



# The Visitor

Schoharie Reformed Church –December 2016

Pastor Mike & Pastor Sherri



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*Christmas Eve Candlelight Service  
December 24, 7:30pm*

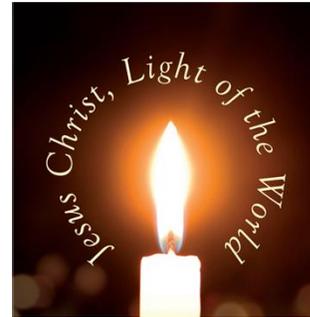


*Sunday School is at 9:15am*

*Worship Service is at 10:30am*

*January Newsletter Deadline –December 19*

## Walk in The Light!



*“Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord.”*

-Isaiah 2:5

*“If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, God’s Son, purifies us from all sin.*

-1 John 1:7

One of the most beautiful parts of the Advent season is all of the lights that decorate and illuminate the space around us. Everything from Christmas trees, to candlelit windows, to colorful Christmas displays on front yards, to creatively crafted storefronts, the many varieties of light help to bring a special delight and wonder to the season.

These lights however, are meant to bring us more than a twinkling, festive feel. They are meant to enlighten us to the truth of the One who came and will come again as “The Light of the World.” Beyond that, they also serve as an invitation for us, as a people of faith, to discover what it means for us to, “Walk in The Light!”

Recently it seems that we don’t have to go very far to observe the reality that we are still a people walking in darkness. All you have to do is turn on the evening news, browse the internet, read a paper, or listen to the conversations around you to discover this for yourselves. Shootings on college campuses, protesting

pipelines, increasing divisions over race, growing fears for the marginalized, growing frustrations for the middle class, worries of security for both the old and the young, wars, and natural disasters. While the world seems to be spinning more and more out of control, let us pause to remember...it is precisely into a world such as ours that Jesus was born as the light of the world. And it is into a world such as ours that we are invited to "Walk in the Light."

To walk in the light is a conscious choice to live visibly different from the rest of the world. To walk in the light is to "Awaken Hope" amid conversations of despair and anxiety. It is to not only imagine another way that the world could be, but to actively live as if our actions were helping to bring that imagined future into reality! To walk in the light is to "Welcome Peace" at all times, even amidst fear, mistrust, and growing hatred. It is to recognize peace will not come from division, but from reconciliation and creating safe space where everyone can belong. To walk in the light is to "Celebrate Joy" at all times, even amidst stress and worry over what we do not have or about losing what we do. It is to take a break from the tired view of how far we have to go, to rejoice in the reality of how far we have come, and the goodness of God that is and has been at work in us! To walk in the light is to "Share Love" at all times, even amidst the words of hatred and the actions of violence that so define the ways we tend to relate to one another in our world. It is to live out the same forgiveness, kindness, generosity, and compassion towards one another that Christ has shown towards us. To walk in the light is certainly no easy task, but the good news is that we do not walk alone, rather we follow the light of the world, and we are simply meant to keep following, no matter how poorly we might have reflected that light in the past. We come together as those who are prone to walk in darkness, and at times we still do, yet the light continues to draw us, and the more we follow, the more light we see!!

This Advent we will wonder together what it means to "Walk in the light." Together we will explore the themes of "Awakening Hope," "Welcoming Peace," "Celebrating Joy," and "Sharing Love." During this Advent season, in addition to our regular Sunday worship services, there are other opportunities for us to walk in the light together on Wednesday for soup and bread Advent evenings. They will be held on November 30<sup>th</sup>, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup>. Each evening will begin with a light soup and bread dinner at 6:00pm followed by a brief worship service ending before 8:00pm, all held in the Heritage House. On Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> we will be having our Sunday School Christmas Program

as a part of our morning worship service and an all-church potluck and Christmas celebration after the service. Plans for our annual Christmas-Eve candlelight service are in the works and more details will follow. Also, we will be worshipping together on Christmas Day at 10:30am in the sanctuary.

As we prepare to welcome the Light of The World, let us learn to walk in the light through this Advent Season, that together we can help our world of darkness find a new way.

*Walk in the light,*

*the beautiful light.*

*Walk in the light,*

*Whether by day or by night.*

*Cuz' the Son is comin'*

*Everything's gonna be alright!*

Walking in The Light Together,

*Pastor Mike & Pastor Sherri Meyer-Veen*



## Upcoming Events

**Wednesdays, December 7, 14 & 21, 6pm:** Advent Soup & Bread Evenings in the Heritage House. All are invited to attend; sign-up sheets for those who would like to offer bread and/or soup are available in church.

