

The Visitor

Schoharie Reformed Church – May 2017

Pastor Mike & Pastor Sherri



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June Deadline - May 25



The invitation into...

“At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, “Come, for everything is now ready.”

– Luke 14:17

In Luke 14:15-24 we read Jesus' parable of the Great Banquet. I don't know about you but I find this to be one of the most terrifying passages in all of the Bible! Why? Because I am well aware of my own tendencies to make excuses, to get stuck, or even at times, to downright refuse the life that Jesus is continually inviting me to live into. Many times, in my own life I have told God, "I'm too busy." "I'll meet you later." "Just let me finish this first." Or even, "I just don't want to right now." I can relate with the people in this story who asked to be excused, because what was on my plate just seemed too important, too overwhelming, or too difficult to allow room for anything else, even God.

Perhaps for the people in this story, it was the attraction of affluence, the promise of something new that told them they didn't need anything else. After all, they had each just acquired something new – new land, new oxen, and a new marriage. Or maybe it was the demands of responsibility they felt? The overwhelming feeling that this was just too important to leave time for anything else – tending to the land, training the oxen, or becoming a good spouse. Or maybe it was the fear of letdown, the risk of what might happen if they chose to receive the invitation? The neighbors will complain about the mowing of the land, the oxen will not work for me, my spouse will feel neglected.

Now of course, the point of the story is not about neglecting our responsibilities whether they be land, oxen, spouses, or careers, kids, pets, our health, or our yards. All are important to God and need to be well-loved, tended to, and cared for in our lives. But I think the point Jesus is making is to challenge us about the excuses, the cycles, the exhaustions, and the anxieties that are all too often a large part of

how we handle our responsibilities whenever we try to do it on our own.

Did you ever notice who the Master invites in the second round of invitations – the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame – and they all come! Why? Because they aren't perfect, and they aren't trying to be, they know they need help that they can't manufacture, earn, or purchase on their own so they are more willing to find a seat at the Master's Table.

As Pastor Sherri and I are preparing to enter into our time of Sabbatical beginning in June, one of my deepest hopes and desires is not just to take a break "from" ministry or church life, but to also, more fully, receive Jesus' invitation "into" a new way of being. I am hoping to develop new routines of prayer, time for intentional reflection, and healthier routines for exercise and play. These are not things I plan to do in place of my other responsibilities, but instead they are things I hope to be able to work into some new rhythms of life, so that I will be able to better handle my responsibilities. I hope to explore questions like, "What does it mean for me to be a minister who lives a more balanced life that includes intentional time for prayer, and reflection, as well as creativity, music, and play in the midst of all my responsibilities.

How about you? Where do you see yourself in this story? How are the struggles and temptations of your responsibilities keeping you from finding a seat at the Master's table?

It is true that we all don't get Sabbaticals. For some of us, maybe it is carving some space into our retirement, or taking some intentional time in our summer, for others perhaps maybe it is a walk in the woods, or a quiet day alone – some way we can do more than get away "from" but also intentionally live "into." Because the good news for all of us is that Jesus' invitation still comes. It comes to us with every new season, with every change, with every spiritual awakening we encounter. How might you begin creating some sacred space in your own life, to hear your invitation, to leave long enough to find your seat at the table, to be fed by the Master, and to fellowship with one another in the joy of the Lord? As you think about it, I want to invite you to wonder with me about how this story might have ended differently!

But none of them made excuses. The first one said, "I would love to come." At the table, he talked about his new field, and there he met a man who gave him some great ideas of how to use that field he had never considered before. The two of them became great friends who now work together in caring for the land. Another one said, "I

would also love to come." At the table, he talked about his new yoke of Oxen, and he met a woman who was also looking for some oxen for her own field. Together they made a deal to share in the cost of the oxen that they might bless both of their fields. Still another said, I just got married, can my wife come too?" To which the servant answered, "Of course! The more the merrier at my master's table, and both of them came. Together they met several other couples and they have begun meeting together in their home to talk about marriage, life, and God.

The master was pleased but there was still room, so he sent his servant out to invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame, and anyone else until every seat was full.

All of them were blessed by the hospitality of the Master. They dined, and laughed, and shared life together. Each returned home, with a new understanding of who they were, and how they wanted to live their lives. And often they journey back to meet at the Master's table.

