



The Visitor

Schoharie Reformed Church

September 2022

Pastor Mike & Pastor Sherri



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Leaving, Learning, & Living

“The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. ‘I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing...So Abram went, as the LORD had told and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran.””

– Genesis 12:1-2,4 NIV

As we continue to sort through drawers, cleanout closets, pack boxes, load vehicles and trailers, the above picture is kind of what I imagine it looks like to see our moving in process. Although this actually looks a lot neater and tidier than ours feels right now. If you have ever moved, or tried to downsize, or just attempted to clean out a room after several years, then you know just how hard it can be. Moving is hard. It is hard because it often involves grief and hard work. It involves grief because we have to do some letting go, some saying goodbye, and some acknowledging of loss, which can be painful. It is hard work, because it involves learning to live in a new way, a different way, and sometimes, like Abram, an uncomfortable and unfamiliar way.

Before he packs them in a box, or sells them in a yard sale, we want to invite you to take a moment and slip into Abram’s sandals. How would you feel if God asked you to move, to leave your home, your country, and

your people at seventy-five years old? If you have one, how long has it been since you last cleaned out the attic, or the basement, or the garage? As difficult as this might have been for Abram, it was even more difficult when you consider the Jewish culture of which Abram was a part. The Jewish culture of the time was deeply tied to land. Land was your inheritance, it was your security, it was your very identity, and your source of power. Abram was also told to leave his community, the people who knew him the best, the neighbors from whom he borrowed tools, the friends he met for dinner, the church members he joined with in raking leaves on fall clean up days. Abram was not just told to move, but to leave behind a place that was familiar, an identity that had power, and a community where he was known. All for what... "the land I will show you."

Really God?! All this for – "the land I will show you." But God being God, follows up this rather vague call with a promise -"I will make you," and "I will bless you." Abram may not know a lot of things about what lies ahead for him, but he is left with no doubts about who will be leading him and who will be with him. Abram is moving in more ways than a change of address. Abram is being moved from power to purpose, from establishment to mission, and from self-security to divine promise.

As we conclude our nineteen years of ministry together, and as we are in the midst of moving as a family, the Schoharie Reformed Church is also being called to move! The church is being called to move into a new chapter, a new identity, and a new way of being church and doing church. So, in our last newsletter article with you, we want to encourage you to consider your own move as the people of God in Schoharie, as the Abrams and Sarais who are journeying by a call and a promise.

What do we need to leave behind? What are the old stories that might keep you stuck in place? What are the lies you might be tempted to believe? "We are just a small church." "If only we had a pastor." "We need more young people!" What are the things you need to leave behind in order to be able to dream, and dare to step into God's future with you?

What have we learned? What do you need to pack? Where have you seen God at work in the last nineteen years of ministry? What values has God given you? What are the lessons learned? What do you want to be sure to carry with you into a new future with God? "Everyone has gifts." "Being a welcoming place is who we are." "We are a family." "God is faithful."

How do we live? What courageous steps is God calling the church to take into a new future with God? "We can change our worship service." "We will invest in relationships with young people." "Let's try it!"

In all that changes, in all that is good, and all that is hard, our future with God is one of calling and promise. Our hope and prayer for us and for the Schoharie Reformed Church is that we will continue to live by the calling and promise of God. We are God's beloved children. We are gifted and called to ministry. God will continue to make us and bless us as God's people.

We are truly grateful for all of our years of ministry with you in Schoharie. You have been (and in many ways you will remain) a part of our family. We could not have asked for a better place to love and be loved, to serve and be served, as well as to teach and learn as your pastors. Thank you from the deepest part of our hearts. You will be truly missed and often thought of with gratitude and fondness (and we hope to see you from time to time). You will be in our prayers. We pray God's blessings on your continued ministry and life together. We remain confident that God who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion on the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6). May God bless you and keep you all.

Pastors Mike and Sherri

Consistory Update

“Be on guard. Stand true to what you believe. Be courageous. Be strong. And do everything you do with love.” I Corinthians 16:13-14

These words from I Corinthians are fitting for this time in the life of our church congregation. It takes courage to stand on what we believe while acting in love to keep believing in a future for Schoharie Reformed Church. But this is what is needed from each member of our congregation. Your consistory believes in this future and our ability to work together with God to find His way forward for us.

The consistory continues to work on plans for our future together. Following the two listening Sundays, information was shared about the input we received and the progress we have made toward our goals. During August, more progress has been made.

1. Two members of Classis met with consistory to formally dissolve our call with Pastors Mike and Sherri, effective September 15, 2022 and to review the rules of that dissolution. We the congregation are not to ask the pastors to return to perform any official duties at SRC (such as weddings, funerals, etc) nor discuss any church business matters with them after 9/15. Also, the Pastors are to separate themselves from the business of this church and refrain from giving advice or input regarding the operation and business of SRC. Friendships may continue as long as no official church business is discussed by either side (pastors or congregants).
2. Consistory will be recruiting pulpit supply people from our congregation and through the larger church. Currently we are waiting for the officially accepted Classis release of Pastors Mike and Sherri before we can begin recruiting.
3. Classis will provide a supervisory person to work with Consistory during the interim. It is our goal to be able to hire a new minister on a part-time basis.
4. Two Consistory members met with members of the Schoharie United Presbyterian Church Session (their board) and Pastor Andrea to discuss the idea of sharing more programs and services. The discussion went well and it was decided that a committee with representatives from both Boards will be formed to determine some concrete ways to work together. Ideas include sharing Bible study groups and other programs, sharing maintenance such as mowing and plowing costs, and developing program ideas for the community together. The next meeting will be scheduled soon.
5. Consistory members will be making home visits with congregants during the months of September and October. During the visits we will seek to hear from members what their needs from the church are, their ideas for programs, and their concerns and/or questions. These findings will be collated and the information used to set priorities and a timeline for the remainder of the fall and into the winter. This information will be shared when available.
6. Liza T, Marion J, and Erin N are developing plans for a Sunday School program
7. Liza T is pursuing plans to lead a Bible Study on the life of David this fall.
8. 15 households pledged in the summer '22 campaign for a total of \$55,000.



