



The Visitor

Schoharie Reformed Church –September 2016

Pastor Mike & Pastor Sherri



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*Worship Time 10:30 am beginning
September 4*

*Sunday School Kick-off Pancake Breakfast
September 11, 9:15am*

*October Newsletter Deadline:
September 26*

Chocolate & Community

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

-Luke 10:36-37



The movie, *Chocolat*, is a wonderful, humorous, and powerful film about forming and being in community. The basic premise of the movie is about a woman and her daughter who move into a strict moral and religious community in the French countryside where they open a chocolate shop during the season of Lent. As the vibrant and colorful personality of the woman begins to shake up the people in the community, several lives begin to unfold in her chocolate shop and the themes of redemption, wholeness, truth telling, grace, and love all emerge as a deep and authentic community is formed around her. The strongest opposition to all of this is the strict moral, and controlling personality of the Count who oversees and manages everything in the town including the church.

Recently our Ridder Leadership team got together on a Friday evening and watched the movie together. We think it would be great for others in the church to see this film and even to watch it together with others and have a discussion about it. (Caution: It is rated PG-13 and should not be watched without chocolate!). We had a wonderful discussion around 10 questions that we will also share with you to use if you would like for your own discussion.

The movie is a powerful image about what it can look like to be “missional” in our homes, businesses, schools, neighborhoods, and communities, and the powerful impact it can have when we open our hearts and lives to others. This is the type of impact that Jesus had and it is what he calls us to be as the church in the neighborhood and in the world. Our challenge is to look a bit deeper at ourselves and at our life together as a church and to courageously explore how we can do this more fully and faithfully. What inspires us and motivates us to create a missional community where hearts and lives can be transformed in authenticity together? What stops us and what gives us anxiety when we think about opening our hearts and our lives to others? What can we learn from how Jesus lived his own life and how God calls us to be the church in the world that can help us to create a more authentic and missional community? These are just a few of the questions we hope to wrestle with a bit more together as a church family as we continue to live out life together.

We hope you will begin to get curious about how we can continue to create a community together where people are free to share who they are, as well as their hopes and fears as together we seek the transforming power of God for our lives and for our world. Beginning in September our worship time will move back to 10:30 am. This fall we are also looking forward to the restart of Sunday school, and our Monday evening Bible Study will resume as we continue our journey through the book of Genesis. We hope you will come share in these opportunities to not only grow in our faith, but also in our life together. In the meantime we hope you might enjoy this movie as we have and if you do, please share your thoughts with us, we would love to hear how it encouraged and challenged you!

Movie Questions:

1. Identify at least five instances where brokenness is restored to wholeness.
2. Which character in the movie do you think best represents a person of peace?
3. Identify at least three places where condemnation and judgment are seen.
4. Look for at least three occasions where “loving well” is demonstrated.
5. How does missional community get developed in this story?
6. What can you learn about doing missional activity alone?
7. What is the most important lesson you gleaned from the movie about being missional?
8. Look for the places where family of origin, shame, or old habits come into play.

9. What moves you or inspires you from this movie?
10. Is there any place where anxiety gets stirred up for you in this movie? What is the anxiety about?

Growing in God, Living in Love,

Pastor Mike & Pastor Sherri

Upcoming Events & Announcements

September 7, 2:45-5:30pm: Schoharie Community Camp After School Program begins at SUPC. This will continue on all school days throughout the school year. **Volunteers appreciated.** See article for more information. Volunteer AND registration forms inside.

September 11, 9:15am: Sunday School Kick-off Pancake Breakfast – all are welcome!

September 12, 7pm: Bible Study resumes . We will continue to meet every Monday at 7pm until Advent. We hope to see you there!

Sept. 12-15, 6-9pm: Sanctuary work days. Please contact Dave at 295-8554, dtoborg@midtel.net for info & to sign up!

Nursery volunteers needed beginning September 11. This is a great opportunity to enjoy spending time with little ones, while providing a service to your church family. The sign-up sheet is next to the flower sign-up sheet. Thank you!

September 16, during the day: Playground pre-assembly work with Rochester volunteers.

September 17, 8am-7pm: Community Playground Build Day!

September 18, 9:15am: Sunday School classes begin.

September 18, 10:30am: Worship in the Sanctuary!

Let's get going on our new Schoharie Reformed Church Cookbook! It's time to share your favorite "go to" recipes, to celebrate getting back into our sanctuary soon!! So, please take some time to print or type your recipes and bring them to church on white paper, **by the end of September** or e-mail them to Sue Smith: vinsue@midtel.net.

