva.

JJ Tenclay is a Refugee Ministries Coordinator who works with ministry partners locally, nationally, and globally to provide compassionate, Christ-like care for refugees and displaced people.

Felipe and Janelle de Waard-Silva work with Roma youth in the Jiu Valley in Romania to build trust, perseverance, character, and courage through rock climbing. Their ministry provides youth an environment where they can experience safety and respect, develop life skills, pursue education, and come to know the love of Christ.

This congregation annually purchases a Partnership-in-Ministry 'share' with half going to JJ and the other half de Waard-Silvas. A Partnership in Ministry share is currently \$7,000. Your contribution to the Mission of the Month in May will go towards covering this commitment. Thank you!

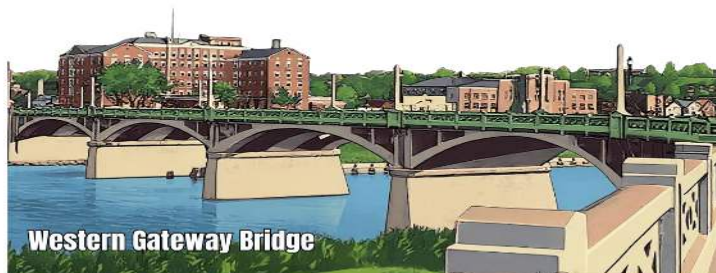
Community Meal Update by Mark Holley

The Community Meal for May and throughout the summer will be called Camp Care. We will have summer day camp for adults. The meal will be hamburgers and hot dogs for each meal. The salad will be different as the desserts for each meal. The meals will have crafts, such as tie-dye shirts, and pot holders. We will have folk songs and fun projects all summer long. The reason for this is to help people forget about all the drama in the world and enjoy themselves for an hour or two.

We have a few people able to help with tie-dyeing shirts, but we could use some more. Please let me know if you can assist us in this activity. God bless.

Over the Bridge

A huge thank you to everyone who donated winter clothes, jackets, blankets and sleeping bags. They were all appreciated by so many and helped them brave the cold.



Now that the warmer weather is here, we are accepting donations of gently used men's, women's, and children's tee shirts, socks, sweatshirts and sweatpants. Also coloring books as well as gently used books for both children and adults.

Thank you to our church family who help to keep Doug Bartling's mission going over the bridge alive for people in great need every Sunday.

Backpack Update by Linda Lewis



As spring arrives with green grass and budding trees, we begin to think about all the joys of summer. But many of our families in the Backpack Program think about the challenges that summer brings when children no longer receive free breakfast and lunch at school. And they no longer receive the weekly bags of food through the Backpack Program which is scheduled to end on June 5th. Our Mission Council has approved four summer distributions which include a large box of food with fresh eggs and fruit as well as breakfast items, pasta and other staples available through the Regional Food Bank.

Volunteers are needed to pick up the food, pack the boxes, meet parents at the church pick-up, and to deliver the boxes to homes. If you are interested, please contact Linda Lewis at 518-346-6809, text to 518-949-1228 or email to lrlscotia@aol.com. Dates will be in mid-June, July, August, and early September. Thank you for your continued support for this important program.

Community Cupboard Update

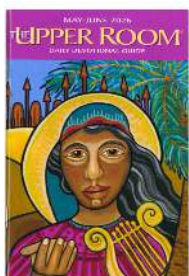
The donations of food and personal care items are so very appreciated by many in our community. This from a guest who stopped by today. “Thank you for being here. This [the Cupboard] allows me to give my children cereal with milk.” Being part of the Community Cupboard brings joy to those receiving!

It also offers the joy of caring and giving. Caring for the Community Cupboard is like preparing for having company at your home. Clean and organize the Cupboard, grocery shopping, and fill the shelves for the next guest. We welcome everyone to assist with keeping the Cupboard well cared for. If you would like more information about how you can be involved, please see Cindy Taft or Karen Wentworth.

Specific grocery items needed this week include canned chicken, tomatoes, and tomato sauce, snacks, and prepackaged easy to prepare meals. Personal care items including toothpaste, bar soap, and period products (tampons & pads) go quickly.

As always, monetary donations to support this mission are welcome.

Renew Bible Study



This month the group continues to read from The Upper Room, a free devotional booklet that contains daily readings, suggested scriptures to read and discussion questions. The May-June issue should be available at the church.

We meet at noon via Zoom. For questions, problems obtaining the devotional, or a Zoom link, contact Sunny Baldwin, at 518-320-4562 or csunnyb53@gmail.com.

thank you

Thank You from Patty Marre

A very heartfelt thank you for all the prayers, cards, meals and well wishes I have received since my surgery. I am blessed to have such a great church family. I continue to heal and get stronger each day and appreciate continuing prayers for patience and healing.

