



# The Visitor

*Schoharie Reformed Church – October 2017*

*Pastor Mike & Pastor Sherri*



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*Worship Time 10:30 am*

*November Newsletter Deadline:*

*October 25*



## *Coming Full Circle*



*"The wind blows to the south,  
and goes around to the north;  
round and round goes the  
wind, and on its circuits the  
wind returns."*

- Ecclesiastes 1:6.

That is what we have done here at the Schoharie Reformed Church in this time of sabbatical; come full circle. We began our relationship in the unknown as I first wrote to you, "Peace be with you," which then turned to the pondering of the hard shell of a turtle and God's soft wings, later a reflection on Abraham's call by God to leave kin and country and to trust that God was bringing him to a better place. I now say again, "Peace be with you."

In keeping with coming full circle, I saw a turtle, much to my surprise, on Thursday, September 14; young, looking to cross 30A in the vicinity of the Charleston State forest as I was coming here to the church in the morning. While the weather is still quite warm, that turtle took me by surprise. I wasn't expecting to see a turtle in nearly the middle of the month. So I too have come full circle, as all of you have as well.

We entered into the unknown during this time of sabbatical for your pastors and their family. If we are honest, we didn't know what this journey in the community of faith would entail: organizing worship, guests, and bulletins as well as keeping up with the life of the church and continuing to carry out ministry. We've heard many guest preachers and speakers as they have shared God's Word with us, and were blessed that the late Tony Campbell was able to minister to us from the pulpit.

You have invited me into your homes, along with Elder Cindy Parks, to minister to you as part of the

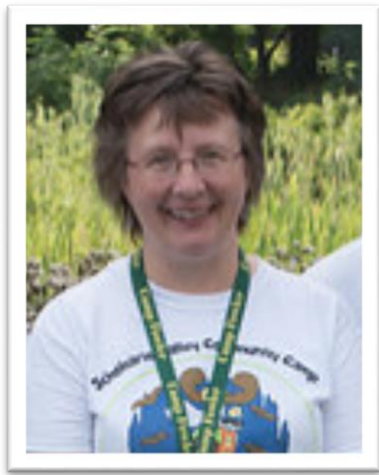
community of faith as we prayed and celebrated in the Lord's Supper. We've shared hospital visits, stories, family life, music, and craft or needlework projects. We retreated together and enjoyed one another's company at Camp Fowler at the beach, around the fire and sharing songs and s'mores - even if it was quite cold. We've shared recipes, gardening tips, and farm animal knowledge.

You blessed me with the experience of participating in Day Camp, an experience I will never forget. Most of all, I will always carry you with me. You were present and praying and being the body of Christ at the end of my certification process. You were encouragement to me to finish strong as you cheered me on.

So thank you for this wonderful opportunity that God opened up to all of us; you will always be part of my ministry story to tell, and forever in my heart. I won't say goodbye, rather until we meet again.

Peace be with you,

*Betsy Westman*



## Food Pantry

**The Food Pantry** has been serving many people over the last few months. There is an ongoing need for food and other supplies. Soups and hearty prepared meals are a great idea, as well as breakfast foods, fresh produce, non-perishable items, paper products, personal care & cleaning products, empty egg cartons, to drop off here or in the SUPC Christian Ed building. Monetary donations are also appreciated.

**Volunteers** are also needed to receive the food delivery on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30-10:00am, and to help distribute the food Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12 noon-2pm. If you would like to help, please contact Diane Walion at 868-4629.

**The Food Pantry is open Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12-2pm.**



## *Upcoming Events and Announcements*

**Book Study on Mondays at 7pm:** Please join us to read and discuss “If You Want to Walk on Water, You Have to Get Out of the Boat” by John Ortberg. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex.

**September 29, 9am-3:30pm: Learn about Long Term Care Resources** with Ready, Set, Connect at the Quality Inn, Schoharie. Breakfast and lunch are included. RSVP to 518-295-2001.

**October 3, 8-10am: Downtown Revival workshop** with Mark Fenton in our newly renovated Fellowship Hall. Hosted by the Bassett Research Institute & Mohawk Valley Population Health Improvement Program. For info: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/downtown-revival>.

### **October 15, 2pm, Fellowship Hall:**

Marion Jaqueway and Cindy Parks are planning a “Kitchen Shower” along with a fall burlap wreath making event.

