

The Messenger

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

The Rev. Craig J. Hoffman

The Rev. Jan L. Hoffman

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From
Craig's
Desk

The Spirituality of Simplicity

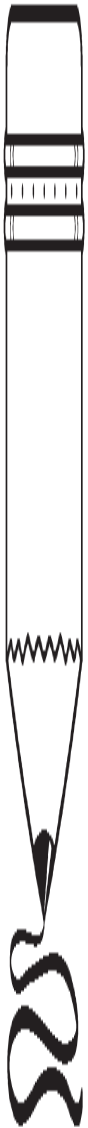
C. S Lewis, one of those voices of faith Jan and I lift up in our October preaching wrote, "Every age has its own outlook. It is especially good at seeing certain truths and especially liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period. And that means the old books. All contemporary writers share to some extent the contemporary outlook – even those, like myself, who seem most opposed to it. None of us can escape this blindness, but we shall certainly increase it, and weaken our guard against it, if we read only modern writers. . . Not, of course, that there is any magic about the past. People were no cleverer then than they are now; they made as many mistakes as we. But not the same mistakes."

Some of those "old books" were written in the 16th century by John Calvin, whose 500th birthday we celebrate this year. Calvin was wrong about some things, but he saw more clearly than we do other things that are true. Lutheran theologian Kathryn Johnson identifies the following.

"Calvin is an excellent teacher when sin is wearing the face of idolatry." Calvin wrote, "The human heart is a factory of idols." He understood that what we give our heart to becomes, in fact, the object of our worship, i.e. our God, and shapes our spirituality. What does our age worship? Kathryn Johnson again: "As we reflect on the fascination with wealth that occupied so much cultural space in recent years, and as we see its enormous costs still unfolding, how can we not admire Calvin's stringent call to 'Let God alone be God' in all aspects of our lives?" How's that for a guide to the living of each day? What does God ask of me this week, this day, this hour in order to be faithful to him?

Spiritually speaking, we resist the idolatry of wealth and of things when we cultivate simplicity and focus in our living. Not that we shouldn't relish life's good pleasures. As an old Rabbi once said, "We will be judged for life's good things we refused to enjoy." But in an age that encourages excess, and in an age when the fragility and finitude of the world's resources rightly claim our attention, healthy spirituality for us and for our culture requires us to be mindful of what we use and consume. That is not something that our age yet sees or believes. But if it is true it will come to see it, for the consequences of missing it will be profound.

Today, and in all our days, let's make sure we ask ourselves this simple question: What does being faithful to God require of me this day?



Thank You 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.

- From Don and MaryLou Erdman thanking us for the chicken 'n biscuits dinner delivered to them.
- From Victor and Lillian Teater thanking us for the chicken 'n biscuits dinner delivered to them.
- From Zilpha Kirk thanking Pastor Jan, Dot Brooks and Tina Haldeman for visits and calls.
- From Judy and Ralph Hewes thanking Pastors Jan and Craig, the choir and musicians, Circle Joanna, Stephen Ministry and others for love, care, prayers, notes and calls.
- From Lucille Wassmansdorf thanking the church for sending her a chicken 'n biscuits dinner.

Milestones In Our Congregation

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

Congratulations:

- To Karl Griffith and Janine Laskoski who were married on September 19.
- To John DeBrita who became an Adirondack 46er this summer when he finished hiking to the top of all 47 Adirondack Mountains that are 4000 feet or higher.

Sympathy:

- To Ed Bogardus and his family on the death of Ed's wife Betty who died on September 20.
- To Mary Jane Crowley and her family on the death of Mary Jane's mother, Hannah Quick, on September 26.

Theological Center Offers Courses



The Capital Region Theological Center, sponsored by the four Formula of Agreement denominations (the Reformed Church in America, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Presbyterian Church USA, and the United Church of Christ) offers a number of courses this fall. See the complete course offering on the flyer on the Discipleship Project bulletin board, but we print a few highlights here. You don't need to be a preacher or teacher to sign up for the courses.

