

The Messenger

First Reformed Church of Scotia
224 North Ballston Avenue
Scotia, NY 12302

The Rev. Craig J. Hoffman

The Rev. Jan L. Hoffman

Volume 62, Number 5

May 2009

From
Craig's
Desk

Thank You!

Jan and I thank you for your care that has lifted and carried us these past weeks as Jan's father Herm Luben completed his 91-year pilgrimage to the Great Banquet with final stops at the Beacon Point memory care facility in Clifton Park and Albany's Memorial Hospital. We are humbled by your love and concern.

We are so glad that a lot of you met Herm. You heard him preach when Jan and I were away. Some of you came to know him well through retreats he led, and blessed him by contributing to a prayer cabin at Fowler named in his honor: Vrede, for "peace." We are also grateful that Herm got to know you. He came to love this congregation that we love. I am doubly glad for that because 16 years ago it was Herm who suggested to Jan and me that we talk to the search committee. He had preached here and was impressed. He sensed a possible fit.

Dad was always walking ahead of most of us in his spiritual life and theological reflection. Long ago his Christ-following led him to a deep conviction that Christ followers must learn to live more carefully with our world. The culture we have created is hard on people and hard on the planet, on "Mother Earth," he called it. He was pleased that our consistory made Creation Care a priority for their leadership. Years ago Herm and Janice, Jan's mother, decided that the final resting place for their ashes would be a small wooded cemetery on Cape Cod outside of Brewster, just a short walk from the cottage of dear friends where they had spent so many memorable days. We found the following poem going through Dad's papers. It is one more reason why I not only give thanks for you, but I also give thanks for Herm, for his life and for his faith.

MOTHER EARTH

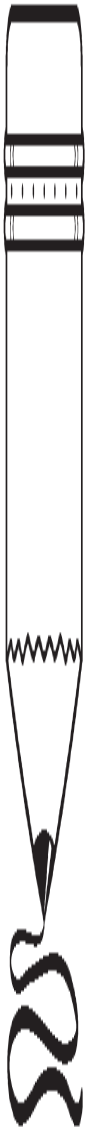
Don't forget, my son:

When you give my ashes to the sandy tomb
you have hollowed out among the Brewster pines,
remember to slash the box.

Let the powdery residue of my old body
mix freely with the gritty sand
the glaciers ground out long ago.

Be sure my remains are not insulated
from the wounded earth
as if at the last we are enemies:

Let the blending be my final prayer
for the healing of my Mother.



**Notes From
The
Congregation**



Since we published the last issue of *The Messenger* we received the following thank you notes and letters. They are posted on the tack strip outside of Pastor Craig's office. Read and enjoy them there for yourselves.

- Allene Carbin thanks the church for flowers and friends who care.
- Jean and Bob Hubbell thanks the church for cards, phone calls, rides and an Easter plant.
- Don and MaryLou Erdman thanking everyone for delivery of an Easter plant.
- Eula Wilds thanks the church for an Easter lily.
- Barbara Botsford thanks the church for an Easter lily and for bulletins and Sharing & Caring notes.
- Dot and Sky Stewart thank the church for an Easter lily and thanks to Sharing & Caring for their notes.
- Scotia Food Pantry thanks the church for the \$43 collected at Easter sunrise and sent to them.

**Attendance
Reported**

We report our monthly worship attendance to encourage you to faithfully gather on the Lord's Day, and invite others to join you.

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
April week #1	307 (Palm Sunday)	225
April week #2	503 (Easter)	232
April week #3	216	187
April week #4	217	293
April Average	311	234
YTD Average	248	257

**Family
Finances
Announced**

Each month we report our giving. Here's how we gave in April.

<u>GIVING</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
April	\$23,765	\$21,271	\$2,494	12%
Total for the Year	\$101,602	\$102,226	(\$624)	(1%)

**Food Pantry
Needs For May**

Every week in the bulletin we publish the food that is the most needed for the Schenectady Inner City Ministry food pantry. Below are the items needed in May. Please place your donations in the container in the narthex or in the one outside Brink Hall. What a great offering we would give if **everyone** brought the weekly item!

There is **always** a big need for brown paper bags as well as monetary donations. Donations are used to purchase milk certificates and other items available at the Regional Food Bank for just 16 cents a pound. Make out your check to the First Reformed Church of Scotia and put "SICM Food Pantry" on the memo line.