Cost: \$20 + bring a wrapped item for the new kitchen or fellowship room.

Please confirm your attendance by 10/8 with Cindy at 518-295-7419 or email [cjarks7@midtel.net](mailto:cjarks7@midtel.net) so enough supplies can be purchased.

**October 22, 3pm:** Commemorate the Beginning of the Protestant Reformation at First Lutheran Church, 181 Western Ave., Albany. Ecumenical worship service, speakers, music, refreshments. Free admission. Non-perishable food donations welcome. Details on pg. 9.

**Saturday, November 4, 9:00 AM:** Fall Clean-up. Raking leaves, cleaning flower bed, trimming shrubs, etc. Please let Dave Toborg or John Nixon know if you can help. Rain date is the following Saturday, November 11.

## *Volunteer Opportunities:*

**The Food Pantry needs volunteers** to receive the food delivery on Tues & Thurs, 8:30-10:00am, and to help distribute the food Tues & Thurs, 12 noon-2pm. If you can help, please contact Diane Walion at 868-4629.

**The Schoharie Christian After School Program** seeks volunteers to assist with snacks, Bible lessons, homework, recreation, crafts, mentoring, etc. This is a joint project of the churches in Schoharie, and is located at the Schoharie United Presbyterian Church. An application form is on pg. 10.

## *Disaster Relief:*

**Hurricane Harvey Relief through Faithwalking:** The Faithwalking community is seeking gift cards for distribution by trusted service providers to the poorest individuals and families in the greater Houston area. To help, please purchase a gift card in the amount of \$25, \$50, or \$100 and send it to: Faithwalking, P.O. Box 131074, Houston, TX 77219.

### **World Renew Disaster Response Service (DRS)**

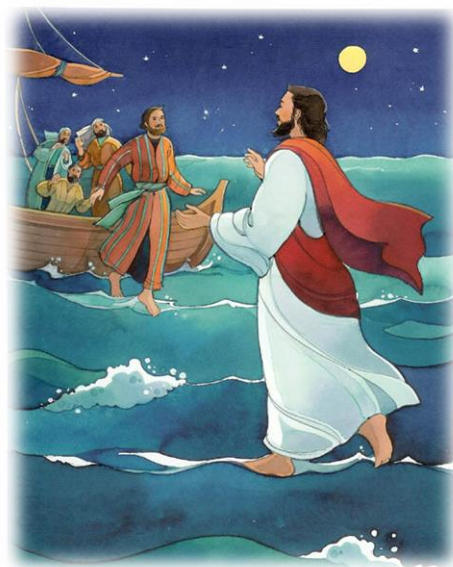
responds to disasters in a variety of ways, with the help of volunteers and donors. More information is available at [worldrenew.net/drs](http://worldrenew.net/drs). Donations may be sent to: 1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407

## *Book Study*

In this small group book study with *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've got to Get Out of the Boat*, by John Ortberg, you'll learn how to move beyond fear to discover God's unique calling for your life!

Peter may have been the first one out of the boat, but Jesus' invitation to walk on water is for you as well. But walk on water? What does that mean? *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat* helps you answer helps you answer Christ's call to greater faith, power-filled deeds, and a new way of knowing how to discern God's call, transcend fear, risk faith, manage failure, and trust God. Relating to the story in Matthew 14 to life today, teacher and bestselling author John Ortberg invites you to consider the incredible potential that awaits you outside your comfort zone.

Please join us on Mondays at 7pm in the Heritage House!





## *What a Wonderful World!*



*Bishop Michael Dube and his family, along with the Meyer-Veens (and Mom Meyer) – Zimbabwe, Africa*

Early on in our travels I remember getting off the tube (underground train) at Trafalgar Square in London. As we were heading out to the street I noticed a performer playing his guitar for money on the platform across from us. He was an older man, a bit dirty and disheveled, and my first reaction was to feel sorry for him as I watched him strum his guitar. But on the escalator, I heard his voice for the first time as it echoed through the tunnel. It was one of the most beautiful voices I had ever heard. The song he was playing was “What a Wonderful World.” The one made famous by Louis Armstrong. That was a holy moment for me because that song became a resonating theme for so much of our sabbatical journey (I even shared a ukulele version of it with the community on Iona, Scotland). We truly do live in a wonderful world!