- *Introduction to the New Testament.* Dr. Peter Bedford of Union College will lead this overview of the New Testament on Tuesday evenings, October 13 through December 15, from 7:00 to 9:00, at the Emmanuel-Friedens Church in Schenectady. The cost is \$225.
- *Intro to World Religions: Islam* is a unique experience to learn first hand from a faith leader, to tour a Muslim sacred space, and have to dialogue with practicing Muslims. *Intro to World Religions: Islam* will be held on Saturday, October 31, from 9:00 to 12:00 at the Islamic Center of the Capital Region in Schenectady. The cost is \$45.
- *World Religions Overview*, sponsored by the Golub Foundation. Gain an understanding of your neighbors and the world we live in with this comprehensive overview. This will be held on Saturday, October 31, from 12:30 to 5:00 at the congregation Gates of Heaven in Schenectady. The cost is \$60.

To register, visit the CRTTC website, www.capitalrtc.org, or copy the registration blank from off the Discipleship Project bulletin board.

Ellis Hospital Needs Chaplains and Chaplain Aids

The Pastoral Care Department at Ellis Hospital needs both volunteer Chaplain Aides and Night Chaplains. Chaplain Aides visit newly-admitted patients. Night Chaplains cover any pastoral emergencies at the hospital during the late evening and nighttime hours. Ellis Hospital provides training for each of these positions. If you would like to know more about serving others in this way, please contact the Rev. Paula Gravelle, Ellis Hospital Director of Pastoral Care, 243-4158.

Dutch Fair Report

We held our 61st annual Dutch Fair on Saturday, September 19. Many, many thanks to Dutch Fair chairpeople Lee Poremba, John Lehman and Richard Doyle, and to all the booth chairpersons, all the folks who worked in the kitchen, all our bakers, and everyone else who helped set up and take down the fair. Your efforts really paid off.

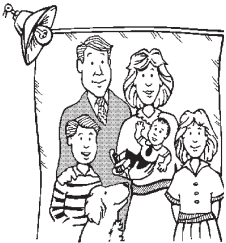
Here's a brief summary of how we did.

<u>BOOTH</u>	<u>NET INCOME OR (EXPENSE)</u>
Next-to-New Clothing	\$1,650
White Elephant	2,990
Plants	569
Book Nook	1,425
Toys	1,400
Jewelry	643
Baked Goods	701
Holiday Items	232
Dutch Café	1,712
Kiddie Fair	173
Cider and Donuts	356
Silent Auction	2,325
Craft Booth Rentals	215
Miscellaneous Income	197
Chicken & Biscuit Dinner	1,426
<u>FAIR EXPENSES</u>	
Miscellaneous Expenses	210
Advertising	170
Dumpsters and Trash Removal	700
Mr. Bouncy Bounce	<u>282</u>
<u>DUTCH FAIR PROFIT</u>	\$14,652

Dutch Fair income is put into our Building Fund for major maintenance and capital expenses. Our Dutch Fair helps us maintain and improve the buildings that others before have left to us.

Stop And Get Your Photo Taken

One of the finest tools we have for telling our community about our church is our Brink Hall photo board. Whenever people gather in Brink Hall for a wedding or funeral reception, or for some other event, you can be sure that people who do not go to our church will wander over to the photo board to see who we are. Those whose images are there reach out to our community and say: "I worship here. I am part of First Reformed Church; you come, too." We thank all these people for their witness.



On the first three Sundays of October church photographer Brian Schaefer will be here before and after worship with his camera to take our pictures. Many of us need to have new photos taken for our photo board because we change from year to year. Moreover, many of us need to have photos taken for the first time. So please, help us reach out to our community. A personal witness for Christ could never be easier than this. Make sure that Brian takes your picture before or after worship on Sundays October 4, 11 or 18. **Your image on our photo board makes our outreach stronger!**

Food And Faith Hosts "Harvest Delight"

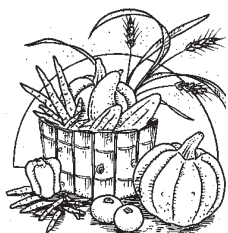
Our Food and Faith Initiative Group will host a special coffee hour after worship on Sunday, October 25 entitled "A Harvest Delight." They will serve home-made squash custard, apple crisp, and applesauce all made with locally-grown produce. They are inviting local farmers and food organizations to join us for an *educational fair* to help us better understand the impact of our food choices and the lives of local farmers. This special coffee hour is in lieu of the Harvest Dinner planned for October 24.