- May 3: Peanut Butter
- May 10: Canned Fruit
- May 17: Baby Food
- May 24: Canned Pasta

**Bottle
Committee
Sends Check**

Our Bottle Committee has been busy turning in your donations of returnable bottles and cans. They are now sharing the proceeds with groups other than Bethesda House. Recently they sent a check for \$90 to the City Mission. Thank you once again for all your returnables!

Attention All Graduates

In the June issue of *The Messenger* we want to publish the names of everyone in our church who graduates this spring from high school, college, or graduate school. Please help us make sure we don't inadvertently miss anyone. Call the church office, 370-4751, and tell us the name of your graduate, the school issuing the diploma, and what the graduate's future plans are. Thanks for your help!

Venison Dinner Held For Men & Boys

Men of the church: Save Sunday evening, June 7, at 5:00 for our 5th annual Men's Venison Dinner. Here's an opportunity to spend some time with other guys of our church over a meal, and also to enjoy a presentation around a common interest. This year our own Kent Busman, Director of our Fowler Camp and Retreat Center will show pictures and tell us about *The Mayans of Southern Mexico*. Your venison dinner will cost \$5, payable that night at the door. But in order that we know for how many to prepare, please sign up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board outside Pastor Craig's office.

Message From Food and Faith Initiative



Our Food and Faith Initiative is a group of people seeking to understand and act upon the implications of Christian Faith for how we raise, procure and use food. Last year our Food and Faith Initiative started sowing seeds of ideas to guide their efforts:

- Create a culture of sustainable living within First Reformed Church of Scotia that fosters a connection between food and faith.
- Deepen our congregation's knowledge of the opportunities to eat healthy food grown locally.
- Encourage the congregation to use God's bounty more responsibly.
- Establish a food fellowship around caring, preserving and using God's bounty.
- Sponsor educational opportunities to further explore sustainable eating.

Interested members of the congregation have met twice to start plans for this growing season. We will have 3 areas of focus this year:

- A Fall Harvest Dinner where the vegetables we eat are vegetables that we grew, and the meat we eat is meat raised locally.
- Educate the congregation so that vegetables and flowers can be grown.
- Create a Summer Harvest Table, so that the bounty of some of our gardens can be shared with others in the congregation who don't have gardens, and also given to local charities.

Plans are already underway for the Fall Harvest Dinner. Want to help? We need donations of seedlings, clean plastic milk jugs or ice cream containers. We also need people to grow larger vegetables, like pumpkins. Sign up sheets will be on the Congregational News bulletin board soon. On Sunday, May 17, the Food and Faith Initiative will help the FROGS plant herbs and vegetables. Vegetables and flowers will be available. We hope others "Adopt-a-Plant" for the summer. This is an opportunity for all, city dwellers and farmers alike, to help with this project. If you'd like to join our Food and Faith Initiative or have questions, talk to Bill or Natalie Monaghan, 399-1102. Our next meeting is Wednesday, May 13, at 7:15. Everyone is welcome.

Notes From The Garden Guild

It will soon be time to begin working on our church's many gardens. June Shaw, our church's chief gardener, puts in countless hours. Last year June worked with a committee we called our Garden Guild -- people who helped tend and maintain our church's gardens. Some people have already signed up to take care of a garden this year. But we need one more person to work in the Secret Garden, the garden just outside the windows of the pastors' studies. If this is something that you might be interested in doing, call June, 306-4408. Many thanks to those who have already signed up to help:

- Jane Corby – the Green Shed garden
- Marian Gilgore – the garden alongside the parking lot in front of Brink Hall
- Emil Jarczyński – the Memory Garden just south of the sanctuary
- Sue Pitts – the Memory Garden just south of the sanctuary
- Duke and Linda Shaw – the garden underneath the Brink Hall windows

Send Us Your Excess Yarn

Do you have excess yarn that you just won't use? We have knitters who are making mittens to donate to the Salvation Army who would love to knit up your yarn. If you have any yarn you are willing to donate, please bring it to the church office or call the church at 370-4751. We'll see that the knitters get the yarn.

