



# The Visitor

Schoharie Reformed Church

February 2022

Pastor Mike & Pastor Sherri



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### Deepening Love

*"Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed God's love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners." – Romans 5:7-8*

There was a recently published quote from a pastor named Rev. Ben Cremer who said, "Christianity should feel like, 'my love for others continues to deepen, not 'my beliefs are more correct than anyone else's.'" This quote is meant to challenge us to wonder - Do I have a love that continues to deepen? Is my love growing for others in our church, in our community, and in the world? What about for those with whom I continually find myself in deep disagreement, or who tends to stir up my anger and resentment? If I do not, then what is keeping me from deepening my love, and how do I begin to deepen it?

The answer is not always as easy or as simple as "just loving more." Some of us have experienced deep wounding or abuse and have trauma from loved ones who have hurt us. As a result, our hearts become guarded in an effort to protect



ourselves. But when we guard our hearts to keep them from being hurt by others, we also run the risk of closing them off from receiving love from others, especially the love God has for us. In his book on the four loves, author CS Lewis writes these words about trying to guard ourselves from being hurt by love:

*“There is no safe investment. To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket – safe, dark, motionless, airless – it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell.” - CS Lewis, The Four Loves.*

It can be tempting to continually seek those in our lives who are “worthy” of our love, or who are “safe” to love, to help minimize the risk of getting hurt. But as we look to God’s love in the way Paul describes it in his letter to the Romans, we are reminded that God’s love for us was not based on our “worthiness” or God’s own “safety” in loving us. It was based on God’s choice to love from God’s own heart. In a similar manner our love is never meant to be dependent on what other people do, or how they behave.

The ability to love comes from the Holy Spirit at work within us. It deepens when we continue to have our hearts nourished with God’s love and when we are courageous in giving our love away to others as God first loved us! If our love is dependent on others it will be sporadic and fickle at best. But if our love comes from the heart of God poured out in us, along with our desire to be people who love it can have a powerful impact on the world.

Now love does not mean opening ourselves up to abuse or fully accepting every aspect of another person. But love does challenge us to not base it on the actions or worthiness of the other, but instead to connect to the love God has for us, “even while we were yet sinners,” and to be courageous in offering that love out of a desire to be people of love. This is not always easy, and often there is a risk of hurt and rejections, but as the old song goes and still rings true, “What the world needs now is love sweet love. It’s the only thing that there’s just too little of. What the world needs now is love, sweet love. **No not just for some, but for everyone.**”

Perhaps the most challenging part of this truth is that for us as Christians “everyone” includes our enemies. A main component, and unique aspect of the love we are to share with the world as followers of Jesus is love for our enemies. If they are to know we are Christians by our love, then we need to continue to challenge ourselves, and deepen our faith that this may continue to become a part of our lives and our witness as the people of God and as the church.

In this month where we celebrate love through chocolates, flowers, and cards. May we also celebrate the love God has for us and challenge ourselves as Christians to continue to deepen that love, even with our enemies that indeed, “they will know we are Christians by our love.”

Growing in God. Living in Love!  
*Pastors Mike and Sherri*



## Clothing Drop-Off Shed

St. Pauly Textile, Inc. clothing drop-off shed is behind the Heritage House, this used clothing company provides a convenient and clean donation program that serves the community while helping the SRC financially.

**What kind of items can be donated?** *Useable* clothing, shoes, belts, purses, blankets, sheets, curtains, pillowcases, and stuffed animals. Items need to be in tied plastic bags. *Unacceptable* items are electronics, books, household items, toys, garbage, pillows, rags, or fabric scraps.

**What does the company do?** St. Pauly empties the shed weekly/biweekly depending on volume and pays us 4 cents per pound of clothing. St. Pauly sells the clothing in bulk to other companies that, in turn, contract with government agencies, relief organizations, and private companies that redistribute the clothing around the world. The geographic destinations depends on what is happening in the world at any given time.

**Can the SRC use the clothing?** If there is ever a need, the SRC can sort through donations to pick out items for a specific need or event (i.e. family in need, rummage sale).