Worship Committee: Are you interested in learning more about becoming a "lay" reader for worship services, sharing music, serving as an usher, or have ideas to enhance our worship experiences together? With our pending return to the sanctuary there are so many possibilities for shaping our worship together, and we need your input and participation to shape this vision. Watch for a meeting in September, and please see Pastor Mike or Edie Schultz for more information.

Fellowship: The Fellowship Committee wants to hear from you! Do you have any special events you would like to see happen in our church? Contact Cindy 295-7419 to discuss. God Bless!

Playground Build Day

As we welcome our friends from Faith Lutheran Church of Rochester and celebrate the partial grant from KaBOOM! and Dr Pepper Snapple Group, we are moving forward with building our new playground! And, we are going to do it all in one weekend using the community build model!

Some volunteers are invited to join the Rochester group on **Friday, September 16** during the day for pre-assembly work.

A community build day is scheduled for **Saturday, September 17 from 8 a.m. – completion (by 7 p.m.)!!**

Come and bring friends and neighbors as we celebrate the completion of a 6.5 year dream!

There will be music, activities for kids, and lots of excitement while we work together to install the equipment.

Please let Pastor Sherri or Colleen Henry know if you are able to attend and how you might be able to assist. Potential volunteer roles, in addition to assisting with the build, include assisting with the community meal and refreshments, assisting with childcare and kids' activities, taking pictures, painting, building some benches, and hospitality hosts (greeters!).

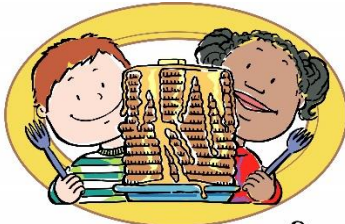


Schoharie Playground Design



**Building a
Playground
Together**

Sunday School



Pancake Breakfast

A new year of Sunday School will kick off on Sunday, September 11th at 9:15 AM in the Heritage House. You are invited to join us for a pancake breakfast and fellowship. The teachers, Cindy Parks and Liza Toborg, will be sharing plans for 2016-17. Everyone of all ages is invited to join us!

Sunday School Calendar 2016 - 17

September 11th - Pancake Breakfast & Sunday School Kick-off

September 18th – Regular Sunday School

September 25th – Regular Sunday School

October 2nd – Regular Sunday School

October 9th – No Sunday School – Columbus Day Weekend

October 16th – Regular Sunday School

October 23rd – Regular Sunday School

October 30th - Regular Sunday School

November 6th – Regular Sunday School

November 13th – First Practice for Christmas Program

November 20th – Second Practice for Christmas Program

November 27th – No Sunday School – Thanksgiving Weekend

December 4th – Third Practice for Christmas Program

December 11th – Final Practice for Christmas Program

December 18th – Dress Rehearsal and Performance of Christmas Program during Church

December 25th – No Sunday School – Christmas Day

January 1st – No Sunday School – New Year's Day

January 8th – Regular Sunday School

January 15th – Regular Sunday School

January 22nd – Regular Sunday School

January 29th – Regular Sunday School

February 5th – Regular Sunday School

February 12th – Regular Sunday School

February 19th – No Sunday School – Winter Break

February 26th – Regular Sunday School

March 5th – Regular Sunday School

March 12th – No Sunday School

March 19th – Regular Sunday School

March 26th – Regular Sunday School

April 2nd – Regular Sunday School

April 9th – Regular Sunday School

April 16th – No Sunday School - Easter

April 23rd – Regular Sunday School

April 30th – Regular Sunday School

May 7th – Regular Sunday School

May 14th – Regular Sunday School

May 21st – Last Day of Sunday School – Picnic following Worship service

After School Program Update

Schoharie Reformed Church is working in partnership with Schoharie United Presbyterian Church to begin a brand new after school program this fall. Both churches have representatives on the advisory committee that will oversee this program. From our church, Jody DeJong and Liza Toborg are serving on the committee with Jessie Griffin and Edie Schultz as alternates. The consistory has committed \$1,500 in start-up funds for this program.

The after school program will be housed in the Christian Education Building behind the Schoharie United Presbyterian Church and will open on the very first day of school, September 7th. There are already 17 children registered for the program with room for a few more. (Please see the application in this newsletter.) The program will run from 2:45 – 5:30 PM Monday through Friday whenever school is in session. There will be snacks provided, help with homework, arts & crafts, Bible lessons, play time, and music. The price is \$10 per child per day with a discount of \$2 for local church families. The program is open to children in Pre-K through 6th grade.

