

# The Visitor

*Schoharie Reformed Church*

*August 2020*

*Pastor Mike & Pastor Sherri*



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Artwork from [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)

## The Calm in The Storm

*"A furious storm came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?' Jesus got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Peace! Be Still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. Jesus said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'"*

*-Mark 4:36-40*

As I (Pastor Mike) listen to the story of Jesus calming the storm recorded in Mark 4:35-41, this dramatic, tension, and wonder-filled scene leaves me with two important truths and one curious question. The first truth is that storms will come. Storms can be both literal and metaphorical. Many of us know about literal storms like hurricane Irene and our winter time "Nor'easters" but storms can also be metaphorical. You may have found yourself in a storm or two (hundred?) during this pandemic.



There are all kinds of storms going on around our country right now such as how to deal with the pandemic, and how to safely educate our children during this time. Another storm is our struggle with racial tensions, what equality means, and how to bring about positive change where it is needed. This is also an election year and we all know storms will come through this highly polarizing time. Then there are also personal storms that come up in our own lives over health, employment, finances, family relationships, and other storms such as what “clean” means, how to load the dishwasher, who’s responsible for what, and how we handle a diversity of opinions.

Storms come. They come because we live in a broken world. They come because change is constant and we all struggle to adapt to those changes. They come because we as human beings have different ways of looking at and understanding the world around us. For whatever reason...storms come.

The second truth for me is that God has power and presence in the midst of the storm. Sometimes God will calm the storm with miraculous power like in the gospel story. Other times God will show us what to do in order to calm the storm by working with God. And at other times, God gives us the courage to hang on until the storm subsides. In whatever kind of storms we find ourselves in, God is with us, and because of this we can work to remain centered in Christ and work at calm whether in the world or in ourselves.

The question it leaves me with is,

***“How do I want to live in relationship with God and others in the midst of the storm.”***

If you read the whole story as the author of Mark’s Gospel tells it, Jesus and the disciples are on the lake and there are also other boats with him. Not everybody is in the same boat, but they are all in the same storm. The storm that comes nearly swamps the boat and as the waves crash over, we hear the internal storm of anxious reactivity as the disciples wake Jesus and say to him, “Don’t you care that we are going to die!” That is a phrase of anxious reactivity. The disciples feel the anxiety of the wind and the waves and they wake Jesus in a panic making the assumption that Jesus does not care whether they live or die because he is not as stirred as they are by the storm. Have you ever been anxious and encountered a calm person, or have you every been the calm person around the anxiety of others as they conclude because you are not as reactive or anxious as they are that you don’t care?

Awoke from his comfortable nap. Jesus calms the storm and then challenges them, “Do you have so little faith?” What do you think having faith in the midst of that storm would have looked like? I wonder if it would have looked like the disciples still waking Jesus but asking for his help or asking what they could do rather than accusing him of not valuing their lives.

While we don’t have the power to control the wind or the waves, we can always remember who is in the boat with us, and we can decide who and how we will be with God and others who are in the storm with us. While we can’t eliminate anxiety, we can choose to work to become a “less anxious” presence with others. By being less anxious we don’t become passive – ignore or withdraw, and we don’t become dictatorial – not allowing others to be themselves. These reactions will only lead to more polarization. Instead being less anxious means that we have the power and ability to access our deeply held values, to act out of our best selves, and to seek to understand others with a spirit of generosity and compassion.

For myself, I (Pastor Mike) want to continue working to become a less anxious presence so that I can work against the polarization that seeks to make a storm out of everything. For me that means finding ways to be connected and to be compassionate while I am with others in the storms, especially with those who are not in the same boat as me.

In the midst of the storms I want to work at keeping connection. Connection to God first and foremost to be rooted in my sense of belovedness, free from shame, and to be able to see others in their belovedness as well. I want to work to keep my connection with others. This connection can come

through not making assumptions about others and learning to ask questions and seeking to understand others and finding our common ground. This connection can also come through crucial conversations where I seek to define myself with authenticity and courage and where I listen with compassion and invite others to share with the same level of authenticity and courage.