**Christmas Poinsettia orders** due as soon as possible; deadline Dec. 14. Please see form on pg. 8 for details.

**Friday, December 2:** Christmastime in Schoharie. Free soup & bread dinner at the Schoharie United Presbyterian Church, with Schoharie Elementary BlueNote choir and Irish step dance.

**Sunday, December 4:** Meeting after the worship service to discuss location of Christmas Eve service.

**Sunday, December 18:** Children's Christmas program during the worship service, followed by a congregational potluck celebration & Advent party. All are invited to participate, and contribute as able. Guests are welcome.

**Saturday, December 24, 7:30pm:** Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

**Sunday, December 25:** Christmas morning worship service at 10:30am. No Coffee Hour.

## Announcements

**Nursery volunteers needed this month:** 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!

**A Different Gift Idea:** For the person who has everything, a gift to Building the Kingdom could be just the ticket! To give to the Capital Campaign (which includes the Playground Fund) as a gift to your loved one, please designate their name on your donation, and you may give them a Schoharie Reformed Church Christmas card acknowledging the gift. Cards are available in the narthex or the church office.

**Recipes sought for Schoharie Reformed Church Cookbook!** It's time to share your favorite "go to" recipes, holiday recipes, too! Please print or type them on white paper or the form on pg. 8 or in the narthex, or e-mail them to: Sue Smith: [vinsue@midtel.net](mailto:vinsue@midtel.net) or Cindy Parks: [cjarks7@midtel.net](mailto:cjarks7@midtel.net).

**Greeter/Coffee Hour Lists** – watch your mailbox in the coming weeks. A new list is coming out and if you need to change your date just email or call Cindy and she will make it happen.

**Adopt-a-Family:** We are putting together Christmas gifts for four children in a group home. See pg. 4 for details.

## Christian Education Update – November 2016

Sunday School has been up and running since early September. On November 13<sup>th</sup>, we had 14 children for our first practice of the upcoming Christmas program. Pastor Mike has once again written an incredible play entitled "The Extraordinary in the Ordinary". Be sure to be in church on December 18, when the children will be performing this Christmas story complete with Jedi, Olaf (from "Frozen"), Superwoman, and many other special people. If you know a child who would like to participate in our program, they are welcome! We will be practicing on November 20<sup>th</sup> and December 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> during Sunday School. December 18<sup>th</sup> will be our dress rehearsal.

There will be no Sunday School on November 27<sup>th</sup>, December 25<sup>th</sup>, or January 1<sup>st</sup>.

A big thank you goes out to Lisa Ovitt. She is in the process of getting our church library up and running.

We are always looking for people to help out with Sunday School. If you are interested, please contact Liza Toborg or Cindy Parks.



## Food Pantry Report – October, 2016

Greetings from the Food Pantry!!

Halloween is over and the holidays are coming up. The pantry is real busy and we are stocking the shelves for the holidays.

The numbers have been up this month, with October reaching 354 clients, which was 80 more than September.

We are still in need of volunteers. A driver is needed to pick up at Hannaford's every Tuesday AM and we also need volunteers for the second Thursday of each month to serve our clients from 12 to 2 pm. We know that the economy has made it more difficult for the working poor to keep things going. If anyone can help in either of these areas it would really be appreciated.

Enjoy what is left of fall and all the colors that are disappearing from the trees.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Sparks



The Outreach/Fellowship Committee is adopting four children from a group home this year that are not able to be with their families on Christmas. We are in the process of getting a list together of their wants and needs when that is ready it will be on the table in the narthex for you to sign up.

Let's make their Christmas shine!



### Operation Christmas Child

Thank you for participating in Operation Christmas Child in 2016. Your generous gifts, when combined with those of others from the sending countries, are expected to yield Gospel

opportunities for 12 million children. What a beautiful and powerful way to share God's love with children around the world!

Live joyfully!

Mary Lou Ryan

## Capital Campaign

We close one full year of our Capital Campaign, we have much to celebrate. Several pledges and other donations came in this past month totaling \$21,180! This brings our total received to \$520,468 with a remaining \$76,133 in pledges. That means we only have \$153,399 to go to reach our \$750 goal! We are very close to 4/5 of the way there! We are on the home stretch! Thank you to all who have contributed generously! Let's keep those donations coming in so we can finish it off in style.

One way you may choose to help this holiday season is by encouraging your loved ones to give a gift to the Capital Campaign in your name. It's a win-win as your friends and relatives do not have to stress over what to buy for you, and you can cut down on "stuff" while helping with the rebuilding. The gift may also be tax deductible for the giver, based on tax law. This gift can be given from anywhere, as donations can be received from the church website at [www.schohariereformedchurch.org](http://www.schohariereformedchurch.org) or the GoFundMe church page "ReBuild SRC."

If you would like to give a gift to the building fund in honor of someone, there are Christmas cards in the narthex you can use. This is a great gift for the person who has everything!