Three local people have been hired to run the program. Darlene Van Deusen from Cobleskill will be serving as Program Director. Margaret Hesdorfer from Esperance will be the Asst. Director and William Lee from Schoharie will be our Staff Leader. We are also looking for volunteers to come in to assist with the programming. You can come in for one day or every day. We would love to have people share their gifts and talents with the children of our community. (Please see the volunteer sheet in this newsletter.)

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call Liza Toborg at (518) 295-8554.

Building & Grounds

Why isn't the Sanctuary ready?

We have been close to being finished the past few months, but contractor problems delayed us. Two in particular held up others because their tasks needed to be completed before the rest of the work could be done.

The work is now moving forward again.

When are we moving in?

Sunday, September 18 worship is the target. This will be a "soft" return – the Sanctuary won't be completely finished, but it will be done enough.

How can we help?

Much help is needed to finish cleaning then move in. Following are the highlights of what we'll be doing:

- Clean the Sanctuary – need vacuum cleaners with soft brush type nozzles and heads to vacuum floors, walls, windows, light fixtures, **everything**.
- Move and/or dispose of leftover materials and other items that will be in the way.
- Move equipment, materials, hymnals, Bibles, etc. from Heritage House to Sanctuary. Set up chairs and equipment. Dust as necessary.

The plan is to for us to work each evening Monday thru Thursday during the preceding week (**September 12, 13, 14 and 15**) to clean and move stuff. Dave Toborg will be there each night from 6 to 9 pm directing the work. What gets accomplished depends on who shows up. Everyone can help; and we'll have a good time working together.

Please contact Dave (295-8554, dtoborg@midtel.net) with your availability; and to learn more details and necessary tools/supplies.

Once back in, we'll sit on folding chairs while the pews are refinished, arranged and reassembled. In addition, other work will continue after we move back in. The significant tasks include:

- Carpet the narthex and the west (organ) end of the balcony.
- Install the sound system.
- Agree upon & then build an edifice on the wall behind the pulpit area.

Help Wanted



Anyone out there love books?

Interested in being the church librarian? We're looking for a volunteer to take charge of the library on the 2nd floor of the Heritage House. This includes reorganizing, tidying up, adding shelves, and setting up a borrowing system. Also, there are several boxes of books from Carol Hendrix that should be added to the library. If you are interested, please contact Cindy Parks or Liza Toborg.

Food Pantry Report

June 30, 2016

Greetings from the Food Pantry!!

June ended the second quarter and we fed 1004 people for the quarter. There was 1604 lbs. collected from Hannaford Food Drive in June and that makes a total of 6456 lbs. for the quarter.

The Schoharie Masons have stopped manning the pantry every Saturday as there was not any interest for it. They are going to re-look at other ways to be involved in the fall.

We are still happy to get some fresh vegetables from people's gardens. That is always good and we are so glad that they share.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Sparks



Capital Campaign Updates:

While some things slow down in the summer, church fellowship, ministry, and fund development activities only ramped up this summer! The auction was a wonderful community and fellowship event, despite the torrential downpours! It also was quite lucrative! We received \$6123! Thanks so much to Cindy Parks for her tireless leadership in this event! Thank you to everyone who donated goods and services to help, it took many, many hands and help came from all around; thank you!

We also launched our online funding through social media on GoFundMe and have received \$1800 in additional funds through this medium already. Anyone can now make donations by credit through PayPal from our church website, or through the GoFundMe page. Please share and keep sharing the GoFundMe link and/or church website on the social media outlets that you use! Thank you.

Funds continue to trickle in from sister churches in very meaningful ways. By request, Jim Meinsma and Maryann Foland gave a presentation at Niskayuna Reformed Church. Brookville and Bacon Hill Reformed Churches both send their prayers and sent small donations this month as well. Faith Lutheran Church, New Hope Reformed and Woodhaven Reformed have also continued in their faithful gifting to us this past month.

We have also received donations from a number of individuals, who wrote notes of encouragement and support.

In total, an additional \$14,514 came in for the Capital Campaign in July and August with additional \$3673 in pledges, bringing our totals to \$462,612 having come in and \$111,062 in pledges since we began the Capital Campaign in November of 2015! Wow! Praise God! We only have a little over \$176,300 to go to reach our goal!

Please keep sharing, giving, and inviting others to be a part of "Building the Kingdom" with us!

Thanks,

Pastor Sherri and the Capital Campaign Committee (Cindy, Maryann, Jodie M., Sue Hess, Sue Smith, and Liza)



Vince Smith, Jim and Jody Meinsma, and Michaela Johnson cleaning up in preparation for the auction



Going once, going twice...