All along our sabbatical, we enjoyed the beauty of creation from the bustling city of London, to the rolling hills of Conway, Wales, the quiet shores of Iona, Scotland, the city and countryside of Zimbabwe, Africa, the peaceful woods of Camp Fowler, and the tropical landscapes of Hawaii. But in addition to the beautiful scenery, we met many, many, beautiful people like Bishop Michael Dube and his family pictured above.

One of our goals in returning from Sabbatical is to continually remember the beauty of the world and its people - to pray for each other, to learn from each other, to share life with each other, far and near.

Our media fills our screens and our papers with so many messages of fear and violence for the world outside. This is an anxious reality, and one that should break our hearts, and motivate our prayers and our service. But it is also only one part of our reality. There is another part, and it is one that we experienced over and over again during our sabbatical, a world of beauty, hospitality, and love shared in the heart of Jesus, that is also a part of the larger world around us. We know many of us often say, “We should focus on the worries and needs in our own community.” But why does it have to be one or the other? Can’t we love our neighbors AND the world around us?

This Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, we look forward to celebrating World-Wide Communion Sunday, and we will join with our brothers and sisters from Great Britain, to Africa, and to the ends of the earth, in proclaiming the Gospel hope that shapes and challenges our lives individually and our life together. We look forward to worshipping with you this Sunday, and to sharing our stories and experiences with you throughout the coming weeks and months (and maybe even years). May we celebrate together the beauty and wonder of our world and its people, and be moved with love and compassion from Schoharie to the ends of the earth to share God’s love and hope with the world!

(continued on next page)

## *What a Wonderful World*

By Bob Thiele (as "George Douglas")  
and George David Weiss.

*I see trees of green, red roses too*

*I see them bloom for me and you*

*And I think to myself what a wonderful world*

*I see skies of blue and clouds of white*

*The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night*

*And I think to myself what a wonderful world*

*The colors of the rainbow so pretty in the sky*

*Are also on the faces of people going by*

*I see friends shaking hands saying how do you do*

*They're really saying I love you*

*I hear babies crying, I watch them grow*

*They'll learn much more than I'll never know*

*And I think to myself what a wonderful world*

*Yes I think to myself what a wonderful world*

Servants of Christ, Sojourners in the world,

Pastors Mike and Sherri



## *Schoharie Christian After School Program*

After a successful first year, the advisory committee was faced with the challenge of hiring all new staff. We are so grateful to Darlene VanDeusen, Margaret Hesdorfer, and Billy Lee for getting our program up and running and we wish them all well in their new adventures.

Over the summer, the committee met several times to find new staff. We hired Dezarae Kennedy as our Homework Assistant, Lisa Jones as our Snack and Activity Coordinator, and Laura Weinhofer as our Program Coordinator. We also hired a Director, but he resigned shortly before the school year began.

Therefore, we in search of a new Director. In the interim, Lacey Eddy (wife of Pastor Brandan Eddy at the Schoharie United Presbyterian Church) is serving as Director. If you know of anyone who might be interested in this position, please ask them to fill out the application on the Presbyterian Church's website.

Each day the children are given a healthy snack, have an opportunity to play indoors or outside, receive help with their homework, and participate in some type of Christian education. Currently, the kids are learning the Lord's Prayer. On a recent visit, I saw them happily engaged in coloring the first page in their booklet about the Lord's Prayer.

We have about 30 children enrolled in the After School Program ranging in age from Preschool to 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The program runs from 2:45 – 5:45 daily whenever Schoharie Elementary School is in session. The price per child is \$10 a day with a discount for children whose families are members of a local church. There is also a discount for families with multiple children.

The advisory committee consists of members from both SUPC and our own Church. Arlene Price and Linda Mencucci are from SUPC. Jean Sparks serves as an alternate. Bernice Barton and Bob Price from SUPC serve in financial oversight capacities. Jody DeJong and Liza Toborg are the representatives from our church with Edie Schultz and Jessie Griffin serving as alternates. The pastors from both churches also serve on the committee.

Finally, we are always in need of volunteers to provide snacks or drinks, help with homework, play with the children, or simply supervise. If you are willing to serve as a volunteer, please complete the application in this newsletter and give it to Liza Toborg or deliver it directly to Schoharie United Presbyterian Church.



