



The Visitor

Schoharie Reformed Church – January 2018

Pastor Mike & Pastor Sherri



JANUARY

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Deadline for February Newsletter submissions: January 25



Another Year Is Dawning!



*“Yet you have made (us) a little lower than God, and crowned (us) with glory and honor.”
-Psalm 8:5 NRSV*

*“Another year is dawning: Dear God let it be,
In working or in waiting, Another year with Thee
Another year of progress, Another year of praise,
Another year of proving Thy presence all the days.”*

Hymn: Another Year Is Dawning. By Samuel Wesley.

Another year has dawned! As we say goodbye to another year we may have both bitter and sweet feelings about it. Perhaps there were some good things to celebrate that took place in your life over this past year, or maybe there were some really hard things that are continuing to impact you. As we know, with each new year comes a new wave of hopes and desires for us to change things in our lives, to see good things come for us and for those we love, and also to see things change for the betterment of our world. While the church “new year” starts with the beginning of Advent, we recognize that God’s mercies are “new every morning” and “never come to an end.” God invites us into God’s newness every day (Lamentations 3:22f)! Have you made some of those cultural “New Year’s Resolutions” to try and bring about some of your hopes and desires? How does the reality of God being “Born in us” make a difference in all of this?

One of the greatest things that can impact our efforts for growth, change, and transformation in our lives is the story we tell about ourselves as we seek to live out our lives in new ways. As I (Pastor Mike) thought about my own resolutions, I had a startling realization that for myself, they all come from places of shame and deficiency. So often my voice of “resolution” sounds like, “You should really do more of...” or “You really need to be better at...” or “You really need to get into...” or “If you want your life to be better, than you’d better get better at...”

Which got me wondering...what might it be like to begin this new year with a new story? What if we start from a story that doesn’t desire change or transformation from a place of shame or deficiency but rather from a place of Belovedness? What if we claim what we know starting with this sense of belovedness that the Psalmist describes when they write of God’s view of human beings, *“You have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor”*?

What if our resolutions didn’t come from a voice that says, “You need to get into...” or “You should really do more of...” Or “You really need to be better at...” Instead what if they came from a place that says:

“You are a beloved child of God and you can do whatever God has put on your heart to do because God is with you! It will be hard. You will fail, because failure is a part of learning and growth. It will take time! You will need to be patient with yourself and others. It’s taken a long time for you to build your current habits, so it will take time to tear them down and build better ones, but with God’s help, with the community of faith beside you, you can do it!”

What happens when we live from that place of belovedness? For me, it helps combat the voice of shame that has caused me to give up so many times before and I can live with more joy and grace in all of the ups and downs that life brings. I also become more willing to risk vulnerability, to share hopes with others and to create communities of love and support. We will have more courage to face the tougher challenges, trusting that though the changes may be really hard, they will also be really good!

As another year has dawned, we want to challenge all of us to wonder about your hopes and desires for growth, change, and transformation in this new year for your health (physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional), your spirituality specifically, your relationships with others, and your mission in the world.

For me (Pastor Sherri), I’ve noticed that sometimes I get stuck in a particular story, and I’ve noticed others struggling with the same issue. What stories do you retell about the way things are in your life? Are those empowering stories? What could you do to stop being a broken record and start living into more of the story you dream about living?

How are feelings of shame and deficiency keeping you from dreaming, or keeping you from making progress toward your hopes and dreams? May our hopes and dreams, old and new, continue to emerge from a story of belovedness that we are God’s and God is with us!

Our hope for all of us as a church family in this new year is that we will continue to live into being and becoming a community of beloved children who are Growing in God and Living in Love.

Happy New Year!

Pastor Sherri and Pastor Mike



Announcements

Ridder Church Renewal: The current Schoharie Reformed Church "Ridder" team has completed the program part of Ridder, and celebrates the growth and learning we've noted in ourselves and in the congregation through Ridder over the past 5 years.