Thank You

Mission:

Thank you so much for helping to support us on our mission to Romania. We are truly blessed to be surrounded by such incredible people. Thank you so much for your incredible gift. Your support means so much to us – thank you.

God bless,
Maggie & Jason White

Day Camp:

From Jacob Olewnick:
I had so much fun at camp learning about God and Jesus. And can't wait to do it again next year.
Thank you!

From Alyssa Olewnick:
Thank you for a great week of summer camp. I had so much fun learning about God and Jesus. Thank you!

Capital Campaign:

From Dawn & Peter Johnson:
Dear Pastors Meyer-Veen:
...Thank you for all you do – both you and the members of the congregation – for the people of this village.

Reflections on the Fifth Anniversary of Hurricane Irene

I am so thankful for a church family who has and continues to work through both the joys and the sorrows of life together. For me, the anniversary of Irene is a time to pause and reflect on what we've learned. Here is my reflection from Sunday morning, August 28, 2016 with broad strokes of the entire community in mind. I invite your continued conversation as you respond and share your observations and as we keep learning together from all the multiple perspectives of our experiences. I am blessed by and with you!

Fifth Anniversary of Irene:

Five years ago, on this same Sunday morning, I began the journey of deeper meaning into "It was the best of times, It was the worst of times." As I think back, I describe it as the most vivid awareness of the reality of both hell and heaven.

It was truly hell, and sometimes I want to ignore, be more apathetic and forget it, but I know I must not for the sake of all of those who face trauma and disaster. The hell that is important for us all to remember that I experienced:

- The unnecessary dehumanizing in being treated like a victim
- The emotional, physical, and spiritual exhaustion of trauma
- The ways we all behave very badly in the midst of extreme circumstances, but in particular, the temptations to:
 - Blame, attack, scapegoat, and transfer our emotions onto our leaders for things outside of their control
 - Be envious and jealous of others, instead of being able to celebrate with them when they receive something you don't
 - Accuse and point fingers instead of asking questions and offering to help
 - Let our emotions make up stories, regardless of facts, and then our own refusal to see facts and then force the validity of our own story to the harm of others
 - Self-justify our bad behavior, and share it with others, twisting the story for our own benefit

- A deep loneliness began to grow in my heart. It is the monster that looms in the darkness of my life. It is born out of being misunderstood so often and on so many levels. It was fed by deep hurt, assumptions and sometimes even by well intentions. At time it rages and threatens my being. It has been my companion ever since and is only calmed through the vulnerability of recognizing it is there, facing it with God, being reminded of my belovedness through Jesus my Christ, and introducing it to the people in my life that have made space to sit in the dark with me even when it is uncomfortable.

The heaven that we must not forget:

- God's presence was so real and palpable! We experienced miracles, we saw hearts being opened and changed, we saw and experienced radical provision... ALL knew God was with us!
- Our hearts were open to neighbors like never before! Walls were broken down, fences destroyed, garage doors opened, and we were all out of our comfort zones – metaphorically as well as physically. "Community" was more real and more vibrant, and born into each of our hearts with greater depth of meaning.
- New friendships grew quickly with great depth. Friends and family poured in from across the US and Canada, those we'd never met and those we never thought would come.
- The ways that trauma helped us gain perspective. We let go of things that did not matter and focused more on the things that were really important. We cared less about possessions and more about people. We didn't bother with the "small stuff" and that was okay with everyone! We gave ourselves and each other grace and understanding more than during "ordinary" times.
- We learned to ask for what we need. We learned to be receivers as well as givers. We learned and lived both "toxic charity" (and now know how to avoid being that for others) as well as the abundant generosity, compassion, and provision of God which often is delivered through people.

- We learned to let go of appearances, perception, and what other people think. We did more of what needed to be done without hesitation. We stopped, for moments, worrying about things like liability and “what if” and for moments, were able to let go of the things that stop us from being and doing the good in the world.

The Stories will be told and retold, and will change over time. Yet, I invite us all to remember, as hard as it is. Not that we should remember the trauma, but remember what we learned out of it! Remember so that we might continue to choose each and every day, with God’s help, to counteract the hell we face so that it may not be compounded, and live more fully into the heaven. Hell will touch us all at times. Yet heaven too is always present, always open to us, and through God’s grace we can choose it. [Go with the metaphor and stop theologizing pastors!]

