



# The Visitor

*Schoharie Reformed Church – December 2017*

*Pastor Mike & Pastor Sherri*



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*Sunday School: 9:15am*

*Worship Time 10:30 am*

*Christmas Eve Candlelight Service*

*December 24, 7:30pm*

*January Newsletter Deadline:*

*December 18*

## Be Born in Us!

*“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.”*

-2 Corinthians 4:6



“Sunrise on Iona”

During our time of retreat at the Abbey on the isle of Iona, off the coast of Scotland on our sabbatical it was the first time we visited what is considered a “Thin Place.” The understanding of a thin place as described by Rev. George MacLeod, a Scottish minister, who founded the Iona Community in 1938 said, “a thin place where only tissue paper separates the material from the spiritual.” We certainly found this to be true during our time of worship, work, and community on Iona. But it has also made me wonder about other thin places and times in our lives when we are able to experience, by God’s grace, a more intimate encounter with the presence of God. Recently I came across this wonderful quote from John Philip Newell in his book, “The Re-birthing of God.” In it he writes these words about the isle of Iona,

“George MacLeod spoke of Iona as a thin place. It is a place in which we sometimes see briefly through the veil that separates heaven and earth. At times that veil can seem as “thin as gossamer.” But to say that Iona is a thin place is not to say that every other place is thick. Rather, it is to say that Iona, and similar sacred sites of pilgrimage and healing throughout the world, are like sacraments or living icons through which we glimpse the Light that is present everywhere. Iona is not a place to cling to, or escape to, but to cherish as a place in which our seeing is renewed, so that when we return to the demanding and conflicted places of our lives and our world we do so with open eyes that have been refreshed.”

We share this quote with you because we believe that the same thing that John Philip Newell writes about Iona could also be said about the season of Advent. Advent is a season through which, “we glimpse the Light that is present everywhere. Advent is not a place to cling to, or escape to, but to cherish as a season in which our seeing is renewed, so that when we return to the demanding and conflicted places of our lives and our world we do so with open eyes that have been refreshed.”

Our theme for this season of Advent is “Be Born in Us!” We want to invite all of us to try and provide a “thin place” for yourself this Advent Season where you can look and listen for God’s in-breaking into our lives and into our world. Maybe it is a corner of your room, or a place on a table where there is a candle or a cross, or maybe even a place outside in the beauty of creation (if you don’t mind the cold). A place where you can focus a brief amount of time each day to pray and reflect during this Advent season, allowing God to be born in you.

Then as you experience this Advent Season we want to invite you to write down the ways you experience God, whether it is by the Spirit speaking to your heart, in a conversation with a friend, in special celebration, in news you hear, or even in the ordinary tasks of the day. Write them down and place them in a special place. We will have bags for you to use that are available in church. Then read them together throughout the 12 days of Christmas, stretching from Christmas Day to Epiphany, January 6. During this season of Advent and Christmas we pray that God will open our eyes to the thin places all around us and that the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love of God may be Born in Us!

Onto this corner,  
this street,  
into this neighborhood,  
this home,  
into these hands,  
and in hands around the globe,  
we ask that you come.

Be born in us today.

All of us.

Be born anew,  
and change the world.

Amen

Amen

Amen

“For Today My Light is Born in You”

by Ann Gerondelis

Seeking the Thin Places,

*Pastor Sherri and Pastor Mike*



## *After School Program*

We are saddened by the departure of Pastor Brandan Eddy and his wife, Lacey. It will truly be a loss to the after school program. Pastor Brandan was instrumental in getting the program started last year, and both he and Lacey did a great deal to keep it running smoothly.

We currently have 3 staff members. Our director is JoAnne Mayne. She has been a wonderful addition to the program. Laura Weinhofer and Dezarae Kennedy do much of the day to day tasks, from running the homework room and providing snacks to playing with the kids and planning programming. There will be a formal training session for all employees on Wed., November 29<sup>th</sup>.

If you know of anyone who might be interested in working at the After School Program, please have them check out the application found on the Schoharie Reformed Church website: go to Learn & Grow, click After School Program Job Openings, and click the link to download the form.