Join Us Helping At The Food Bank

Mindful of our consistory's long-term goal of encouraging and enabling us to be involved in hands-on missions, our Congregational Care Council is organizing a group of volunteers to work at the Regional Food Bank, 965 Albany Shaker Road (on the road to the airport). We are scheduled to work from 3:00 to 5:00 on Sunday afternoon, October 18. They can take up to 25 people at one time to work. We'll meet at the church and carpool to the Food Bank. If you'd like to be part of our team, sign up on the sheet posted outside Pastor Craig's office, or contact the church office, 370-4751.

Food Pantry Needs For October

Every week in the bulletin we publish the food most needed by the Schenectady Inner City Ministry Food Pantry. Below are the items needed in October. 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.

- October 4: Toilet tissue
- October 11: Juice
- October 18: Canned fruit
- October 25: Hot cocoa

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>
September week #1	160	251
September week #2	293	254
September week #3	224	228
September week #4	192	219
September Average	217	238
YTD Average	216	204

Family Finances Announced

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

<u>GIVING</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
September	\$25,432	\$27,996	(\$2,564)	(9%)
Total for the Year	\$225,589	\$226,425	(\$836)	(less than 1%)

Pastor Craig Will Teach “The Essential 100”

The Essential 100 is a plan of Bible reading designed especially for people who want a broad overview of the scriptures, and who want the encouragement that comes from reading the texts and talking about their meaning with others. *The Essential 100* selects 50 lessons from the Old Testament and another 50 from the New Testament, and then bundles these lessons into groups of five – twenty groups of five in all. The essential 100 texts can thus be read over a twenty-week period.

Pastor Craig Hoffman will lead twenty weeks of *The Essential 100* this coming program year on Wednesdays starting October 7. Three sessions of *The Essential 100* will be offered each Wednesday: one from 6:30 to 7:30 in the morning, another from 12:15 to 1:15 with participants invited to bring a brown bag lunch, and another from 7:15 to 8:30 in the evening. Participants may move between sessions as their schedules require.

Sign up sheets are posted in the narthex and outside of Pastor Craig’s study.

Camp Fowler Plans Harvest Gathering



Fowler Camp and Retreat Center is planning a Harvest Gathering at Glen Sanders Mansion on Monday, November 9 beginning at 6:00. This event will be a time of thanksgiving and celebration and an opportunity for those gathered to support Fowler monetarily. Some Fowler expenses formerly paid by the Albany Synod will now be the responsibility of Fowler itself. This change will require annual funds of approximately \$90,000 to be raised by Fowler.

The November 9 gathering is the inaugural Fowler fundraising event – we need you to make it a success. We are seeking table sponsors (\$250) and event sponsors (\$500+). If you cannot be a sponsor at this time, please plan on attending and bring a friend. A freewill offering will be received during the evening’s program. Reservations are required. Please call or email David Walsh, 370-2320, sisudaw@gmail.com if you are interested in sponsoring a table of 8, becoming an event sponsor or would like to sign up for this exciting event.

Help Get Fowler Ready For Winter

Fowler Booster Week-end is October 9-12. This is a week-end that everyone helps get the camp ready for winter. You can stay part of the week-end or the whole time. Registration is needed and meals cost \$2/person for breakfast and \$3/person for lunch and dinner. A registration form and week-end schedule are on the pew in the narthex. If you need more information contact Joanne Ligtenberg at 585-3813 or email her at jligt@frontiernet.net.