I wrote the above early this morning, wanting to finish a conclusion before posting. In the meantime, Josh DeBartolo gave a brilliant and beautiful speech that brought me to tears. He told a story to his 4 month old son, Blake, introducing him to the people he worked with during flood recovery.... (Courage, Empathy, Quiet Leadership, Compassion... and you’ll have to read Josh’s speech for the rest). What a way to retell the story!! What a way to inspire us all to live more into heaven on earth!

We are not perfect, nor will we be. No matter. We go on and go forth. Through facing our worst of times, God brings out the best in us.

Pastor Sherri

First Steps on the Road to Recovery



Karen Olewnick, Dianne Enders, Jon Monsees, and Sarah Goodrich working at the volunteer and information table in the days following Hurricane Irene



Mike Reed, Andrea Chaisson, Susan Reed, Bobby Poorman, and another volunteer work together coordinating recovery efforts

Summer Intern Update

Where did the summer go!? I'm forever grateful for the opportunity I had to serve as the Summer Youth Ministries Intern. I've learned and grown so much throughout this whole experience, and I wanted to take some time to share some of that with you all.

Just as I expected, I strengthened my leadership and communication skills. But more than that, I truly believe that I've grown in my faith this summer as I experienced a different side of the world of ministry. Now more than ever I find myself turning to God to both thank Him for all He's doing and to ask for His help in every part of my life. I no longer feel as anxious about everything, including my future. I'm so thankful that my life crossed paths with the lives of so many different people this summer, all of whom have helped me to see the world from a whole new perspective.

And Day Camp was a huge part of that. Serving as the Director this year is simply the most rewarding experience I've ever had. I'd never describe the job as easy, but the feeling I had before, during, and after camp is indescribable. If you ask those who were around me on Friday afternoon, they will tell you that I sobbed for hours. Though I was sad that camp was over and that it was time to say goodbye to an absolutely amazing group of people who God called together for the week, I also cried tears of joy knowing that 162 campers had experienced God's love through us. God did incredible things that week, and I'm so blessed to have been a part of it. While I may have had the title of Director, God's the one who really directed us.

Even though Day Camp was the highlight of my summer, I also enjoyed planning various other events. Although things didn't always go as we had hoped, we were able to spend two afternoons volunteering at the Animal Shelter of Schoharie Valley walking dogs and cuddling cats who were awaiting adoption. It was a wonderful way to support a local organization and I encourage you all to consider giving some of your time to help at the shelter.

As I head back to Elmira College for my senior year, in addition to my memories and improved skills, I will take with me the love you have all shown me over these past few months. I look forward to coming home to this warm and welcoming church community!

Peace and blessings,

Michaela



Walking and helping with dogs at the Animal Shelter



Cuddling kitties at the Animal Shelter

Schoharie Valley Community Camp 2016

We are happy to report that we had a very successful week of camp! With 162 campers in attendance and 94 staff and volunteers working hard leading up to and during camp, this was a record-breaking year for us! Many returning campers were happy to be back, and a large group of new campers were able to join us as well.

In addition to our local base of volunteers, we welcomed a group of 23 from Fellowship Reformed Church in Muskegon, Michigan on their annual mission trip. Instant bonds were formed between the local volunteers and our new friends from Muskegon, and watching everyone work together with the campers' best interests in mind was an amazing sight. We were also lucky enough to have two staff from Camp Fowler join us for the week: Lucas Grove and Greg Ingraham. These two brought great energy and aided our staff in making sure all programming ran smoothly. All of our guests felt at home in our community and many are already making plans to come back and visit us soon!

This summer's service projects involved designing and creating concrete stepping stones that will be installed at our newly built local Lily Park, and decorating reusable shopping bags that will be distributed at our local Food Pantry. Campers were excited for these opportunities to give back to their local community. We were so pleased with their hard work and willingness to serve others.

The week finished with a large group in attendance for our closing worship service and picnic. Attendees enjoyed some singing and a slideshow highlighting events from the week, and were also given some information about the local churches and upcoming events for youth. Each child went home with a tie-dyed t-shirt, a picture frame with a photograph of their cabin, a Bible, a lunchbox and freezer pack, a variety of crafts, a bandana to fit our pirate theme, and a special map to help them remember what they learned during their time with us. As campers were leaving, many volunteers and staff received hugs and high fives from campers, already asking if they would be coming next summer!

We are already looking forward to next year! Keep your eyes and ears open for updates coming soon! Thank you again to everyone who made this possible! Your prayers, encouragement, donations, and other support are greatly appreciated. Thanks be to God for this wonderful ministry!

Camp Prayers



The Wild Pirate Crew



The Moose!



Doing business with Crazy Gracie