## *Building & Grounds*

The Fellowship Hall is substantially complete. This past Saturday, a bunch of us cleaned and moved tables and chairs into the Hall while others set up for Sunday School and the pot luck luncheon.

A new refrigerator, stove, and microwave were just delivered. Being a church facility, from time to time there is a need for a second fridge and large upright freezer; keep the Hall in mind if you learn of a good clean unit for donation.



There are a handful of items (trim around the platform lift, inside stair handrails, door trim, door stops, balcony area for the electronic organ, carpet, etc.) remaining to be done by our contractors. These should be wrapped up this fall.

**Parents** – Please do not allow your child to operate the vertical platform lift unless you are on the lift with them. Even with all its safety features, there are still opportunities for something unfortunate to happen.

### **Other stuff**

There are numerous other “little” jobs (install door sweeps, weather stripping, vacuum, painting, building shelves, etc.) either needing to be done that you can do yourself at your convenience. Contact Dave Toborg if (295-8554, dtoborg@midtel.net) if you can help out.



*Sanctuary front doors being stripped and painted. They would not hold paint any longer – too many layers of incompatible coatings.*



*New railing is being installed. Safer. Much safer.*

### **Pews**

Two-thirds of the pews have been refinished and are stored in the Sanctuary. Once all are refinished, the contractor will help us put them back together.



*Disassembling the blue tent after finally removing the pews.*

*(continued on next page)*

**Anyone need a pew?** As reported previously, some of the pews will not be used and are being replaced by loose “worship seats”. We’ve been keeping those pews for parts and “just in case”. As a couple of folks recently have inquired about acquiring a pew for their home, we are letting everyone know that they are available to Congregation members. First come, first served. Sizes range from 6’ to 16’ long. Contact Dave Toborg if interested.

### **Fall Clean-Up**

**Saturday, November 4, 9:00 AM.** The focus will be on raking leaves, cleaning out the flower bed, trimming shrubs, and general outside clean-up in preparation for winter. Bring rakes, gloves, pruners, loppers, etc. Could also use a couple pick-up trucks. Please let Dave Toborg or John Nixon know if you intend to be there. Rain date is the following Saturday, November 11.

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### ***Thank You Notes and a Donation***

**From Dawn & Peter Johnson,** donation with thanks for using HH tables for SOS at the Village Yard Sale:

Thank you for allowing us to use several of your tables for the Village Wide Yard Sale. We really appreciate your generosity! Please accept the donation for your church as a sign of that appreciation.

#### **Thank You from Prattsville Reformed Church:**

We do not know how to say thank you for your generous gift toward our restoration project. Having you join us for worship was a wonderful picture of your love and solidarity in this long process of recovery. May God bless your remaining projects and the ministry God is calling you to do.

#### **From Schoharie County Community Action Program:**

Thank you for your generous donation to the SCCAP back-to-school drive. This service project relies totally on donations. Your donation aided in the distribution of school supplies to 231 Schoharie County children residing in low income households. Your support to SCCAP and the community is appreciated.

**From Reformed Church in America,** re: contribution to Tropical Storms/Hurricanes – Care Network:

Thank you for helping those affected by the storms. You know how much this support means because of your own experience. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Christ.

### **Operation Christmas Child**



What do fun toys, school supplies, hygiene items, and prayer all have in common? They all go into packing a shoe box for a child through Operation Christmas Child.

Since 1993 shoe boxes have been lovingly packed with items and prayers and delivered to boys and girls in more than one hundred fifty countries and territories. It has been a long standing tradition for Schoharie Reformed Church to participate in this worthwhile project. Shoe boxes and more information about Operation Christmas Child are available in the narthex or you can go to [samaritanaspurse.org](http://samaritanaspurse.org) to learn more.

We will be dedicating our boxes Sunday, November 12. Let us show some children of the world how much God loves them through the goodness and love of others by packing a box or boxes full of "goodies" and prayer.

#### **Gift Suggestions**

- **Toys:** Include items that children will immediately embrace such as dolls, toy cars, stuffed animals, kazoos, harmonicas, yo-yos, jump ropes, balls, toys that light up and make noise (with extra batteries), etc.
- **School Supplies:** pens, pencils and sharpeners, crayons, markers, notebooks, paper, solar calculators, coloring and picture books, etc.
- **Non-Liquid Hygiene Items:** toothbrushes, bar soap, combs, washcloths, etc.
- **Accessories:** t-shirts, socks, hats, sunglasses, hair clips, jewelry, watches, flashlights (with extra batteries), etc.
- **A Personal Note:** You may enclose a note to the child and a photo of yourself or your family. If you include your name and address, the child may be able to write back.