Consistory Update Cont.

9. Other ideas that continue to be researched are:

- possible sale or rental of Heritage House
- after school program for older youth who use the playground
- music and arts programs using youth from schools
- potluck suppers
- newcomers club
- ways to include seniors in programming

Consistory members will be visiting with members soon and look forward to our conversations. If you have things to share at any time, please feel free to contact any consistory members. We want and need your thoughts, ideas and support.



Day Camp Wrap-Up 2022

On August 9th, the Day Camp leadership team met for a wrap-up meeting to review the week. We were so blessed to receive the gift of a large tent from the Kerr family! Next summer we will likely need an additional tent to replace the one between the Presbyterian Church and their Christian Education building.

One quote from the minutes from that meeting said, “the chaplains put together amazing discovery times and vespers throughout the week. We loved their interactive elements of discovery and great skits.” Minor tweaks to scheduling and sign-in/sign-out procedures should make things run even more smoothly next summer.

Snacks were lovingly prepared each day by Ralph and Irmgard Buess. We will greatly miss having Ralph in the kitchen next summer!

Pastor Andrea organized the schedule for Friday’s talent show. The families really seemed to enjoy seeing their children’s God-given talents on display! Many members of Christ the Shepherd Lutheran Church prepared and served a picnic lunch for the families and staff to enjoy.

Although we had a smaller than anticipated group of campers this summer, Day Camp was a wonderful time of fun and fellowship for everyone involved!

Christian Education Meeting

Anyone who is interested in Sunday School or youth activities for our congregation and community is invited to join us for a meeting on Monday, September 12th at 6:30 PM in the Heritage House. This will be a time to share our ideas and begin planning for the future of our children at the Schoharie Reformed Church. Come and tell us what you would like to see for the youth of our community! Questions – please contact Liza Toborg at (518) 295-8554 or ltoborg@midtel.net.



Village-Wide Yard Sale

Saturday, September 10 – This is always fun and a good fundraiser. Members are invited to bring their own stuff to sell on the lawn in front of the Heritage House. You are responsible for setting up and selling your items. At the end of the day, unsold items will be moved to the curb for free (unless you make other arrangements).

No fee. Folks simply donate their proceeds to the Church. Set-up starts 7 am (the early bird sells the worm).

Please – no dirty junk. Pray for good weather. Contact Dave Toborg if questions (518-295-8554, dtoborg@midtel.net).

Luke and Jack Jacobs will be selling breakfast sandwiches and coffee that morning.

After School Program

The Schoharie Christian After School Program that we run in conjunction with the Schoharie United Presbyterian Church is gearing up for another amazing year of providing Christian Education for the children of our community. The doors will open on Tuesday, September 6th to approximately 42 children ranging from Pre-K to 5th grade. We have a full roster of children, and a waiting list has been started.

The staff includes Shirley Lawyer, Linda Sobieski, Brenda Weideman, and our new hire, Jo-Ann Karker. Welcome Jo-Ann!! They are led by our director, JoAnne Mayne. The children receive a healthy snack and participate in Christian education, play time, arts & crafts, and homework help.

A training session was held for all staff members on Wednesday, August 31st at the Schoharie United Presbyterian Church. They were treated to a lunch of pizza and salad by JoAnne Mayne.

The children will be participating in a service project this year, packing shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child through Samaritan's Purse.



Operation Christmas Child

NATIONAL COLLECTION WEEK
NOVEMBER 14-21, 2022

When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, 'anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.'" - Mark 10:14-15

Bible Study

An exciting new Bible study on the life of David will begin on Monday, September 26th! We will be using a study guide written by Jack Kuhatschek entitled David: Developing a Heart for God. Over 12 sessions we will explore David confronting Goliath, David's friendship with Jonathan, David's complex relationship with King Saul, David's temptations, and why David was referred to as a man after God's own heart. Two sessions are being offered each week – one at 10:30 AM and one at 6:30 PM in the Heritage House. Both sessions will cover the same material so you can feel free to choose either time. Liza Toborg will be leading the discussion each week. Books will be available soon in the Narthex of the church. Questions – please contact Liza Toborg at (518) 295-8554 or at ltoborg@midtel.net.

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. 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 snacks, granola bars, fruit snacks, juice packs, and snack crackers. Additional items of need are cleaning supplies, paper towels/ toilet paper, personal hygiene items such as hand soap, toothpaste, shampoo and shower soaps. Items may be left in our Narthex; or dropped off at the SUPC on Tuesdays or Thursdays from 12pm until 2pm 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 at 518-868-4629. **The Food Pantry is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 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



- Returnables to Righi's Redemption Center in Middleburg for fundraising.
- Aluminum can tabs that will be donated towards Shriners Hospital for Children. Any aluminum tabs you wish to donate, you can leave in the Narthex to be picked up by church staff.
- 2022 Wildlife Festival is being held at Blenheim-Gilboa Visitors Center on September 17th from 10am-4pm . For more information please visit the New York Power Authority Facebook page under the tab "events" for more details.
- Fall Antiques in Schoharie is happening on September 24th from 10am-5pm and on September 25th from 11am-4pm. This event is being held at 143 Depot Lane, Schoharie, NY 12157 . For more details, please visit the SCHA website at schoharieheritage.org
- Fam 5K "Fund" Run/Walk is happening on September 24th at 10am at the Cobleskill Fair Grounds. For more information, please visit www.fam5k.com.

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