Living into God's Good Graces,

Pastor Mike and Pastor Sherri



Thank You from Camp Fowler

"...It requires faith that the little we each do will be enough. The Chapel-by-the-Lake has handprints on the ceiling. It reminds me of all the people, seen and unseen, who help support and guide this ministry. Your current gift... humbles me again. And once again, I say "thank you." –Kent Busman

Rebuilding Donations

Thank you to the following generous donors:

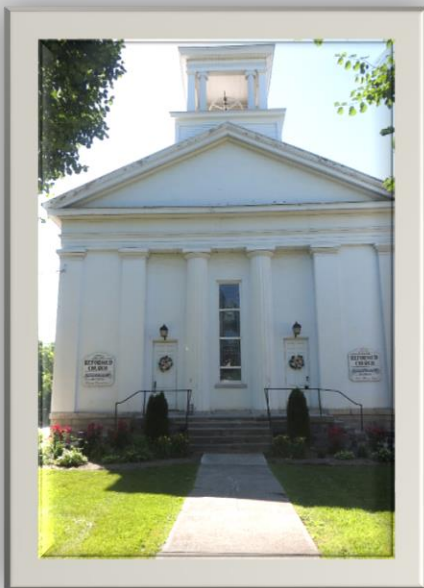
Donna Morey, in memory of Robert Morey

The Regional Synod of Albany

Benevolence

The consistory recently decided to donate the May Benevolent offerings to a Zimbabwe mission project. They are trying to raise money to establish a driving school and need to purchase a vehicle. Also, they have a dream of establishing an eating house in order to make some income as a means of sustainability.

Consistory also decided to put a jar on the counter at the Gas Up and whatever is collected there would go to this mission also.



Upcoming Events

May 2, 4pm, Heritage House: Planning meeting for Sunday School & Sabbatical Celebration. All are welcome to come share ideas and help plan!

May 6-7, 9am-6pm: Faithwalking event at the Quality Inn in Schoharie. Scholarships are available. For more information, pick up a brochure in the narthex or contact Pastor Sherri at (518)231-2151 or PastorSherriMV@gmail.com. Scholarships are available.

Saturday, May 6, 9:00 am: Spring Clean-Up – details on pg. 5

Sunday, May 21: Sunday School Celebration and Pastors' Sabbatical Send-off in the Heritage House after church. Please feel welcome to bring a dish to pass if you are able. All are invited!

May 25, 6:30pm: Schoharie Memorial Day Parade - We invite you to help decorate the Schoharie Valley Community Camp float, and walk with us in the parade! If you are interested, please contact Jennie at the church office.

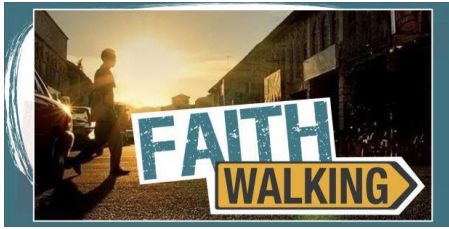
May 28, 12 noon: Vietnam Veterans' Remembrance in the Lutheran Cemetery, followed by horse-drawn procession to Lasell Hall (DAR). 1pm: Recognition and Remarks on Vietnam Veterans' Service; refreshments will be served. SRC will help with refreshments; if you can contribute a salad, please bring it to the DAR by 12:30. For more info, go to www.schohariepromo.org/uploads/flyer.pdf

June 10 & 11, and June 17 & 18: Gas Up! Antique engines, draft horses, music, and food on Drebitko Road in Gallupville. Come join your church family at the food booth! More info on pg. 4.

July 15, 10-5: Schoharie Lily Festival at the Lilies of the Schoharie Valley path & gardens on Fort Rd. Experience the beauty brought forth by your neighborhood volunteers, with contributions from the churches and Day Camp kids! For a vendor application, contact the church office. More info on pg. 6

July 17-21: Schoharie Valley Community Camp. "I Can Help" form is on pg. 7. Registrations and counselor applications are available from our website and in the narthex.

August 25-27: Congregational Retreat at Camp Fowler. Reserve your place for a wonderful weekend! Choose accommodations in the hotel-like Chi Rho, or rustic cabins. Let us know how many people are coming and where you would like to stay by the **end of May**. Contact Paul Schultz for details.



FW101 Retreat

**May 6th (9am-6pm) and 7th (9am-6pm)
at the Quality Inn & Suites in Schoharie, NY**

Our Purpose

Faithwalking is a spiritual formation process where people are increasingly following the way of Jesus, experiencing ongoing transformation, and developing effective practices for missional living: serving the poor, the marginalized, and those in need; working for the common good; and restoring individuals, social systems, communities, and nations to God's intended design.