Register by May 8th! Paint & Snack: 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

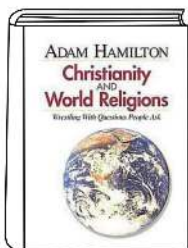
A Benefit Concert for Jubilee

Join Iida Nyman, Savannah Gordon, and Rebecca Schmid on Wednesday, May 27th at 7:00pm for an evening of classical music. All proceeds will be going towards a new service dog for Jubilee, a local college student who is preparing for law school. Jubilee, who was born with multiple birth defects and has undergone nearly a dozen surgeries to keep her spine stable, is also a through-knee amputee who relies on a service dog to walk without a wheelchair.

Her service dog also helps with over twenty-five different tasks that are too difficult for her to do alone. Such service dogs are highly trained and come at a significant cost. So come take this next step with Jubilee and enjoy an evening of live music. Suggested donation: \$20

To learn more about Jubilee and her soon-to-be new service dog, visit:

www.gofundme.com/f/help-jubilee-get-her-next-service-dog



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.



Open the House

Saturday, May 23rd, 2026 10:00AM 4:00 PM

Come help us “open the house” and get ready for the summer! The Saturday before Memorial Day is your chance to be one of the first people to set foot on the grounds for the summer. To make sure that Camp is ready to go for the campers who will arrive in June, we have a long list of work projects that need to happen. We could certainly use your help if you’re interested in volunteering to help us with tasks like preparing cabin areas, opening up seasonal buildings, stringing name tags, and more. We will have tasks for all ages and ability levels. Work projects will be happening from 10am-4pm. Join us at noon for lunch. Pre-registration is required.

May Faith Formation

- May 3 Youth Sunday prep, *Our God is an Awesome God*
- May 10 Youth Sunday prep, *Our God is an Awesome God*
- May 17 Confirmation and Communion - no class
- May 24 Pentecost Sunday & Youth Sunday prep, *Our God is an Awesome God*
- May 31 Youth Sunday prep, *Our God is an Awesome God* rehearsal

Youth Group

Sunday, May 31st

4pm-6pm

Middle School and High School

Niskayuna Reformed Church

3041 Troy-Schenectady Road

Come enjoy food and fellowship with Middle School and High school kids from churches around the area. Games, songs and more. Those going on the mission trip will meet in a group and talk about upcoming trip details.

Mission Trip 2026

- Who:** All High School Students
 - When:** Sunday, June 28th-Thursday, July 2nd
 - Where:** Reformed Church of Highland Park, NJ
 - Why:** To spread God’s love
- Interested? Contact Miss Diana!
518-428-2914 (cell)
education@firstreformedscotia.org



Health and Wellness Note

May is National Asthma and Awareness Month. 1 in 13 people in the U.S. live with asthma, allergies, and related conditions. This month we'll focus on asthma, a lung condition that causes tightening of one's airways and inflammation, and can affect people of any age. Sadly, 10 people die daily from asthma and most are avoidable. Fortunately, with the right treatment and care plan, asthma can be managed.



This year the Allergy and Asthma Network theme is “knowledge”, a key factor in effectively managing asthma and allergies. The network has numerous free tools and resources to help guide you through all things asthma and allergies.

One of the most important things to have is an Asthma Action Plan. The plan helps you know what medications to take, what triggers to avoid and what to do during an asthma flare. You can download a free plan at: <https://allergyasthmanetwork.org/what-is-asthma/asthma-action-plan/>

- **Know your symptoms:** People who recognize symptoms earlier, seek care sooner, and live healthier lives. Symptoms, which can differ from person to person, may include: coughing, chest tightness, wheezing and shortness of breath. If symptoms are severe or frequent, contact your health care provider to discuss your treatment plan.
- **Know your triggers-** Not everyone will have the same triggers either so it's important to be aware of yours and then try to avoid them. Some of the common triggers are: humidity, indoor allergens like mold, pet dander, dust mites, cockroaches; outdoor allergens: pollen, mold; irritants like secondhand smoke, diesel exhaust, air pollution; respiratory viruses, exercise, stress, and cold air or sudden temperature changes.
- **Discuss with your provider** what immediate actions to take when you begin to have an asthma flare. The sooner actions are taken, the quicker your breathing may return to normal.

Being prepared can make all the difference!

For more details, check out [ControlYourAsthma.org](https://www.controlyourasthma.org)



May Anniversaries

Michael Linke & Sarah Cordts	4	Fran & Nancy Landry	23
Bob & Laurie Cooper	11	Ken & Elaine Willcox	26
Robert & Priscilla Harvey	19	Christopher McCloskey & Susan Damon	27
Bill & Diane Faubion	19	Lonnie Hojnacki & Martha Gilgore	30

May Birthdays

Susan Damon	3	Madalena Crisci	14	Bill Faulkner Sr.	21
Katelynn Conroy	5	Max Holley	14	Alex Gilgore	22
Steve Mathes	6	Linda Shaw	15	Phyllis Beck	24
Elaine Willcox	7	Ron Shaw	17	Edward Graber	26
Benjamin Doyle	9	Ann Armstrong	18	Mark Graber	26
Denise Lansing	10	Ken Swain	19	Steve Warfield	29
Bobbie Nelson	13	Sue Fedak	20		

Address Service Requested

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