We are looking to hire someone to work Monday through Friday from 3 – 5 PM.

If you would like to volunteer, we have forms in the narthex or on our website: [www.schohariereformedchurch.org/editoruploads/files/AfterSchool\\_Program\\_Volunteer\\_Form.pdf](http://www.schohariereformedchurch.org/editoruploads/files/AfterSchool_Program_Volunteer_Form.pdf).

## *Day Camp*

Planning is underway for Day Camp 2018! This year our theme will most likely be Superheroes. Save the dates – July 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>. Like us on Facebook or look for upcoming articles in this newsletter about our plans for this summer! Want to be involved with the planning? Contact Liza Toborg at (518) 817-1540. Or better yet, join us for our next planning meeting on Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 4 PM at Christ the Shepherd Lutheran Church on Main St.



## Upcoming Events

**Advent Soup & Bread Evenings:** Wednesdays, December 6, 13 & 20 at 6pm in the Heritage House. Please join us for a simple supper, followed by a brief worship service. If you would like to provide a soup or bread, there is a sign-up sheet in the narthex, or contact Pastor Mike. All are welcome!

**Sunday, December 10, 2pm - Caroling:** Hayride meeting at the church parking lot. We will be going around town stopping at homes and the Parsonage Pines singing Christmas carols, then Returning to the church community room for snacks and hot cocoa. Anyone who is able, please feel free to bring a plate of cookies.

**Sunday, December 17: Sunday School Special Program and Church Potluck Celebration.** During the worship service, the children will perform "The Greatest Gift," an original play created by Pastor Mike. Afterward, there will be a potluck lunch. If you would like to bring a dish to pass, a sign-up sheet is in the narthex.

**Sunday, December 24: Sunday School Birthday Party for Baby Jesus** and Christmas celebration for all of the Sunday School children at 9:15. All children are welcome.

**Sunday, December 24, 7:30pm: Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service** in the sanctuary. All are welcome!

## Announcements

**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. Application forms are in church & the newsletter.

**Hurricane Relief-** How you can help: **Faithwalking Hurricane Harvey relief project:** purchase monetary gift card, send to Faithwalking, P.O. Box 131074, Houston 77219. These will be distributed to those most in need.

Or donate to **World Renew Disaster Response Services:** 1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407 phone:1-800-552-7972 website: worldrenew.net/drs

**Aluminum Tabs for the Shriners** - Please continue to bring can tabs to the church; John Nixon and Ron Filmer will deliver them to help Shriners' Hospital. Thank you!

**Nursery volunteers needed:** This is a great opportunity to enjoy spending time with little ones, while providing a ser-



## Sunday School

We are so excited to have approximately 20 children participating in our Christmas program. Once again, we are blessed to have an original play created by our very own Pastor Mike. This year we will be performing "The Greatest Gift" on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> during the worship service at 10:30 AM. Practices will be held each Sunday in December during Sunday School (9:15 – 10:15 AM). We invite any and all children to join us! There is always room for more!

On Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, we will be having a special birthday party for baby Jesus and a Christmas celebration for all of the SS children. Please bring your child – even if they have never been to Sunday School before. There will be cake and gifts for all!!

There will be no Sunday School on December 31<sup>st</sup>, but we will resume on January 7<sup>th</sup> with more exciting adventures from the life of Gideon!



## Christmas Poinsettias

It's time to order poinsettias to beautify the sanctuary for Christmas Eve! Order early to guarantee your choice of color. An order form with more details is on page 8.



## *Food Pantry Governance*

The Schoharie Community Food Pantry is a ministry housed at the Schoharie United Presbyterian Church, but one that involves the larger faith community. One of the ways that the different churches support the pantry is through individuals who serve on its Advisory Board. This Board meets twice per year (or more often if a need arises), and is made up of the following individuals:

- Diane Walion – co-director – Schoharie Reformed Church (SRC)
- Jean Sparks – co-director – Schoharie United Presbyterian Church (SUPC)
- Colleen Quirion – co-director – Christ the Shepherd Lutheran Church (CTSLC)
- Ethel Robinson – Treasurer – SUPC
- Marguerite Stanley – SUPC
- Alice Sutch – SUPC
- Peg Gras – SUPC

As you can see, only three churches are currently represented on the Advisory Board, even though other faith communities regularly support the pantry through volunteers or donations. In addition, we would welcome other individuals from the above three churches to join the Board if they are interested.