What We Do

Faithwalking is a series of four courses (FW101, 201, 202, and 301) open to anyone, where we teach, coach, and empower you to master the components of your ongoing transformational journey. Our core work centers around helping you and those in your community to master the work of spiritual formation, inner healing, emotional maturity, and missional living. We believe that this work in personal transformation clears space for us to effectively get on mission with God in the world.

For More Information

You're welcome to pick up a brochure in church, or talk with Pastor Sherri or Pastor Mike for more information.

Financial Assistance Available

The Consistory encourages everyone to consider participating in the Faithwalking 101 Retreat. If you are interested and need financial assistance, please let Pastor Mike or Pastor Sherri know.

To Register

To register, please enter the link below into your browser. Select the option of retreats 'Open to specific churches, organizations or Faithwalking Circles.' Choose the NY Event and Pay By Circle; payment link will be sent in confirmation e-mail.

<https://www.faithwalking.us/101-registration/>

50th Annual Gas Up

The 50th Anniversary of the GAS UP will be occurring June 10 & 11, and June 17 & 18. We have been involved in it for most of those years and will be there this year. We would like to honor Ron and Nancy Oliver on this anniversary as well for their great labor over the years.

Details are not yet worked out but feel free to contact Dottie Vojnar, Buck Berdan, Larry Poulin or Frank Weber to volunteer as it gets closer. There will also be volunteer sign-up sheets in the church and Heritage House. How you can help:

- Assist with cleaning the booth and preparing it for use
- Bake a pie
- Make a batch of potato or macaroni salad
- Work a shift in the booth
- Help with cleanup

This is a fun way to be involved with the community and make a difference! More details will be available in June.



Schoharie Valley Community Camp

Looking for a volunteer opportunity? Schoharie Valley Community Camp wants you! Please see the "I Can Help form on pg. to see some of the ways you can contribute, or consider applying as a counselor (applications are in the narthex and on our website).

Got newspapers? We'll take them! There's a collection box in the front foyer of the Heritage House.

We'd love to have your help with **decorating the float** for the Memorial Day Parade. There are some ahead-of-time projects, plus assembling it all on the day of the parade. And all are welcome to **walk in the parade**, as well! Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.



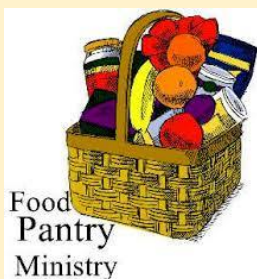
Food Pantry Report March 2017

The Schoharie Community Food Pantry continues to serve the needs of those living within the Schoharie School District as well as other local communities. As of February 2017, Jean and George Sparks have scaled back their involvement, after many faithful years of service. The time and effort that they have devoted to this ministry is amazing, and not easily replicated. Most administrative duties are now being handled by Diane Walion, who organizes a great group of volunteers who pick up food, weigh donations, stock the shelves, and operate the pantry when it is open. Colleen Quirion submits the monthly reports to the Regional Food Bank. Ethel Robinson continues to manage the finances for the pantry.

In February, the pantry was visited on 57 occasions. In March that total was 64 visits. Since clients are allowed to visit up to twice per month, those numbers do not represent discreet households, but rather the monthly collective totals. In those collective visits, we served 177 people in February and 170 people in March. Based upon our guidelines, each household was given food sufficient for at least three days each time they visited.

We continue to receive donations of food from many sources, all of which are greatly appreciated. In addition to food, we are happy to receive other household necessities such as toilet paper, paper towels, shampoo etc. Many thanks to all who faithfully support the pantry.

A big "Thank You" to all the volunteers!



Building & Grounds

Fellowship Hall Renovations

Rough plumbing and electric passed inspection. Sheetrock is up. Taping and spackling are nearly done. Walls and ceiling will need to be painted before the flooring, doors, trim, etc. are installed. We are still shopping kitchen cabinets.

Painting! As mentioned above, the Fellowship Hall is ready for paint - we need your help to get it done. Ideally, we'd like to schedule a few hours every day for retirees and a couple evenings for other folks. Please call Dave Toborg (295-8554) for details and your availability.



Standing at the back door looking toward the kitchen

Spring Clean-Up

9:00 am, Saturday, May 6. Coffee will be ready. Our Spring work is pretty light this year – there is just a couple hours' worth of work:

- Branches, rake sycamore leaves, litter patrol
- Prune/clean-up plantings in front of the Sanctuary
- Clean one gutter
- Clean-up along the brook behind the playground

Bring: You, gloves, your favorite yard tool (rake, hand pruner, lopper, shovel, wheel borrow, pick-up truck, chainsaw (just-in-case), etc.)