Join Us For Yoga

Yoga class began Sunday, April 19 at 7:00. Thirty-two men and women came for a relaxing hour and fifteen minutes with teacher Nancy Tobiessen. Want to join us? Bring a mat, wear comfortable clothing, and bring a check made out to Nancy Tobiessen. All ages are welcome. We hope to meet 4 Sundays in May, beginning May 3.

Book Group Announces New Selections



Join other readers in your church family at 7:15 on the third Tuesday of the month for a discussion of a good book, and what that book may show us about our faith or about the world in which we live out our faith. We meet in the Lakehill Room. There is no need to sign up - just read the book and join in. Here's the schedule:

- Tuesday, May 26, Pastor Craig Hoffman leads a discussion of *The Language of God* by Dr. Francis Collins. Dr. Collins, once the head of the Human Genome Project, is a respected scientist who fully accepts the theory of evolution, and also a committed Christian who finds no conflict between his faith and science.
- Tuesday, June 23, Helen Nelson and Barbara Robinson will lead a discussion of *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson, a mountain climber who was helped by the residents of a poor Pakistani village. He returned to help build a school there. This is the story of one man's mission to promote peace . . . one school at a time.

City Mission Seeks Assistant

City Mission seeks an Assistant to the Downtown Ambassador Coordinator. This paid position requires about 20 hours per week. This Assistant will focus on managing the volunteers for the Ambassador Program in downtown Schenectady. Ambassadors are individuals from downtown social service agencies that are paired with community volunteers. These pairs provide hospitality and a welcoming presence before and after Proctor's shows, for the monthly Arts Night, and for the Sunday Green Market. The Assistant will coordinate evening and weekend Ambassador shifts, orient volunteers, and be "on the street" during the service hours. The Assistant will also help recruit and retain community volunteers, and make presentations to community groups to encourage interest and participation. The Ambassador program is fulfilling (who doesn't like to be greeted with a smile and a helping hand) and fun! Call Pastors Craig or Jan Hoffman, 370-4751, for a referral.

Heat Has Been Turned Off

Our consistory has a heating policy that not only helps us conserve gas, but also helps us plan for shutting down our heating system. Unlike your home furnace, after we shut our heating system down it takes a full day to get it up and running again. So we don't just turn off the heat; we plan to turn off the heat. By policy we shut our system down by the third Sunday in May - this year, May 17. We will shut it down even earlier if weather permits. So, starting on Sunday May 17, if it seems a bit chilly in the morning dress a little warmer for church.

Next Communion Will Be May 24

We will celebrate the Lord's Supper on May 24, Ascension Sunday. A Communion Thanksgiving offering will be received for the Fowler Fund Drive: A Future with Hope. We made a commitment to give \$5,000 each year for three years towards the \$2,000,000 goal, which has nearly been achieved. This fund drive helped us build the new kitchen and dining room at Fowler called "Fenimore Hall", a prayer cabin, and also helped us create a safer passage through Camp. Please help us be part of the debt relief for our Camp Fowler.

Outdoor Worship Will Begin

Weather permitting, our 8:00 worship services will be held outdoors on the plaza in front of the sanctuary from Sunday, July 5 through Labor Day Sunday, September 6. Outdoor worship is a unique experience: birds always accompany our singing, and red fox have been known to parade by as we pray. Outdoor worship is also a unique witness. The sound of Route 50 traffic can be annoying, but every car or truck that drives by means that at least one person sees a congregation at worship on the Lord's Day. The larger the congregation, the greater the witness. That's a good thing – a very good thing!

Join others for 8:00 worship outdoors this summer. Sit on the steps or on the plaza. A lawn chair or blanket helps. If it's cold or wet outside, we simply worship in the sanctuary.

Don't Forget Dutch Fair

Our 61st annual Dutch Fair will be held on Saturday, September 19 from 9:00 to 3:00. As you do your spring cleaning around the house be sure to remember our need for good used toys, books, and White Elephant "treasures" that we can sell. Remember, too, to plant extra veggies in your garden for sale at our Country Store. Talk to any one of this year's Dutch Fair chairpeople to find out more: Richard Doyle, 399-6135; John Lehman, 355-5301; or Lee Poremba, 381-9609.

Do We Want To Sponsor Refugee Family?