I also want to be compassionate. I want to be compassionate with others and with myself. Being a less-anxious person in the midst of the storm is hard work and it is exhausting. I won't always say or do the right things but compassion can help keep me open to learning and growing, and it can help free me from seeing myself with shame and seeing others with judgement.

We are in the midst of some pretty big storms right now as a human community, and more storms will come as we near the next election. The storms will come, but God has power and presence with each of us, and we can decide how we want to be and who we want to be with others in our boats. My hope and prayer for myself and for each of us is that we will continue to work and witness against polarization by continuing to work on our own anxiety, able to stay connected through curiosity and conversation about other's perspectives and put an end to the name-calling, labeling, and finger pointing that only creates more storms, and instead work for the common good and towards an unpolarized future where we all can flourish. As the storms continue, and as they continue to come who and how will you be?

Working on Calm,

*Pastors Mike and Sherri*



### *Update on August Worship at SRC*

We will be gathering for worship, either outdoor or on Zoom for Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> at our summer worship time of 9:30am. We plan to be celebrating the sacrament of communion. The elements (bread and juice) will be prepared for you to pick-up with your bulletin when you arrive for worship. If you are planning to join us on Zoom please be sure to gather your own elements.

For the Sundays of August 9, 16, and 23 you are encouraged to visit other churches for their gatherings, whether in person or online through Zoom or YouTube or Facebook Live, as we will not be holding our own services during those weeks.

We will rejoin in worship at SRC on Sunday, August 30<sup>th</sup> when the service will be led by members of our consistory who will share some testimonies of God's faithfulness in their lives.

During the fall we are planning on continuing to hold outdoor worship as long as the weather cooperates. Our consistory continues to work on our safety plan for returning to worship in our sanctuary. We hope you have a blessed month of August and we look forward to worshipping with you at the beginning and end of the month and beyond!

*Worship  
With Us*

## Prayers and Praises

**Prayers-**Ron & Nancy Oliver. Bettie & Al Palmer. Vern & Ron Filmer. Edie & Bob Jaqueway. Jim McGee.



Carolyn & John Nixon. Savannah Marie's grandmother MaryAnn Kenney with failing health and great grandmother, Meg with failing health. MaryAnn Longo with health complications. Richard & Marilyn Rutland are having health issues. Karlene Welt's granddaughter Lauren, she is 12 years old, is having health problems. Andrea Chaisson's nephew, Jim Swartout due to health issues. Marion Jaqueway's cousin Nancy Rice is recovering from surgery. Dennis Richards. Liza Toborg's sister-in-law Sue and husband Ted. Sarah & Dave Goodrich's daughter Llori, Llori is a traveling nurse at a hospital on a Navajo reservation in Arizona where she is the lead nurse handling corona or possible corona patients. Marion Jaqueway's mom Marion, broke her femur and she is not having surgery, all are hoping for complete healing with no side effects. Sue Herchenroder's girl friend Ginny Wanderwood, Ginny had a triple by-pass on June 29<sup>th</sup> at Albany Medical Center. Andrea Chaisson fell while hiking and broke her right arm in two places, she required surgery to have a plate with screws. "Prayers for all of our healthcare workers, emergency workers, essential employees, small businesses, single, elderly, families, and all others in our congregation and beyond who are dealing with the impacts of this pandemic emotionally, physically, and financially in large and small ways." Our men and women serving in the armed forces. Those affected by natural disasters. All those grieving the loss of loved ones.

**Praises-** "Praise for the opportunity to gather in-person for outdoor worship. Praise for the Joshua Project and the many volunteers who continue to provide food and resources for families throughout our county. Praise for our local clergy who continue to meet and work together to meet the needs in our communities during this time. The Pastors, leaders, volunteers, parents and kids that participated in Schoharie Valley Community Camp-Virtual Style last week."



## Buildings & Grounds

### Picking Weeds

The landscaping out front of the buildings needs attention. An unknown garden angel typically weeds and trims it, but now it is getting unruly. (Thank you.)