Please RSVP to Dave Toborg at 295-8554, dtoborg@midtel.net. Rain date is May 13.

A Message from Interim Pastor Betsy Westman



Greetings in the name of our risen Lord! My name is Betsy Westman and I will journey with you as Sherri and Mike journey on their sabbatical. I look forward to our four months together as we learn and grow together.

I am finishing my Approved Alternate Route in the RCA through the MFCA in California to receive my Certificate of Fitness for Ministry. I will journey to Holland, Michigan in early June for my oral exam. As we are together this summer I will also continue to seek a call so I can be ordained as well as spend a week as a co-chaplain at Camp Fowler.

My experience comes from having first been a Preaching Elder and currently I am a student under care in Montgomery Classis. My home church is the Reformed Church of Canajoharie. Most Sundays I am filling pulpit supply within Montgomery Classis with an occasional Sunday in Schoharie Classis.

I am married to my husband Jim for twenty four years and we have two sons, James and Daniel. Jim's retiring as a teacher from the Greater Johnstown School District in June having thirty years of service. We live in the Town of Glen and are semi-empty nesters. James, our oldest, has an Associate's Degree from Alfred State in Diesel/Heavy Machines and works full time at Daimler Trucking in Fultonville, while Daniel is finishing his sophomore year at Oneonta State (my alma mater), where he is studying geology/geography and is a member of the cross country and track and field teams. He's also working on an Associate's Degree in criminal justice through distance learning at Hudson Valley Community College. He's on staff at Camp Fowler this summer.

When I'm not taking a class, I enjoy reading and doing needlework. I do cross stitch and tatting (making lace). I enjoy baking and experimenting with recipes. I also play the violin and just completed my thirtieth season with the Schenectady Symphony Orchestra. I'll be sure to share my music with you this summer.

I look forward to meeting you, getting to know you, and sharing in the life of your community.

Peace be with you,

Betsy Westman

The Schoharie Promotional Association presents the
First Annual Lily Festival
at the Lilies of the Schoharie Valley Walking Path and Gardens
Fort Road, Schoharie, NY
Saturday, July 15, 2017, 10am-5pm

Crafts, Vendors, Food,
Entertainment,
Historic Tours and more

FREE PARKING —
Fox Creek Park and
Park and Ride lot on Route 443 and 30
Free admission
Historic Tours and more



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Would you like to help the Lily Park? Put on your gardening gloves, get your tools, and come on down to tidy it up for spring! Donations are always appreciated. For more info, contact schohariepromo@yahoo.com , 295-7801 or 295-8118.

I can help make Day Camp Great!
July 17 - 21, 2017

- I will pray for Day Camp
- I can help with Maintenance – set up, during camp time or after hours.
- I can help with Snacks – people are needed to solicit donations, pick up items, work on food prep during camp times.
- I can help with Administration – needed areas are data entry, working at the registration table, writing letters to campers, writing thank you notes, etc.
- I can help with traffic control – people needed for beginning and end of each camp day (7:45 – 9:00 or 3:30-4:30)
- I can be a Counselor or Junior Counselor – Be with the kids and assist or lead activities – need to fill out application form!
- I can help with Arts and Crafts
- I can help with Music
- I can help with Nature – need to fill out an application form!
- I can be camp photographer for the week – can come and go from camp as needed.
- I can help with Recreation – need to fill out an application form!
- I can help organize Friday's all camp lunch!
- I can make a financial contribution to help camp
- I can be camp nurse for one or more days of camp – must be physically present for full day

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____



Schoharie Valley Community Camp
 Volunteer Medical History & Background Information

As a Day Camp Program we are required to obtain the medical history and run background checks of all Day Camp Volunteers. *Please return this information by July 2nd so that the background checks can be completed before the first day of camp. Please know that this information will be kept confidential except in the case of emergency.*

Health Information:

Are all your immunizations currently up to date ____yes ____no

Please list any allergies, special dietary needs, or specific illnesses that we should be aware of:

Please list any Medications you are currently taking:

Background Information:

Full Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Driver's License # (if applicable) _____

Have you ever been convicted of a felony ____yes ____no

If yes, please explain and give date: _____

I hereby attest that the above information is up to date and accurate to the best of my knowledge and that failure to produce accurate information could result in my inability to be a staff or volunteer for Schoharie Christian Day Camp.

Signature _____ Date _____