**Do Not Include:** Used or damaged items; war-related items such as toy guns, knives or military figures; chocolate or food; candy; liquids or lotions; medications or vitamins; breakable items such as snow globes or glass containers; aerosol cans.

Your generosity makes a difference! Read the story on the next page for an example:

## *Vladimir and the Dental Floss*

*Growing up in a culture rife with bribery, my shoebox gift—given with no strings attached—showed me God's unconditional love.*

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I grew up in the Ukraine in a family of nine children. Nadia, featured in Shoebox Stories on June 12, is my sister. We survived on rice and potatoes and, as the third from the youngest, I wore the clothes passed down to me from my older siblings—including tennis shoes. We took turns wearing them outside to play. We also shared a toothbrush among us.

My mom was very resourceful and made all of our clothes. She also did the laundry for all nine of us without a washer or dryer. She worked so hard scrubbing with a large block of Russian soap that her hands would crack and bleed.

*"I had never received a gift before."*

Prior to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, we were persecuted heavily for our faith in Christ. My father was the pastor of an underground church that met in the woods or various apartments in the middle of the night. Aware of this, the government threatened to send him to Chernobyl to work on the nuclear reactor.

Even after the fall, the persecution continued. Our culture taught that if you believed in God you were weak.

When I was nine years old, we learned about a special event for low-income families. I'll never forget riding the bus and the tram to this occasion. It was a harsh winter and I didn't have warm clothes, but I didn't feel cold at all—only excited. As I sat looking outside the window, it was as though time stopped.

When we arrived we found a lot of welcoming American smiles. They served us snacks, sang songs, and showed us a cartoon sharing the Gospel. At the end of this, they opened big boxes that contained our Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts. I had never received a gift before.

As my siblings and I opened our shoebox gifts, I was so excited to look at the brightly colored packages and toys—including a yo-yo! I thought this was so cool because it was bigger than the yo-yos that were popular in the Ukraine. The school supplies inside my shoebox also made me feel special because my family couldn't afford them. For once, I had something that others in my class did not have.

My favorite thing in the box, though, was dental floss. I didn't know what it was so I licked it, thinking it was

candy. Then I learned it was for brushing your teeth, so I rubbed the floss along the outside of my teeth. I thought Americans were interesting people if they brushed their teeth with a string, but decided that since they have beautiful smiles, it must work for them. I wondered if it was an invention that hadn't come to the Ukraine yet.

Once the wax wore off, I used the fancy string to tie sticks together to make toys that would float in the water.

*"My shoebox gift gave me an example of unconditional love."*

Inside my shoebox was also a note and a picture from a couple who lived in Colorado. Years later, it meant a lot to consider how they gave of their time and money to bless me.

My shoebox gift gave me an example of unconditional love. No strings were attached. Bribery was commonplace in the Ukraine, so a gift was rarely a gift—something was always expected in return. Most people looked out only for themselves, but the shoebox gifts gave us hope that people can be loving and generous. Receiving something as a free gift was new to me—and helped me better understand God's free gift of salvation, which we can't earn and can never repay.

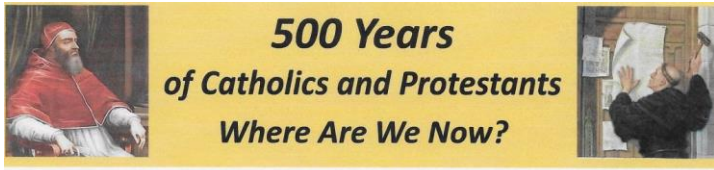
Four years later, a relative of ours in the United States started lobbying for my family to immigrate to their city in Tennessee. Approvals came through, so in 2000, we sold our apartment in order to finance our journey. The local mafia, however, discovered that we had cash on hand. A friend of my sister Nadia told her that they were planning to kidnap one of us for ransom.