There are more than 11 million refugees in the world today. Over the next months 60 of these people, mostly Iraqis, will be resettled into the greater Schenectady and Capital District areas. Catholic Charities is one of the agencies on this end trying to reach out and help these new immigrants make a home here. As part of our consistory's goal of helping each of us get involved in some hands-on mission in Christ's name, our Missions Council invited Sister Marianne Comfort of Catholic Charities to speak to interested people in our Sunday, March 29 Table Talk about this work. Now our Missions Council wonders if sponsoring one of these families is a mission project we'd like to invest ourselves in as a congregation or as individuals.

Sponsoring an immigrant family would include:

- Raising up some people to offer welcome, orientation and friendship.
- Gathering enough used furniture to get them started in their apartment
- Helping support the family financially until other income streams begin. Catholic Charities estimates this need to be between three and five thousand dollars.

If we did sponsor an immigrant family we would have same help.

- Catholic Charities takes on the hardest parts of the project like finding an apartment and setting up appointments with the necessary social service and governmental agencies.
- The Niskayuna Reformed Church has committed itself to sponsoring a family and awaits its arrival. They would provide counsel and advice from their experience.
- The local Muslim community has offered to help with translation and English lessons.
- A group of Buddhists in our area is interested in co-sponsoring a family, possibly offering further support.
- There are experienced "resettlers" in our congregation, people who have worked with immigrant families before. Two of these families have already expressed an interest in helping us in such an effort.

Now our Missions Council is looking for feedback. What do you think of our church sponsoring a refugee family? Let us know of your interest or of your questions. Please call Missions Council Leader Bill Faulkner, 399-5736, Pastor Jan Hoffman, 370-4751, or council members Jane Lansing, 372-6082, or Linda Lewis, 346-6809.

Save Pull Tabs For Shriners Mission

Pull the tabs off of cans – soda, soup, and dog food cans. Save them, put them in a plastic bag and bring them to the specially marked bin in the mailroom. These tabs provide income for the Shriner's Hospitals for Children. The Shriners provide transportation for kids who need the special services available from the Shriners Hospitals, including surgery for burn victims, and those with cleft palates and spinal cord injuries. Acceptance is based solely on a child's medical needs. To know more about the 22 International Shriners Hospitals for Children, go to their website, www.shrinershq.org

May Mission Of The Month Is Habitat

Our May Mission for the Month is Habitat for Humanity, a volunteer organization that provides decent, affordable housing for people one house at a time. Their motto is, "A hand up, not a handout." Go to Habitat's website: <http://www.hfhscny.org> to learn more.

Here's how to give to our Habitat for Humanity Mission of the Month:

- Offer your financial support by using May's yellow envelope in your box of offering envelopes.
- Volunteer your time by calling 395-3412, or by emailing to: volunteer@hfhscny.org.
- Help us make lunch for volunteers on in June and July. Watch for the dates.

Last month we gave \$714.80 to the April Mission of the Month, Bethesda House. Thank you for your generosity.



Help Get Fowler Ready For Summer

It's almost time to get Camp Fowler ready for the summer! The ice is gone from the lake. Fowler Boosters are the people who help open and close the camp each year. This year you can join them! Plan on a weekend at Fowler, May 22-25. If you have never been to Fowler, this is your chance! Meals are available for \$2 per meal. Families are lodged in the cabins and Chi Rho house. There are chores for people of all ages. This is a great way to get to know the camp on a short-term basis. To register for the weekend, contact Joanne Lightenberg at jligt@frontiernet.net.

Adopt Our Fowler Staff In August

This year our Fowler Friends have volunteered to adopt the staff at Fowler the week of August 16: the same week that our church is sending volunteers. Lynn Makrin is organizing our efforts, and the Camp has created a wish list. We will be collecting non-perishable goods during May and June. Items can be left in the designated box near the office. Suggested items are:

- New white tee shirts in children's and small adult sizes
- Re-useable water bottles
- Canned soda and seltzer
- Phone cards
- Sharpies

Any questions, call Lynn at 280-6444.