Earn Credits With Discipleship Project

Our Discipleship Project is one way we encourage adults to be intentional about their own spiritual growth by giving points for classes taken, books read, opportunities exercised. We are beginning the last quarter of our project to increase our adult spirituality in 2009. So far we have earned 374 credits towards our goal of 500 of the year. We encourage every adult to earn 5 credits, but you are welcome to earn more. The first 5 credits are posted on the Project board.

This fall our church is offering two opportunities to earn more credits. Sundays after worship we offer Table Talk, which earns a ½ credit per Sunday. Then on Wednesdays Pastor Craig will be leading lessons on the Essential 100. (See details in another article in this issue of *The Messenger*.) The fall session earns 4 credits. There are Fowler retreats and courses at the Capital Region Theological Center, CRTCC. If you prefer to do something in the comfort of your own home, there are books to take out from our library or e-courses. Check out the bulletin boards or see Sunny Baldwin for more information.

MOM For October Is Camp Fowler

Our Mission of the Month for October is the Fowler Fund Drive – A Future with Hope. We have pledged \$5,000 toward the Camp Fowler Campaign that has given us the new Fenimore Dining Hall, and will convert the old Suits Dining Hall into the Leet Nature Center. We have raised about half of our pledge with previous offerings this year. Fowler's ministry is special to us all; this year we sent more children and youth to Fowler than any other church – 33 in all. Moreover, we sent 19 volunteers to help staff the camp. We believe in the mission of Camp Fowler. Won't you help make sure Camp Fowler is available for our kids and grandkids in the years to come?

For more information, go to the website: campfowler.org

Designate your Mission of the Month offering by using the specially marked envelope in your box of offering envelopes. Need a box? Call Kathie in our church office, 370-4751.

Retreats At Camp Fowler Are Available

Camp Fowler in Speculator, NY is not just a summer camp for kids. It's a year-round retreat center for adults and youth groups. Upcoming retreats include the following.

- Youth Leader Summit: Dec. 4-5
- PSALM Retreat for Artists and those who appreciate art: Jan. 10-12
- Daughters of Eve for mothers and daughters: Feb. 5-7
- Marriage Enrichment: Feb. 12-14
- Winter Youth Camp for 6th-8th Grade: Feb. 14-16

Go to the Fowler website, campfowler.org, for more information. Or speak to one of the pastors if you're interested in an upcoming retreat.

Book Group Will Discuss New Selection

Join other readers in your church family at 7:15 on the second-to-the-last 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. There is no need to sign up. Just get the book, read it, and join in. Here's the schedule:

- Tuesday, October 20, Carolyn Norris will lead a discussion of *Travelling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith* by Anne Lamott. This is the spiritual biography of a contemporary author with a troubled past who, against all odds, comes to believe in God and then in herself.

Join Us In Working For Donuts

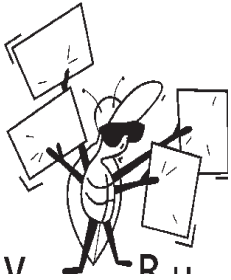
Our Buildings and Grounds Council has scheduled a Fall Work Day for Saturday, October 31 from 8:00 to 1:00. The B & G Council is preparing materials and directions for a variety of projects to prepare our buildings and our grounds for winter. There is something for you to do! What might it be? Take a look at the list that follows, and then set aside this day to work with others on your church home. Coffee and donuts are your reward! Sign-up sheets are posted on the bulletin board outside of Pastor Craig's office. Signing up helps us plan enough food and drink. Here's some of what needs to be done:

- Get our lawns and gardens winter-ready
- Clean gutters
- Remove screens and install storm windows on the sanctuary
- Clear the slope to Collins Lake of young trees
- Help prepare our Brink Hall roof for winter
- And lots more!