## How SRC Can Receive Donations From Amazon

Schoharie Reformed Church is enrolled in *Smile.Amazon*. The church will now receive a donation from every Amazon purchase made by you when you use the Smile link!!

Access Amazon from your browser by typing in "Smile.Amazon.com". Then select Schoharie Reformed Church from the "Smile" charities on the top left of the home screen and begin your shopping. After you proceed thru checkout the donation is automatically calculated and placed in the Schoharie Reformed Church fund.

Please share with family and friends, it's a great way to support our church while doing your online shopping.



## Communion Class



We have an exciting Communion class for our elementary Sunday school age groups that will be starting soon. It will be held on 5 Sundays: February 13<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>, March 6<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>, and April 3<sup>rd</sup>. This program will be led by Liza Toborg and will take place each Sunday before worship beginning at 9:00am in the Fellowship Room downstairs.

The Communion program is entitled “We Gather Together”. It is a fun, hands-on, creative, and Biblical way to help kids understand the meaning, importance, and celebration of communion. The program teaches the meaning of the bread and cup, and the ways they relate to Jesus, our faith, and God’s great love for us. On Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> the children will meet with the elders of the church during their review class. Then, they will get to help celebrate communion during the 10:00am worship service.

At the Schoharie Reformed Church, as a part of the Reformed Church in America, we believe that all children are welcome at the Lord’s Table, and the integrity of the table is the responsibility of the elders. We believe it is important for every child who comes to the Lord’s Table to have a basic understanding of what the sacrament of Holy Communion is and what it means for us to receive it. We hope that many of our children will be able to participate in this exciting opportunity! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Pastor Mike or Pastor Sherri at (518) 295-8177 or by email: [schohariereformedchurch@yahoo.com](mailto:schohariereformedchurch@yahoo.com).



## Schoharie Valley Community Day Camp

The Schoharie Valley Community Camp planning team held their first meeting on January 13<sup>th</sup>. The dates for camp this summer are July 18 – 22. We discussed potential curriculums that could be used this summer. The top three that we are considering are Spark Studios (an artistic and creative program from Lifeway), God’s Wonder Lab (a scientific, experiment-based program from Concordia), and Rocky Railway (focused on railroads and animals in the Rocky Mts. from Group). We will need tons of volunteers and paid staff to work at camp this summer. If you are interested in volunteering to help with the planning or to work directly with children this summer, please contact Liza Toborg at (518) 295-8554. Please check out the Schoharie Reformed Church website; [www.schohariereformedchurch.org](http://www.schohariereformedchurch.org) under the Camp heading or the Schoharie Valley Community Camp Facebook page for updates on registration and paid positions. Our next planning meeting will be held on Thursday, February 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm via Zoom. If you are interested in joining us for this meeting, please contact Liza Toborg at 518-295-8554.

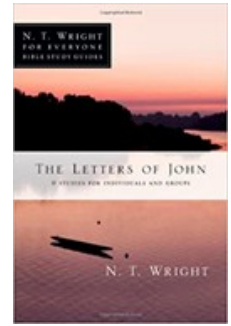
Respectfully submitted,  
Liza Toborg





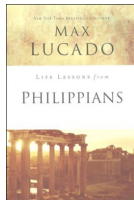
## Bible Study

You're invited to take part in a *Bible Study* on the The Letter of John on Monday evenings at 7:00pm in the Heritage House. Please bring your Bible and come join us for a wonderful discussion on The Letter of John. This Bible study will run through the Monday, February 28<sup>th</sup>. For any questions you may contact the church office at 518 -295-8177.



## Future Bible Study

Coming in March – a Bible study on the book of Philippians beginning Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm in the Heritage House and continuing each Monday through Monday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>. To be led by Liza Toborg.



All are invited to attend.



## Red Cross Blood Drive

Thursday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1-6pm.

The Red Cross will be holding a blood drive in the Community Room of SRC.

For complete information and to schedule an appointment please visit: [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).