With a chartered bus waiting on the street to take us to the airport, a group of friends came to our three-bedroom, fifth floor apartment to escort us one-by-one to our transportation. Other friends waited with those who had made it to the bus. This ensured that no one was left alone and vulnerable to the mafia's schemes. When we finally got on the airplane, we were relieved.

Today, I work for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in Charlotte as a web designer. I enjoy packing shoeboxes together with my wife and two boys. My favorite thing to include is a soccer ball, because it is often shared by the entire neighborhood. Playing soccer helped me avoid some of the common traps for youth in my culture, like drugs and alcohol.

I pray that the Operation Christmas Child gifts we send will bless each child and help them see God's unconditional love—just as my shoebox blessed me.





**Commemorate the Beginning of the Protestant Reformation**

**on October 22, 2017, at 3 p.m.**

**at First Lutheran Church, 181 Western Avenue, Albanv. NY\***

**Refreshments to Follow**

**Admission is Free and All Are Welcome**

*Donations of Nonperishable Food Items Will Be Accepted  
for the Emergency Shelter and the Damien Center*

\* Handicap Accessible    \*\* Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany    \*\*\* Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

Sponsored by CREO,  
the Capital Region  
Ecumenical  
Organization



For Information, contact  
CREO at 518-482-6612  
or email  
[creoboard@gmail.com](mailto:creoboard@gmail.com)  
Fr. James Kane at  
518-453-6660 or email  
[ecumenical@rcda.org](mailto:ecumenical@rcda.org)

On October 31, 1517, a Catholic monk named Martin Luther nailed a list of 95 complaints about the Catholic Church to the door of the cathedral in Wittenberg, Germany. The furor caused by his “95 Theses” led to the Protestant Reformation.

Catholics and Protestants will commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that event with a program and ecumenical worship service on October 22 at 3 p.m. at First Lutheran Church, 181 Western Avenue, in Albany. The program is free and open to the public. Donations of canned and nonperishable food will be accepted for the Emergency Shelter and the Damien Center, both located in the church.

The program begins with a keynote address by Fr. Dennis Tamburello, OFM, Professor of Religious Studies at Siena College and a member of the national Reformed Church-Roman Catholic Dialogue. He will speak on the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* signed by the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church in 1999. This agreement resolves one of the central controversies that sparked the Reformation: salvation by faith alone versus salvation by faith and works. The agreement has subsequently been signed by the United Methodist Church and the World Communion of Reformed Churches. Time for questions and answers will follow Fr. Tamburello’s address.

The ecumenical service of worship features a joint sermon by Bishop Edward Scharfenberger of the

Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany and Bishop John Stanley Macholz of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Music will be by the Festival Celebration Choir. Their anthem will be “Grant Us Thy Peace,” based on a text by Martin Luther.

The service also includes a Renewal of Baptismal Promises in which representatives of eight faith traditions will combine water from their baptismal fonts as witness to the one baptism that unites all Christians. Refreshments will follow the program.

The program is sponsored by the Capital Region Ecumenical Organization (CREO) and the Protestant-Catholic Dialogue committee of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany. CREO includes area representatives of the American Baptist Churches USA, the Episcopal Church of America, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church in America, the Roman Catholic Church, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church. For more information, contact Edith Leet, CREO Coordinator at 518-482-6612 or [creoboard@gmail.com](mailto:creoboard@gmail.com) or Fr. James Kane at 518-453-6660 or [ecumenical@rcda.org](mailto:ecumenical@rcda.org).

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# Schoharie Community Christian After-School Program



## Volunteer Sign-Up

The goal of the Schoharie Community Christian After-School Program is to be a cost effective, Christian based resource for students and parents of the Schoharie area, providing a fun, safe, and nurturing environment for children in the after school hours. The program will meet Monday – Friday, from 2:30 to 5:30 pm during the school year, and will not meet on day's school is closed or lets out early. The program begins **September 7, 2017.**

In order to meet this growing need, this ministry will need the support of our congregations! Please let us know how you can help:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Best Way to Reach You \_\_\_\_\_

Home Church (*If applicable*) \_\_\_\_\_

How would you like to help?  Prayer  Donation  Be a Volunteer

If you would like to be a volunteer, on what days and how often are you available?

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What areas of the program are you interested in participating with?

- Snacks  Mentoring  Bible Lessons  Crafts  Homework  Recreation  Other

If "Other", please describe \_\_\_\_\_