Want to feel like this is really your church home? Then help work on it. We'll provide equipment and guidance. All we need is you! Sign up soon on the bulletin board outside of Pastor Craig's



Youth Group Announces New Activities



FROGS, our youth group for 4th through 8th graders who Fully Rely On God, is making changes. Parents will take turns leading “hopenings” on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month. Heather Kramer will continue to assist. In order to be greener Frogs, we want to use email notices as much as possible. Please see Sunny Baldwin or leave a note in the Coordinator of Christian Living mailbox with the email address you would like us to use. Here’s the October Hopenings:

- Sunday, October 4 will be a FAMILY activity. We will caravan at 12:30 to Central Park to participate in the 2009 Capital Region Buddy Walk. The Walk is an inspirational 1 mile walk. There will be live music, bouncy bounce, balloon magicians and more. There is no obligation to collect pledges, but it is certainly welcomed. See Diana Ackner or check out the website: <http://www.dsahrc.org/what-we-do-topmenu-69/events/the-buddy-walk>
- Sunday, October 18, we'll take a hike at Christman Sanctuary on Schoharie Turnpike in Duanesburg. It is a “gentle walk” with a beautiful waterfall at the end of it. Bring a bag lunch to eat at the falls. The Munsons are leading, but we need additional adults to drive and hike with them.
- We still need someone to volunteer on Sunday, November 1. Call Sunny Baldwin, 374-8276, if you can help.

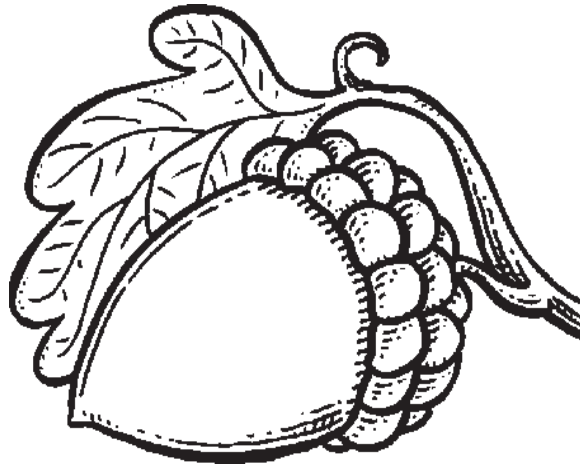
Giving Statements Are Available

Financial Secretary Bobbie Nelson and Assistant Financial Secretary Linda Schaefer will distribute giving statements for the first 9 months of 2009 after 8:00 and 10:00 worship on the first three Sundays in October. Picking up your giving statement after worship saves your church the expense of mailing it to you, and reviewing your giving statement helps verify our recording accuracy. The sealed envelopes will be organized by giving number those days, so please have your number in mind when you go to pick up your statement. Your giving number is the number printed on the upper right of your offering envelopes.

Statements will also be available to pick up from the church office during the week until November 1 when all the remaining statements will be mailed.

November Anniversaries

Bob Jr. and Amparo Pitts	11
Jim and Kim Pierce	22
Auggie and Joan Casper	26
Dan and Trudi Ertel	28



November Birthdays

Hugh Boyd	1	Karl Griffith	14
Joan Grant	1	Dana Poremba	14
John Konczeski	1	Cliff Tygert	14
Sandra Konczeski	1	Karolyn Bekkering	15
Al Snyder	2	Judy Hewes	15
Jessica Himmelwright	3	Amparo Pitts	16
Megan McConchie	3	June Selke	16
Marion Wade	3	Barbara Talbot	18
Hill Bekkering, Sr.	4	Joe Deamer	20
Fran Mathes	4	Caitlin Crowley	21
Tom Monaghan	5	Sarah Hoskinson	21
Greg DeBrita	6	Aubrey Pierce	21
Jane Willcox	9	Bill Greer	22
Beth Oaks	10	Emily Hoskinson	22
Linda Schaefer	10	Kathy Hoskinson	22
Ken Nelson	11	Bob Pitts, Jr.	22
John Lehman	12	Harris Gregory, Jr.	23
Sandra Suits	13	Heather Kramer	26
Ken Willcox, Jr.	13	Philip Hermance	26
Cheryl Conover	14	Leila Kohout	28
Jim Geiger	14	Natalie Shoemaker	28

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