Another new round of Ridder is just beginning in our region. Given the deep and significant journey it has been for each of the team members, the Ridder team would like to invite you to consider joining a NEWLY FORMING team. If you have questions, or would like more information, please speak with one of the pastors, Cindy Parks, Maryann Foland, Buck Berdan, or Luke Jacobs.

Epiphany Party Friday, January 5, 5:30-8pm: Join your church family at the home of Pastor Mike, Pastor Sherri, Sam and Sophia (131 Fair Street) for an evening of fun and good food, and friends. Please park at the church and walk, or ride in style with Thomas Jaqueway in the black Highlander. All are welcome!

Annual Congregational Meeting January 28!



Our annual congregation meeting will be held this year on January 28th downstairs in the community room following our morning worship service. It will be a meeting of celebration of God's faithfulness to us this past year, as well as a time of looking ahead to where God is leading us into the coming year. Please plan to stay after church and celebrate with us!

Yarn opportunity:

If you would like to help some patients heal and help others in the process, please bring in any yarn, knitting needles and especially crochet hooks (they crochet more than knit). Your donations will go to patients at the New Choices Recovery Center in Schenectady. They make scarves and leave them around the area for the homeless or anyone who needs them. It also keeps their anxiety under control by keeping their hands and minds busy. I will drop them off. Thank you & God Bless, Cindy



Rededication of the Schoharie Reformed Church

February 24 & 25, 2018

The planning committee has been working on this Rededication Event for a couple of months and we wanted to let you know some of the highlighted events we have planned.

- Volunteers, green shirts, all congregants and anyone that helped Schoharie Reformed Church rebuild are invited.
- There will be a short tour on Saturday and for those who want the details, the rebuilding process and history there will be a long tour on Sunday.
- A reception with cookies and punch in the afternoon
- Saturday young people will be making special placemats that will be used for Sunday's dinner.
- Sunday there will be a regular church service and coffee hour.
- Sunday afternoon will be a rededication liturgy, with a rebuilding slide show.
- There will also be an organ recital and possibly other instrumental players or singers. (Still in the planning stage)
- Formal catered dinner on Sunday

If you have something you would like to see happen on those days or you have any comments, please contact one of the committee members: Pastor Sherri, Cindy Parks, Liza Toborg, Buck Berdan or Kim Charboneau.



Merry Christmas to all!

The church received several Christmas greetings from friends near and far, including Dave & Carolyn Allen.

Decorating the Christmas Tree



Hayride and Caroling

Hardy souls turned out on a snowy December 10 to carol through Schoharie!



Thank You

Pastors say Thank You! Thank you so much for the generous and thoughtful Christmas gift from the congregation. It was the largest Christmas gift you've ever given us and was very meaningful to receive. Thank you again, and as always, it is a pleasure serving God with you!

Adopt A Family Thank You! When we asked the family for their "wish list" they told us, "Even if one of these items is purchased for each child, that would be amazing." They never imagined the congregation would respond to generously and quickly! Working together, within one week, you all were able to fulfill the ENTIRE wish list! The family was overwhelmed, in tears, and wanted to share the depth of their gratitude. Well done Schoharie Reformed Church! You've made a huge impact!

Thank you from Catholic Charities: Your gift to our annual campaign helps us to continue to serve the poor and the vulnerable. Our programs have addressed unmet human needs in our area for over 40 years. Last year we served approximately 6,000 people in our area and brought approximately 1.4 million dollars of contracted services to local communities. You are now a partner in our efforts to ensure that people in our area have an opportunity to live with dignity, and to have their needs met.

Your gift helps us serve the economically vulnerable, working and student parents, at-risk youth, child care providers, those adults in Drug Treatment Court recovery programs, and families, individual, businesses, and even schools seeking mediation and conciliation as an alternative to litigation through the courts, victims of domestic violence, crime victims and those individuals struggling with mental health issues. Your gifts also support the work of highly skilled staff & community volunteers working every day to promote social justice and to address the effects of poverty in our area through the variety of programs we offer.