### Clothing Drop-Off Shed temporarily closed

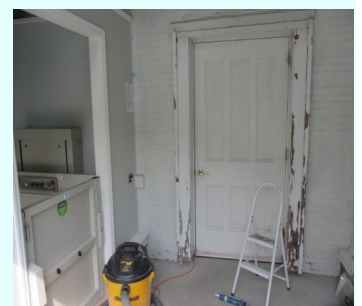
Due to the coronavirus, the operator has temporarily closed the Clothing Drop-Off Shed. This is unfortunate because the shed provided a nice little income source for the Church. In the meantime, please hang onto your donations.

### Building Work

Cleaned, prepped, and painted the trim inside the new entryway to the rear door. Also better sealed the old door against cold drafts.

The entryway to the Fellowship Hall is next. There are plenty of other painting projects and other jobs needing attention.

Contact Dave Toborg at 518-295-8554 if you would like to help.





# Schoharie Valley Community Camp

July 20—24, 2020



Schoharie Valley Community Camp completed its first ever online camp. Even with this being new to everyone, we had 41 campers through the week participating in Arts & Crafts, Nature, Recreation, Discovery Time, Vespers, and daily zooms to enjoy lunch and snack together! This year campers learned about how God works within us in regards to Truth, Justice, Peace, Faith and Salvation. Each camper got a chance to show their knowledge of how God works in our lives. We are beyond thrilled that each camper had an amazing week filled with fun! Thank you to everyone who donated materials, assisted putting materials together, assisted with the implementation of camp throughout the week and most importantly for your continued prayers of our amazing staff and energetic campers!

Friday Vespers Video: [https://youtu.be/1wsVOeAyO\\_k](https://youtu.be/1wsVOeAyO_k)

**Look at those smiling faces!**

Thank you again to everyone who helped make camp amazing this year!

## Food Pantry



The Food Pantry continues to be busy providing for many families in the area during the summer months. Items of need are canned fruits like fruit cocktail, peaches, pineapple, pears, and oranges; and pasta, canned vegetables such as corn, carrots, peas, green beans, yellow beans; canned ravioli/beef stew/soup/spaghetti o's/chili with beans; boxed macaroni & cheese, tuna fish, peanut butter, jelly, granola bars, cereal, pasta sauce, jello packs, pudding packs, snack crackers. During this time there is a special need for cleaning supplies in addition to food items. Cleaning items such as: paper towels, toilet paper, laundry and dish soap, toothpaste, shampoo and shower soaps are needed. Items may be dropped off at SUPC on Tuesdays or Thursday from 12noon till 2:00pm or they may be left between the doors of the SUPC educational building. Monetary donations are +654 0` appreciated as well, checks may be written to "Schoharie Valley Food Pantry". *Volunteers are needed to help with the Food Pantry, if able, please contact Diane Walion at 518-868-4629.* Thank you all for your continued support.



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



## Greetings Church Family!

In August as we take a few weeks to celebrate God in our separate ways on Sundays, please remember that church operations will still be running. We offer "Tithely" where you may do online giving by visiting our church website at: [schohariereformedchurch.org](http://schohariereformedchurch.org) or you may mail in your tithes to: Schoharie Reformed Church,  
PO Box 635,  
Schoharie, NY 12157.

Thank you and have a blessed August.

## Thank You



The Food Pantry would like to extend a thank you to everyone for the generous donations we have received. We are grateful for all you do to serve the community.



## Aluminum Tabs

We are still collecting aluminum tabs to help off set the cost of patient care at Shriner's Hospital. You may deliver them to the church office on Tuesday or Wednesday 8:30am-1:30pm or leave them on the front porch bench of the Heritage House. Thank you for your continuous support. If you have any questions please contact the church office at 518-295-8177.





## Operation Christmas Child



*National Collection Week November 16-23, 2020*

We are continuing ministry overseas. Operation Christmas Child is working directly with our international volunteer leadership teams in over 100 countries to assess ongoing ministry activity with some modifications according to local government guidelines.

