



The Visitor

Schoharie Reformed Church

February 2019

Pastor Mike & Pastor Sherri



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*March Newsletter Deadline
February 25th*



A Season of Becoming:

"Seek the Lord while God may be found; call on the Lord while God is near. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

-Isaiah 55:6,10-11

As the cold and snow of February is upon us, I (Pastor Mike) have come to realize that I often find myself in a wintry conflict this time of year. There is a part of me that is jealous of the bears! I long to join them in their wintry hibernation where I can sleep right through the cold and bitterness of winter until I awake in the

warmth and the sunlight of springtime! But there is another part of me that sees this time more like the seeds that are germinating in the ground – a season of becoming. When I look at winter this way, I often find a great hope and anticipation for this time of year. This season holds potential to try new things, to create new routines, to try and break old habits, and to live into new ways of being for my health and for my life.

Some of the questions I want to invite us all to wonder about in this winter season are how are we “seeking,” and who are we “becoming?” How are we connecting our hearts and lives to the Light of The World we recently celebrated in the gift of Emmanuel – “God with us”? I want to challenge you to take some time to reflect on questions like these and to do so without shame. This is not about being good/bad, right/wrong, rather it is about recognizing what is, and where we want to be! The truth for all of us as human beings living our lives is that without intentional effort who are now is who we will continue to be. So, what does our present have to show us about our future, and what do we want it to show? In other words, ***what does your life show about who you are seeking to become?*** If I want to lose some weight this winter (which I do) what do my current exercise and eating habits show me? What changes do I need to make? What challenges do I need to step more courageously into for my life to become something healthier in this season?

Additionally, I want to seek the Lord by opening up my Bible more, and reading some good books that will help challenge me and grow my faith. I want to engage with others in a small group and I want to be more connected to God and others through times of worship. I also want to take more time to play and be together as a family at the ice-skating rink, on the sledding hill, or around the fireplace at home.

In all of this, I want to recognize that during these winter months I can still enjoy a long nap (but not hibernate), and I can live into this time as a “season of becoming,” so that the seeds of God’s love and purposes can take deeper root in me.

I wonder what potential, what hope, what rest, and what renewal these winter months hold for you? I hope you will open your heart to wonder and your courage to try new things as we wait for the arrival of Spring. Despite the cold, we hope to see you all as a part of worship when you are able so that we can continue to share together how God is working in our hearts and lives in this special season! Here is a wonderful poem by the late Mary Oliver entitled, “Starlings in Winter” to help inspire us in this season of becoming. Blessings,

Pastor Mike & Pastor Sherri

(please see poem on page 3)



"Starlings in Winter" by Mary Oliver

Chunky and noisy,
but with stars in their black feathers,
they spring from the telephone wire
and instantly
they are acrobats
in the freezing wind.
And now, in the theater of air,
they swing over buildings,
dipping and rising;
they float like one stippled star
that opens,
becomes for a moment fragmented,
then closes again;
and you watch
and you try
but you simply can't imagine
how they do it
with no articulated instruction, no pause,
only the silent confirmation
that they are this notable thing,
this wheel of many parts, that can rise and spin
over and over again,
full of gorgeous life.
Ah, world, what lessons you prepare for us,
even in the leafless winter,
even in the ashy city.
I am thinking now
of grief, and of getting past it;
I feel my boots
trying to leave the ground,
I feel my heart
pumping hard. I want
to think again of dangerous and noble things.
I want to be light and frolicsome.
I want to be improbable beautiful and afraid of
nothing,
as though I had wings.



Pastor's Thank you

"Pastor Mike and Pastor Sherri want to express our sincere gratitude for the very generous Christmas gift from our church family. We are blessed everyday to get to minister with you in this place as we share life together in the love and grace of God. Thank you for your thoughtfulness, your kindness, and your generosity towards us. We look forward to a new year of life and adventure in God's ministry through all of us as the Schoharie Reformed Church."





Our Church Website



If you haven't visited the Church website recently *please* do. It will keep you up to date with all the church events, current and upcoming. Our **newest** addition to the website is "**Watch Online**" in addition to "**Listen Online**". With the work of Pastor Sherri and Vince Smith you are now able to watch and listen to Sermons, current or in the past! What a great way to re-listen to a favorite service or view a service you may have missed. You may choose to listen to a service while out for a walk or enjoying a cup of coffee in the evening. This is a great way to expand our church family to other family members or friends that live out of the area or due to health problems are unable to attend our Sunday Worship Service. To Watch Online or Listen Online go to:

<https://www.schohariereformedchurch.org/> and click on the green highlighted link in the top right hand corner. If you have any questions please contact the church office.

Special thanks to Vince Smith for all of his work with recording and editing sound and video to make this happen!

Interested in technology? More volunteers are always welcome to assist with the sound booth during services and keeping the website up to date. Please let us know of your interest.