Pilgrimage Offered For Young Adults

Young adults ages 18 to 30 have a unique opportunity to worship, work and reflect on their spiritual journeys at *Pilgrimage*, May 27-31, at Camp Fowler. Want to know more? Speak to one of the pastors or check out the Fowler website, www.campfowler.org. The cost is \$100 which includes meals and lodging. The retreat begins with light dinner on Wednesday evening and ends with lunch on Sunday afternoon. This is an opportunity to spend significant time in a faithful community listening for that "still small voice" of God that is still whispering through the world.

Walk For CROP Walk



Sunday, May 3, people from our congregation will join people from other area churches in the 27th annual Schenectady Area CROP Walk. CROP Walks, a project of Church World Service, provide money that is used exclusively for hunger relief both locally and around the world. For the Schenectady Area CROP Walk, 25% remains for local need. The Schenectady Area CROP Walk is the second largest in New York State and in the top 25 in the country – over 800 people walked last spring to raise \$56,000. Everyone can participate, either by walking yourself and collecting pledges, or by supporting others with your pledge. This year we walk a new downtown route, starting from the Emmanuel Friedens Church on Nott Terrace. The walk is 5k, just over 3 miles, and there is a “Golden Mile” one-mile walk. Wear walking shoes and comfortable clothes to worship that day, and bring a bag lunch with you. We’ll eat together in Room 1 after coffee hour and leave church at 12:30 in carpools for Friedens Church, 218 Nott Terrace in Schenectady.

Youth Group Plans Activities

FROGS, the youth group for 4th-8th graders, has planned activities for the rest of the year.

- Sunday, May 3: Join with your family and other members of the congregation to walk in the Annual Crop Walk.
- Sunday, May 17: Gardening Day. We’ll make sandwiches for lunch at 12 noon and then plant herbs for the Fall Harvest dinner. After we’re done we’ll take a walk to Jumping Jacks for ice cream for an end of the year treat.

Any questions, call Heather Kramer, 377-2784, or Sunny Baldwin, 374-9276.

Table Talk Speaks Out For Missions

Following our consistory’s lead in making hands-on mission a priority for our congregation, “Speaking out for missions” is this spring’s Table Talk theme. Table Talk is an after-worship discussion time for adults, meeting from 11:15 to 12:00 in Memorial Lounge. This is an opportunity to get to know some people who are in mission in our community and find out where we can help.

Upcoming speakers include:

- On May 10 we’ll welcome Dan Butterworth, a Missioner from 1st Schenectady who works for the Damien Center, a ministry to people with HIV and their families.

Come find out where you’re being called to help. Any ideas you have for other speakers? Speak to Sunny Baldwin, 374-9276, or Jan Hoffman, 370-4751.

Fowler Camps Will Get Scholarships

Youth from our church who register for a week of Christian camping at Camp Fowler this summer will have \$125 automatically deducted from the amount they owe during registration. Please make your regular deposit when you send in your registration; the \$125 is deducted at registration at Camp Fowler on the Sunday of your camp week. If you need further assistance, please contact Sunny Baldwin or Pastor Jan Hoffman at 370-4751.

Please let us know when your child has been accepted for a week at camp. The Fowler Office is not easily able to let us know what campers from this congregation have signed up. You can help by letting us know.

How Do We Get Sanctuary Flowers?



Flowers adorn our sanctuary every Sunday morning as one of the ways we praise God. The flowers cost our church \$45 each week. This money does not come from our regular offerings; it comes from the Flower Fund. Money enters the Flower Fund in one of two ways:

1. People make a donation to the Flower Fund if they would like to place flowers in the sanctuary some Sunday morning in memory of someone or in honor of some event. We publish in the bulletin the name of the donor, the person remembered, or the event honored that Sunday. We invite you to place flowers in the sanctuary some Sunday that is significant for you. Call Church Secretary Kathie Balser, 370-4751, to schedule a day.
2. People make a donation to the Flower Fund before Christmas and/or Easter for the purchase of poinsettias or lilies. We invite these donations in memory of someone or in honor of some significant life event. Again, we publish the names of those remembered or the events honored in the bulletin. Since more money is usually donated at Christmas and Easter than we need for poinsettias or lilies, the surplus helps us purchase flowers the rest of the year.

This year our Worship Council is inviting you gardeners among us to place arrangements of fresh flowers from your gardens in the sanctuary in July and August. Again, please call Kathie in the church office to arrange for a date. We need to know ahead of time so that our standing order with our florist can be cancelled in a timely way.