The health and safety of our staff, local partners, and beneficiaries is of utmost importance to us. Samaritan's Purse is constantly monitoring COVID-19 trends around the world.

Samaritan's Purse and the Operation Christmas Child team encourages everyone to follow local guidelines and use personal discernment to shop for shoebox items. Many stores are opening around the country and online shopping is a popular method for participants.

Shoebox gifts are needed! Now more than ever, children need to have the reassurance that they are loved by God. We believe in the urgency of reaching communities with the eternal hope of the Gospel, especially in these uncertain times. Shoebox gifts—and our follow-up discipleship program, The Greatest Journey—are powerful tools to share this Good News with millions of people around the world.

### **Good News. Great Joy!** Build a Shoe Box Online

You can still help share God's love with children around the world even if you don't have time to shop for and pack an Operation Christmas Child shoebox gift. With a few clicks of your mouse or swipes on your touchscreen, you can build a shoebox online. Make it your own by choosing from a list of gifts\*, then add a personal letter and photo. We'll pack your shoebox and send it for you, for a suggested donation of just \$25.



**From Virtual to Vital**—Each shoebox gift becomes a tangible expression of God's love for a child in real need. Shoeboxes built online also allow ease of entry through customs, and help ensure Operation Christmas Child's continued presence in places that are hard to reach.

Visit: [www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/buildonline/](http://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/buildonline/)

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. Additional information will be available in the future.

## Updating Information

As we do our best to keep our prayer list and praise reports up to date, we do ask for your assistance to provide any new or updated information to Pastor Mike, Pastor Sherri, Cindy Parks or the Church office. If you have moved, have a new address, phone number or email, help us stay in contact with you by contacting the church office with any changes. If you are receiving the newsletter in paper form and online but would like to receive it online only please contact the church office. We thank you in advance for your assistance in keeping our church family informed.

Schoharie Reformed Church Office: 518-295-8177 or [schohariereformedchurch@yahoo.com](mailto:schohariereformedchurch@yahoo.com)





## Volunteer Opportunity: Fabric Surgical Masks

**Cobleskill Regional Hospital is seeking volunteers and supporters to assist in the manufacture of fabric surgical masks.** While the fabric masks are not a substitute for healthcare grade respirator-type masks, this is a coordinated effort to use the fabric masks to extend the life and supply of the (N-95) respirator masks. These respirator masks are still on critical short supply nationally, and provide the best protection for our healthcare workers, patients and community.

Detailed information can be found at: <https://www.bassett.org/covid-19/fabric-surgical-masks>

There are multiple ways you can assist. Some of these include:

- Donation of your time in sewing of the fabric masks
- Donation of supplies



All materials and donated masks will be disinfected prior to and between uses.

### **If you desire to donate your time in the creation of masks:**

1. A standardized pattern is available for use, including written instructions.
2. We are looking for both 2-PLY and 3-PLY masks.

For sewing people interested in donating fabric as well as their time, please see the supply guidelines below.

**To Donate Finished Masks:** Completed fabric surgical masks may be dropped off or mailed to Cobleskill Regional Hospital located at 178 Grandview Drive, Cobleskill NY 12043. Masks can be dropped off in one of the donation bins located in the ER and PT Entrances, please include your name and address with donations, in order for us to send a thank you. (if mailing, please put Attention: Monica Calzolari). Please contact Monica Calzolari at 518-904-1048 if you have any questions regarding mask donations.

### **If you desire to donate supplies to the effort, of need are:**

- Preshrunk 100% cotton of a tight weave (white is preferred, but patterns and colors are acceptable.)
  - o 1 yard creates approximately 5 masks
  - o No red fabrics please – the color may run when laundered and disinfected.
- Elastic cord or 1/8" elastic ribbon
  - o 1 yard creates approximately 2 masks

*Again, thank you for your interest, support and efforts to keep our community safe and healthy! Your assistance is greatly, and humbly, appreciated!*





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