## After School Program

The advisory committee for the Schoharie Christian After School Program met on January 19<sup>th</sup>. We interviewed and subsequently hired Mary Unser as a substitute for the program. The budget was reviewed, and the committee agreed to resume paying the Schoharie United Presbyterian Church for a portion of the utilities. The church had waved these fees during a period of low enrollment due to COVID. The staff are all being paid at the new minimum wage of \$13.20 per hour. We discussed possible purchases to be funded by a Stewart's Grant that we are applying for. Those potential purchases would include 2 new folding tables and a laptop computer. Schoharie Central School has agreed to provide bus transportation for our students during the cold weather. We also discussed purchasing reusable plastic cups for the students to cut costs and be more environmentally friendly. It has been my pleasure to serve on the advisory committee for the past several years. While I will no longer be serving as our consistory representative to the ASP, Larry Poulin has agreed to take on this role. Thank you, Larry! Edie Schultz and Jody DeJong continue to serve on the board along with Jessie Griffin who is our sub. The next ASP meeting will be held on March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Liza Toborg



## *Operation Christmas Child*

This past November we were able to pack 25 shoeboxes full of goodies to be sent to children in need all around the world. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could pack even more shoeboxes this year? In order to do that, I encourage you to start shopping now! As you see small items on sale that you think would be perfect for children, please pick them up. Matchbox cars, school supplies, small combs, bars of soap, toothbrushes, etc. all make great shoebox gifts. I can't wait to see how many shoeboxes we are able to fill this November!



## *SCHOHARIE COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY REPORT FOR 2021*

In 2021 the Food Pantry never missed a beat, despite the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the extra physical work in taking food out to families as they stay in their cars, our volunteers have persevered and continued to provide excellent service.

For the 2021 calendar year, we served 160 families, consisting of 458 individuals. These families visited the pantry a total of 976 times during 2021, for an average of 81 visits per month. Most families visited infrequently, with fully 111 (69%) visiting six or fewer times during the entire year. 50 families (31%) visited just once in the year. Since we are considered an emergency food pantry, these numbers confirm that we continue to fulfill that mission, rather than being a regular food source for most of our clients. At the other end of the spectrum, 33 families (21%) visited the pantry 12 or more times during the year. A review of these families shows that they are primarily made up of the elderly and folks with disabilities. All families are allowed to visit up to two times each month.

In 2021 we received food from a variety of sources. For example, we participate in the Retail Store Donation Program through the Regional Food Bank and our partner store is the Hannaford Market in Esperance. Three days per week our volunteers drive to Hannaford and pick up whatever they have for us. Other volunteers weigh that food and put it away, discarding anything that is inedible by the time it gets to us. In 2021 we received 49,103 pounds of food in that way! Typically this food is vegetables and fruits, pastries and bread, but we also receive some meat, deli and dairy products from this source.

We also order food from the Regional Food Bank which is delivered to Cobleskill and is picked up there by other volunteers. Deliveries come to us twice per month and we place orders in excess of 1000 pounds for most of those visits. That food is very inexpensive and sometimes free. We pay for it out of our annual grant from the Regional Food Bank and then from our own funds which are donated to us.

Additionally, many individuals and organizations drop food off, in small and large quantities all the time. During the pandemic, the Schoharie Masonic Lodge has been especially generous and regular in their giving, providing us not only with food but also paper products and personal care items. Other organizations and individuals regularly support the pantry with gifts of money, which is very much appreciated. During 2021 one individual won a freezer and \$500 worth of meat (provided by Hessian Hill Farm) and she donated both items to us, since they were not needed by her! Our community is extremely generous in taking care of the hunger needs of others.

The food pantry could not operate without the dedication of our volunteers, who number between 25 and 30 individuals. They are truly amazing and a gift from God and we are thankful for their continued dedication.