Milestones In The Lives Of Our Congregation

Here are some milestones in the lives of people in our congregation.

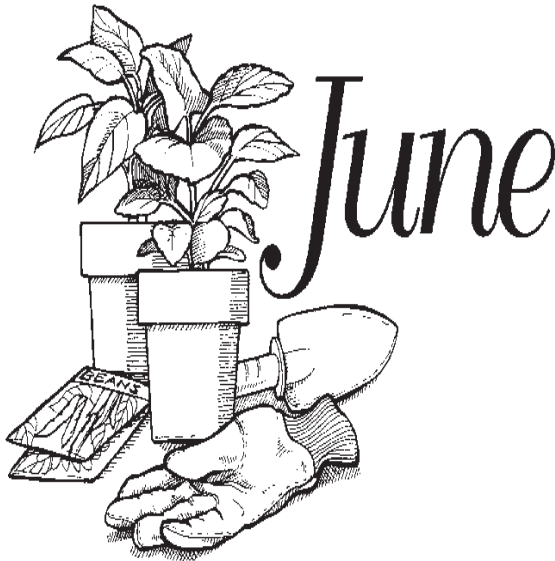
We express our sympathy to:

- Linda Francois and her family on the death of Linda's father.
- Ms. Sandy Suits on the death of her mother, Gertrude Suits.
- Pastors Jan and Craig Hoffman and their family on the death of Jan's father, the Rev. Herm Luben.
- Phil and Marcia Davis on the death of Phil's brother, Ron.
- Joe Widmer on the death of his wife, Muriel.

Congratulations:

- To Mr. George Casler and Ms. Sharon Johnson who were married on April 25 at the Blooming Grove Reformed Church in DeFrestville. George and Sharon are making their home in Nassau, New York.
- To Jamie and Kathrine (Almy) Mahon on the baptism of their daughter Madeline Claire who was baptized on April 19. Grandparents are Marge and Chris Almy.
- To Erv and Joan Grant who celebrate 50 years of marriage on May 23.

June Anniversaries



Harris and Louise Gregory	1
Robert and Barbara King	3
Kent and Jill Busman	4
Jeff and Cindy Taft	5
Stanley and Fern Lee	6
Nick and Meri Sue Bobrowich	9
Tom and Judy Vaccaro	9
Doug and Inga Wade	9
Russ and Claudia Garrison	10
Duane and Mary VanPatten	11
Chic and Marian Gilgore	15
Ralph and Judy Hewes	16
Dick and Kathy Hoskinson	16
John and Diana Ackner	18
Ken and Barbara Nelson	18
Joe and Cathy Deamer	21
Myron and Alicia Hermance	21
Al and Margo Snyder	21
Ken and Eleanor Marks	27
David and Jae Schalekamp	28
George and Karen Squires	28
Bud and Louise Coons	29
Charles and Cheryl Conover	30

June Birthdays

Cheryl MacNeil	1	Alexandra Ayers	10	Carole Auger	20
Helen Blase	3	Michaela Kilgallen	10	Phil Davis	20
Jean Rundell	3	Emily Davis	12	Al Carter	21
Tyler Ayers	4	Joseph Deamer, Jr.	12	Eric Hoey	21
Michael Shaw	4	John Hoey	13	Gayle VanHeusen	22
Ziggy Poremba	5	Russell Carlson	14	Grace Ackner	23
Katie Hoskinson	6	Morgan DeThorne	14	John Auger	23
Pam Walsh	6	Miranda Gilgore	14	Linda Naumowicz	26
Ken Fetter	7	Ethan Szemansco	14	Barbara Wurz	26
Randy MacNeil	7	Laura Taft	14	Laurel Ahnert	27
Jim Penn	7	Carole Tygert	14	John George	27
Shelly Poremba	7	Tom Vaccaro	14	Betty Knaggs	27
Brian Ahl	8	Nancy Konczeski	15	Terri Doyle	28
Bub Bekkering	8	Steve Balser	16	Kim Kranick	28
Robert White	8	Paul Kramer	16	Dorothy Henwood	28
Nancy Blair	9	Diana Ackner	19	Meri Landry	29
Dana Gilgore	9	Erin Walsh	19	Rhys TenEyck	29

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