We are also working on getting a cookbook together, hit some snags with that one, but it's still in the works. There will be a collage making class in February for those of us that get cabin fever in the winter months.

Special thanks to the Pleasant Ridge Church of Danboro, Pennsylvania. They wrote, "We have just sold our church and no longer have a congregation. A former pastor, Robert Hoeksema, told us that your church needs help restoring the sanctuary. Schoharie Reformed Church was Bob's first church. He and Lucille have fond memories. Sounds like you have been through a very rough time and we hope this donation will help with your long ordeal."





## *Pastors' Sabbatical*

The Schoharie Reformed Church was named a recipient of the 2016 Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program administered through Christian Theological Seminary! We are one of 147 congregations across the United States who were selected, and the only congregation in the Capital Region.

While the consistory had already agreed to give our pastors sabbatical time away next year, this grant will allow the pastors and congregation both to do some creative and renewing activities during that time. \$15,000 will go toward the congregational plan, which will include providing for leadership while the pastors are away, as well as some special guests and an all congregation retreat at Camp Fowler. Save the dates: August 25-27, 2017!

The additional funds will allow the pastors to travel and experience various renewal activities, related to their theme of "reconnecting to God, themselves, and each other." Mike will focus on food and music as a means for reconnection, and Sherri will focus on relationships and nature. The sabbatical time will begin at the end of May and will conclude the middle of September.

We are thankful to the planning team, which included last and this year's consistory, the grant writing team, and some additional congregants, including Paul Schultz. Well done to the grant writing team, including Dusty Putnam, Karen and Bill Olewnick, and the pastors!

We have a rough plan and have received the funds! Would you like to be a part of the implementation team to further develop and help the plans become reality? This will include planning for the retreat, planning dinners, organizing pastoral coverage and worship, and any other special events. Please let the pastors know as planning will begin soon.



## *Building & Grounds*

### Little Jobs

A handful of the tasks from last month's "little jobs" list have been either completed or spoken for. But there are still plenty of things in the Sanctuary that you can do. The tasks can be done at your convenience weekdays, evenings, or weekends. By yourself or with a friend. Each job done is one less item on the "things-to-do" list and/or we have to pay to have done. Contact Dave Toborg (295-8554, dtoborg@midtel.net) for details if you can make one of them happen.

	<u>Skill Level</u>
a. Balcony – Pull up the remaining old blue carpet. Pull those carpet tacks and nails.	Low
b. Balcony Pews – Shim and tighten certain units.	Moderate
c. Balcony Pews – Fill nail holes and prep for paint. Paint.	Low
d. Organ – Finish vacuuming floor and furniture alongside the organ.	Low
e. Rear Doors (upper & lower) – Install door levers. Clean paint off interior brass door lever.	Low
f. Rear Door (upper) - Wash spill stain off aluminum threshold and concrete floor.	Low
g. Rear Doors (upper & lower) – Install door stops. <i>Requires research.</i>	Moderate
h. Lift Door (exterior) – weather strip door perimeter. <i>Requires research.</i>	Moderate
i. Basement – Disassemble homemade work platforms (no longer needed).	Low
j. New Balcony Rail – Clean mill scale and trim any sharp welds. Remove any surface rust. Fill holes. Mask, prime and paint. <i>Long, tedious, but rewarding.</i>	Moderate





### *Christmas Memorial Plants and Donations*

Christmas memorial poinsettias will be available again this year. Or you might choose to remember loved ones by donating to the rebuilding fund...or perhaps both! The plants are \$10.00 each again this year. Please complete this form and place it in the offering plate or send it to the church office as soon as possible (the earlier, the better). We will accept orders until Wednesday, December 14. Thank you for helping to beautify our Christmas services while remembering special loved ones.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

Memorial to: \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

In celebration of: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of plants: Red \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_ Pink \_\_\_\_\_

\*Donation to Rebuilding Fund \_\_\_\_\_

Paid \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Owe \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to 'Schoharie Reformed Church'



### *Schoharie Reformed Church Cookbook Seeks Great Recipes!*

The Capital Campaign is creating a cookbook to raise money for Building the Kingdom. There's still time to share your favorite "go to" recipes – including those special holiday treats!

If you need more info or have questions call Sue Smith @ 518-390-3263. Please print or type your favorite recipes as soon as possible, bring them to church on white paper or this form (please print), or e-mail to:

Sue Smith: [vinsue@midtel.net](mailto:vinsue@midtel.net) or Cindy Parks: [cjparks7@midtel.net](mailto:cjparks7@midtel.net).

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone, e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipe name: \_\_\_\_\_

Serves: \_\_\_\_\_ Oven temp: \_\_\_\_\_

Ingredients: \_\_\_\_\_

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Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

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