Pastor Colleen Quirion





## *Food Pantry*

Many families are in need of extra help; the Food Pantry is continuing to work hard to serve the many families in our community. With many families facing the high cost of winter heating expenses, non-perishable items such as canned fruits, boxed macaroni & cheese, tuna fish, pasta, pasta sauce, canned ravioli/beef stew/soup/spaghetti o's/chili with beans, canned vegetables, applesauce, peanut butter, jelly, cereal, jello packs, pudding packs, granola bars, fruit snacks, juice packs, & snack crackers. Additional items of need are cleaning supplies, paper products-paper towels/toilet paper, personal hygiene items such as hand soap, toothpaste, shampoo and shower soaps. Items may be left in the SRC Narthex or dropped off at SUPC on Tuesdays or Thursday from 12noon till 2:00pm or they may be left between the doors of the educational building. Monetary donations are appreciated as well, checks may be written to "Schoharie Valley Food Pantry". If you would like to volunteer with the Food Pantry, please contact Diane Walion 518-868-4629. **The Food Pantry is open Tuesday & Thursdays, 12-2pm.** The Food Pantry would like to thank everyone for your support and donations, your help makes the Food Pantry successful in helping our community!



## *Announcements*



**Consistory:** will meet Wednesday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in Heritage House.

**Directories:** Please find updated directories in the Narthex.

**Updating Information:** We want to stay in touch with you and our church family. To continue to stay in touch we are asking you to update any new contact information for yourself or a family by contacting your Care Elder or our church office at 518-295-8177. If you have a new address, phone number or email address please share that information.

**Church Flowers:** our weekly altar flowers are a ministry of the church that provide our congregation with an opportunity to celebrate, honor, or remember a loved one, celebrate an event, or just to bless and beautify our sanctuary during a Sunday Worship Service. There is a sign-up sheet with an opportunity for you to provide flowers for a particular week or occasion in the Narthex. You may then make your donation for the flowers by placing it in the offering plate or by sending it directly to church (PO Box 635, Schoharie). Following the service, the flowers are yours to take home to enjoy, or give away to someone else. Thank you.

**Recycling:** Please continue to save your used printer cartridges and cell phones for recycling. These items may be left at the church office.

**Aluminum Tabs for the Shriners:** Aluminum tabs are continuing to be collected to help offset Shriners Hospital patient cost. Tabs may be left on the table in the Narthex.



## Financial Update

For those of you who were unable to attend the congregational meeting and are interested in the information, congregational packets can be provided by email. This year, due to the circumstances of our current reality, our consistory felt it necessary to make some difficult cuts to our budget including a reduction in the Pastors' Salary to try and manage our financial losses. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information in the packets or have questions about the congregational meeting please contact the church office at 518-295-8177.

## Thank You's



### Dear Schoharie Reformed Church Benevolences,

Thank you for your most generous gift to SALT's efforts of preserving our unique quality of life by applying valuable community resources. Your generosity is helping create a vibrant, strong, and enduring community that is better equipped for the future.

Sincerely, Anne Morton, Chair SALT Development

### Dear Schoharie Reformed Church,

Thank you for your generous donation to the Joshua Project. It will go a long way to help the neediest people in Schoharie County.

Sincerely, The Joshua Project.

### Dear Friends,

Thank you for your commitment to support global missions. God is doing amazing things, and you have responded to his call to help grow the global church through RCA Global Mission.

Thank you for serving with us.

Sincerely, JP Sundararajan, Director of RCA Global Mission

### Dear Friends,

Thank you for your contribution to the Care Network-USA Disasters 2021 December USA Tornadoes.

Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

With deep gratitude, Eddy Aleman, General Secretary

### Dear Friends of the Schoharie Reformed Church,

We hope this letter finds you and your families safe and warm this winter. We're happy to report that 2021 was a record year. Over 40 *million* pounds of clothing were donated to our clothing sheds- that's over 200,000 pounds of clothing collected every business day!

Every clothing shed is an important part of the big picture. Here are some numbers to show you the impact your shed made in 2021...

- 11,689 pounds of clothing were donated to your shed in 2021

- this was enough to clothe an estimated 2,153 people all over the world

- Based on this volume of clothing, your organization received \$468

Thank you so much for partnering with us on this. We truly appreciate all the support you continue to give to the clothing shed program!

Sincerely, The Team at St. Pauly Textile, Inc.



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*February 2022*