The next meeting of the Advisory Board is Saturday December 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am. We meet at SUPC in the Christian Education (white) building. All are welcome to attend to learn more about the ministry or to join the Advisory Board. Please spread this message to anyone you think might be interested!

*Pastor Colleen Quirion*



## *Food Pantry Report*

*November 2017*

The Schoharie Community Food Pantry continues to operate due to the grace of God expressed through the efforts of many people in our community. Every person who arrives at the pantry seeking help leaves with food enough for three days, and we follow the guidelines of the Regional Food Bank to make that happen. One day this month we served 18 families, but on other occasions the number is just a handful. Our volunteers continue to be a dedicated group of wonderful people.

Sometimes people ask what items could most be used at the pantry. I would say that spaghetti sauce and peanut butter are the two items that are most missed by our clients when they are gone. However, any donation of cereal, pasta, tuna fish, soup and canned goods of any kind are always gratefully received.

In addition, it is helpful to remember the non-food items that are often difficult for folks to buy, such as toilet paper, toothpaste, shampoo, laundry detergent, dish soap, etc. These non-food items cannot be purchased with SNAP (food stamps) so are a precious commodity to our folks.

And last, but certainly not least, you can support this ministry through your prayers! Pray for the volunteers, for our clients and that this ministry would continue to be there for people who need it.

*Pastor Colleen Quirion*



## *Building & Grounds*



Fall clean-up went well except that all the leaves were not yet down. But with all the wind since then, that should not matter.

### Miscellaneous Stuff

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

**Donations** Being a church facility, from time to time there is a need for a second fridge and a large upright freezer; keep the Fellowship Hall in mind if you learn of a good clean unit for donation. Also looking for a larger flat screen TV (55”+) to hang on the wall. It would need HDMI and USB ports.

### Winter is coming

**Snow** After a 1” snowfall, our snow plow contractor plows the parking lot and shovels the steps, ramp, and the street sidewalk. Lesser amounts, however, are our responsibility - so please be encouraged to grab a broom and/or shovel for the nuisance snows that pop up all winter long. Don’t wait for someone else to do it. Especially keep the steps and ramp clear so the sun can do its thing thereby reducing usage of ice melting agents.

Note that we use plastic shovels (without steel edges) to minimize damage to the wooden steps and ramp. When necessary, there is a beige plastic tote full of magnesium chloride on the Heritage House porch. Compared to rock salt, magnesium chloride is less corrosive to the steel fasteners holding together the wooden steps and ramps.

**Heat** Both buildings have programmable thermostats. If you need to raise the temperature for an event, simply press the up arrow until the desired temperature shows (typically 68°). And remember to turn it down when you leave. If the schedule needs permanent adjustment AND you are comfortable doing so, then go ahead and change the program. If not, contact Dave Toborg.

## *Thank You*

**From Mary Lou Ryan, OCC Coordinator:**

The shoeboxes that you lovingly packed will demonstrate God’s love in a tangible way to children in need. For many, it will be the first gift they have ever received. Thank you!

Church leaders in more than 100 countries will use shoebox distributions as opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with children of their communities. I look forward to our continued partnership in this wonderful ministry.



**From The Joshua Project:**

Thank you so much for your generous donation...to the Joshua Project. It will go a long way to help the people of Schoharie County in need of our assistance.

The Joshua Project focuses on the neediest in our communities. Located throughout the Schoharie Valley, we are an ecumenical group of volunteers who strive to improve the lives of others.

Again, thank you for your generous donations. If you have any questions about the Joshua Project, please call us at 518-937-2422.



# Schoharie Community Christian After-School Camp



## Volunteer Sign-Up

The goal of the Schoharie Community Christian After-School Camp 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<sup>th</sup>, 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?



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

- Snacks    Mentoring    Bible Lessons    Crafts    Homework    Recreation    Other

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



### *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 13. 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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*December 2017*