Sunday School 2019



February 3— Regular Sunday School

April 7 – Special Activity

February 10 – Special Activity

April 14 – Palm Sunday Parade

February 17 – No Sunday School

April 21 – No Sunday School (Easter)

February 24—Regular Sunday School

April 28—Regular Sunday School

March 3—Regular Sunday School

May 5 – Special Activity

March 10—Regular Sunday School

May 12 – No Sunday School (Mother's Day)

March 17 – Special Activity

May 19—Regular Sunday School

March 24—Regular Sunday School

May 26 – Last Day Sunday School with
Children's Program & Church Picnic

March 31 – No Sunday School





Announcements

Consistory-we are happy to announce the following nominations to our Consistory: MaryAnn Foland to serve as Deacon; Laura Stevens to serve as Deacon; Cindy Parks to serve as an Elder; Liza Toborg to serve as an Elder. On Sunday, February 10th, after Worship Service you will have the opportunity to vote for these individuals. There are Annual Congregational packets available in the Narthex or by contacting the church office. If you have any concerns please speak with Pastor Mike or Pastor Sherri.

Consistory-the next Consistory meeting will be held February 27th at 6:30pm in Heritage House.

Offering envelopes- for 2019 are in the Narthex, please help yourself to your box. If you are unable to pick your offering envelopes up on a Sunday or have any questions please contact the church office. Thank you for your generosity.

Testimonies - We would like to celebrate the work God is doing in the life of our congregation. If you are feeling led to share a brief testimony about what God is doing in your life, please speak with one of the Pastors.

Night to Shine- on Friday, Feb. 8th, Fusion Community Church will be hosting "*Night to Shine*" sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation. Night to Shine is a prom night experience for special needs folks, offered by churches who love them, their families, and the agencies that serve them. This event is *Totally Free*, just register. If you would like to serve and be part of making this event happen please register as well. Complete details are posted in the Narthex and Community Room. Thank you for making this all possible.

Paint & Sip-by Nicole, Wednesday, February 13th 6pm in our community room. Snack and non-alcoholic beverage will be provided along with all materials needed for the painting. Cost is \$35 each. Please try to rsvp by Feb. 8th to Marion Jaqueway at 518-295-7320. If you have any questions please contact Marion.

Schoharie Valley Community Camp-will be held Monday-Friday, July 15-19, 2019. More information will be available in the future. We look forward to seeing you at camp.

Greeter/Coffee Hour/Liturgists-volunteers are needed. Please consider being a Greeter, to welcome our church family; a Coffee Hour Host to offer a social time after worship for your church family; a Liturgist will help spread the word of God during our worship service. We invite everyone to take part. Please see Cindy Parks to be put on the schedule for one or several of the task thru-out the year. Blessings.

Church Flowers-You may wish to grace our sanctuary with flowers for a Sunday Worship service . This may be to celebrate, honor or in memory of a loved one. The church flowers are a wonderful way to share beauty and blessings with your church family. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex for your week(s) of choice. There is no individual cost for these arrangements but you may choose to make a donation towards your selection. If you have any questions or need assistance to sign up, please contact the church office.



Announcements



Contact Information-please contact the church office at 518-295-8177 or E-mail: schohariereformedchurch@yahoo.com to update your contact information, if you have changed your mailing address, phone number or email address. If you are new to our church family, in addition to the above information please be sure we have all family members month & day of birth and your wedding anniversary month & day. This will help everyone stay in touch.

Technical Support Volunteers-we are in need of volunteers to assist with the technical support of our church sound board and the church website. If you would like to volunteer for one or both of these task please talk with Vince Smith or Jim Callahan. This is a great way to learn and offer assistance to your church family.

Aluminum Tabs-Please continue to bring can tabs to the church and you may leave them in the Narthex. The tabs will then be processed, proceeds will be used to offset patient cost.

Donations- There is a need for a good DVD/Blueray player to connect to the flat screen in the Heritage House and a large energy efficient refrigerator for the Fellowship Hall.



Thank yous

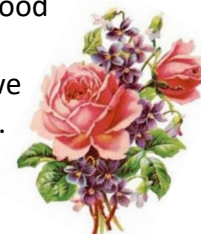


Kent Busman (Uncle Kent)- sent the Congregation a thank you note stating: " I had a nice time Sunday, December 30th with the Saints in Schoharie".

The Reformed Church would like to thank you for supporting the Bode's Ministry to the Protestant Church in Oman. Your gift is a blessing to all who are served as a result. Thank you, Amanda Bruehl, RCA Staff.

Capital Region City Mission thank you for your recent gift toward the Christmas meals. Your generous compassion provided our needy neighbors in the Capital Region with over 3,500 nutritious, hot meals on Christmas Day, as well as shelter, clothing, and other vital care. Thank you

Camp Fowler-your gift to Camp Fowler comes as we open up registration for another year of ministry. As we step into another year, we continue to need your support through thought, prayer and gift. Together, in this New Year, we can reach more lives, grow more leaders and share more good news. Thank you for walking along with us on this journey of faith. We join hundreds, no, thousands of others who believe that when we all do a little-great work gets done. May we walk this journey together in balance and peace. Your current gift humbles me once again. And for this I once again say, "Thank You." Walk in balance, Kent Busman, Executive Director.