We promise to continue to offer programs of the highest quality. You may find more information about the work of Catholic Charities of Delaware, Otsego & Schoharie Counties on our local website, www.charitiesccd.org.

Thank you so much for your gift to Catholic Charities. It is very much appreciated.



Sunday School Advent Program

The Sunday School students performed "The Greatest Gift," an original play by Pastor Mike, on December 17 for the congregation. They discovered that when trying to shop for the perfect gift for God, it could not be found in a store. Through helping others along the way, they learned that, "We are the greatest gift we can give to God, and we give that gift when we



Congregation Potluck

After the Sunday School program, the congregation and friends gathered for a delicious potluck lunch and time of fellowship.



Operation Christmas Child

Christmas Greetings, Sisters and Brothers!

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! (1 John 3:1) What joy we share in knowing that we belong to the Prince of Peace, Mighty God, Everlasting Father! And, our participation in Operation Christmas Child has shared the Good News of our Messiah with millions of children around the world. Thank you for filling shoeboxes with much needed gifts for the children and for your prayers to support the project.

Collection week 2017 netted a harvest of 1,530 shoeboxes at our drop-off site. That was an increase of 27 over last year. Many, if not all, of those boxes are headed for children in the Dominican Republic. December 1 & 2 found me at the Maryland/Washington, DC Area processing center. I was privileged to serve alongside volunteers from Latham Community Church. We were addressed by two "full circle children" during our time there. One was Jaki who was raised in a Guatemalan orphanage where a single toothbrush had to be shared among all of the children. The other was a Ukrainian named Maria who now lives in Ohio where she is an art teacher. A box of crayons in a shoebox affirmed for her that God knows everything about her. Hearing these young women share their stories reinforced our belief that God uses our simple gifts in mighty ways to bless children.

As I look ahead to a new year of serving our Lord through Operation Christmas Child, I am making a commitment to be more disciplined in prayer. I have joined the OCC Prayer Network, and I invite you to do the same. You may do so online at samaritanspurse.org/praywithocc or I can send you a mail-in form upon your request.

I look forward to serving along side you in 2018. MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR!
Live joyfully!
Mary Lou

Sunday School Calendar

- January 7th – Regular Sunday School – Gideon and The Brain-Freeze Test
- January 14th – No Sunday School – Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend
- January 21st - Regular Sunday School – Gideon and Horns of Plenty
- January 28th - Regular Sunday School – Joseph and Greens with Envy
- February 4th - Regular Sunday School – Joseph and Miss Kitty's Claws
- February 11th - Regular Sunday School – Valentine's Day Celebration
- February 18th – No Sunday School
- February 25th - Regular Sunday School – Joseph and Dreams & Droughts
- March 4th - Regular Sunday School – Joseph and Justice of the Peas
- March 11th - Regular Sunday School
- March 18th - Regular Sunday School
- March 25th - Regular Sunday School – Palm Sunday Parade with Schoharie United Presbyterian Church
- April 1st – No Sunday School – Easter – Resurrection Egg Hunt following Worship
- April 8th - Regular Sunday School
- April 15th - Regular Sunday School
- April 22nd - Regular Sunday School
- April 29th - Regular Sunday School
- May 6th - Regular Sunday School
- May 13th - Regular Sunday School
- May 20th - Last Day of Sunday School – Church Picnic



Church Secretary News

A warm welcome to our new Church Secretary, Stephanie Remmers! Stephanie attended Schoharie Schools, and retired from Schoharie County after three decades of service. She lives in the Town of Wright with her husband, Karl. She enjoys making just about everything! Stephanie has been working with Jennie this week, and will take over the position fully on January 16. Stop by and say hello!

Jennie has started a new job as the program director for the Schoharie Library. There are lots of interesting programs and events in the works for 2018, so she looks forward to seeing you at the library as well as in church.

Schoharie Community Christian After-School Program



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 days school is closed or lets out early.

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 _____

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