Samaritan Purse



We saw God do amazing things in 2018 through Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse. *Your Gifts Go A Long Way*. 2018 Collection Totals: 10,623,776 Shoebox Gifts, sent to 112 Countries and Territories.

"Millions of children are coming to the Lord Jesus Christ through Operation Christmas Child and The Greatest Journey. These young disciples are sharing their faith, and the Gospel is transforming families and communities around the world."

—Franklin Graham , President, Samaritan's Purse



Schoharie Community Food Pantry Report for 2018

In 2018 a total of 152 families visited the food pantry at least once, which is nearly identical to 2017. Those families were made up of 500 individuals; 193 children, 259 adults (18-64) and 48 seniors. These 152 families collectively visited the pantry 961 times, which is nearly 100 more visits than in 2017. When the number of persons in each family is multiplied by the number of times that particular family visited the pantry, the total number of people actually served is arrived at. That figure for 2018 is 2,643, an increase over 2017 but still less than 2016.

Of the 152 families served, most utilized the pantry on an emergency basis, visiting less than once per month. Fifty-one families visited only once, and 94 families (62% of total) visited five or less times. The families who utilize the pantry on a more regular basis, beyond periodic emergency are fewer, with only 35 families visiting 12 or more times.

We continue to participate in the Retail Store Donation Program through the Regional Food Bank. Practically speaking, this means that every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning one or more volunteers picks up food from Hannaford in Esperance. That food is then weighed and shelved by other volunteers. A total of 33,591 pounds of food was received and given out by the food pantry from this source alone in 2018! In addition, the pantry benefits from food drives done by Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Schoharie Helping Club, Postal Service, Fire Department/Kiwanis, just to name a few, as well as many individuals who give on their own or through their churches. There is no question but that total food donations exceed 40,000 pounds per year. In addition, we have a grant from the Regional Food Bank and we purchase food from them, at a greatly reduced cost, using that grant and our own financial resources. Due to an increase in the number of feeding programs which exist, our grant from the Food Bank has been reduced, so we are spending more of our food pantry savings each year. As of September 30, 2018, the balance in the food pantry account was \$8,900.05.

The operation of the food pantry would not be possible without our dedicated volunteers. At any given time between 25 and 30 people are involved in this ministry. All glory be to God, who enables and guides our way! Food pantry donations are appreciated to help others in need. In addition to our Food Pantry box in the Narthex items may be dropped off at SUPC on Tuesdays thru Fridays from 11:00am till 3:00pm. Monetary donations are appreciated as well, checks may be made out to Schoharie Valley Food Pantry. The Food Pantry is in need of volunteers to man the food pantry on Tues. and Thurs. If interested please contact Diane Walion at 518-868-4629.

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





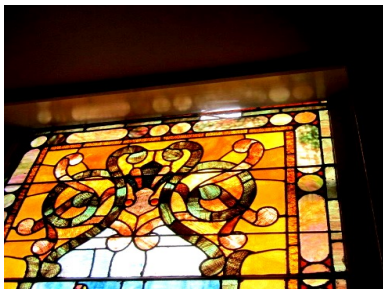
Buildings & Grounds



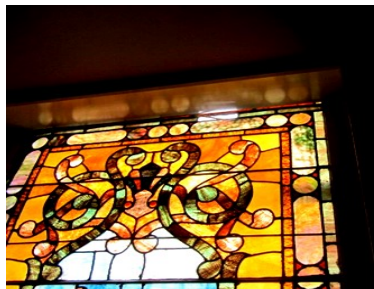
In my report at the Annual Congregational Meeting last month, I briefed folks on my initial research into maintenance and preservation of our nine stained glass windows. This is the largest building project on the horizon.

Our nine windows were a significant component of the 1894 major renovation of the Church building (which included the organ and pews). They are protected with circa 1980s wood-frame Plexiglass storm windows.

To date, one contractor has reviewed the windows and provided a proposal. He pointed out how age, gravity, and heat affect the windows – the lead lattice settles and sags to the point where gaps appear, glass cracks, and/or pieces fall out. This is easily seen on our windows. The five units with a southern or western exposure are particularly showing their age; and all the storm windows are rotting. That contractor proposed \$125,000 to completely rebuild the five worst windows, repair the other four (to extend their service life another 15 to 20 years), and install all new storm windows.



Cracked glass



Missing piece at top



Gap due to sagging

Obviously, this would be a significant undertaking and more research is necessary before any decision is made. My plan is to meet with other contractors, and identify alternatives such as doing nothing or installing plain glass windows.

The congregation needs to begin thinking and praying about our stewardship of the windows. What do they mean to our Church family? What is the best direction?

Fundraising will be needed. Are grants available? Are there unusual fundraising ideas that we don't typically think of? If this is important to you – ask God how you can help.

More to come.

In the meantime, please see me if you would like an in-person review of the windows.



David Toborg, 518-295-8554



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