

# *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

## Simplicity Again

I wrote about simplicity last month, and I do so again. Articles I've read and conversations I've had are, quite without my will being involved, prodding me to think again about the spiritual discipline of simplicity.

The most recent prod came from Martin Marty, a Lutheran Church historian I've long admired. In this 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of John Calvin's birth, Marty wrote an article giving thanks for insights that Calvin and his offspring (us) leave as a legacy to all. Marty identified four things Calvin understood deeply, things worthy of our attention today. Here they are, and here's what he said about them.

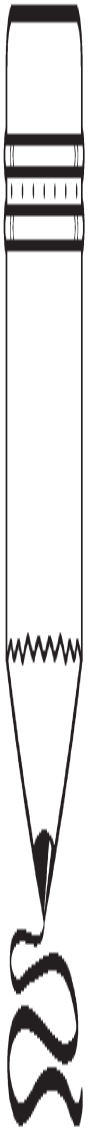
Calvin taught that all human beings are tempted to idolatry -- to putting something else in the place of God in our lives. "As we reflect on the fascination with wealth that occupied so much cultural space in recent years, and as we see its enormous costs still unfolding, how can we not admire Calvin's stringent call to 'let God alone be God' in all aspects of our lives?"

Calvin taught that the way to resist idolatry is to cultivate simplicity. Christians should not be dour; joy in life and lightness of heart are blessings and much to be desired. But steady mindfulness is called for. "Disciplined reserve about excess is called for when the finitude and fragility of the world's resources claim our attention as urgently as its beauty and goodness."

Calvin taught a profound care for the public realm. Christianity is not just about us and about those close to us; it is about how we live with others in cities, nations, and world. "This care combines a deep awareness of the human tendency to abuse power with a firm commitment to working toward greater justice in social arrangements."

Calvin loved the church. He knew how messy and frustrating the church could be, but he resisted the temptation to think that the church should include just holy people. "It is precisely in this earthy and earthly church with all its failings that God has promised to be present in Word and sacrament, in admonition and fellowship."

The Thanksgiving season is upon us. As we give God thanks, we do well to consider what response is called for in gratitude to God's blessings. We do well to heed Calvin's counsel: Put God first in life. Learn to live simply. Be a citizen wary of power and dedicated to justice for all. Help build Christ's Church.



## 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 Kayleigh Denney thanking the church for her scholarship to Camp Fowler.
- From Ed Bogardus and his daughters Kathy Pratt and Susan Woznack thanking the church for the thoughts, prayers and caring during the difficult time of the death of Betty, their wife and mother.

## Milestones In The Lives of Our Congregation

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

Our hearty congratulations go to:

- Jack and Carol Arnold on the birth of a new grandson, Sydney Thomas, born in North Carolina on October 21 to Chris and Angela Aquilino.
- Karl Griffith who ran two marathons this past summer and has qualified to run in the Boston Marathon this coming April.

We extend our sympathy to:

- Dennis and Sheryl Pelkey and their family on the death of Dennis's brother Bob.
- Fran and Nancy Landry and their family on the death of Fran's brother Steve.

## Food Needed At SICM Food Pantry

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 November. 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.

- |                |                          |                |             |
|----------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| • November 1:  | dry mixes; potato/noodle | • November 22: | canned meat |
| • November 8:  | oatmeal                  | • November 29: | oatmeal     |
| • November 15: | cereal                   |                |             |

## MOM Is SICM Food Pantry

Our November Mission of the Month is the Schenectady Inner City Ministry's (SICM) Food Pantry. Located at 839 Albany Street in Schenectady, it is Schenectady County's largest food pantry. It typically serves over 2,000 people every month. Over 37,000 people were served last year. We give food weekly to the SICM Food Pantry in baskets found in the narthex and outside the Office. Dry mixes (tuna helper, potato dishes, noodle mixes, etc.) are especially needed during November. The Food Pantry always needs baby formula (*Enfamil w/iron*), brown paper and plastic bags. Our gifts of money help the food pantry purchase milk certificates and other items from the Regional Food Bank at very low cost. Your Mission of the Month gifts can make a difference in feeding the hungry and caring for the poor in Schenectady.

## Here's Our Snow Policy



November might be the month for our first heavy snow (but let's hope not). What happens if it snows hard before worship? Our policy is always to hold worship if at all possible. However, if Scotia or Glenville authorities declare a snow emergency, and if we are asked to keep our cars off the streets, we will comply and cancel our Sunday morning schedule. If worship and Sunday School are canceled we will make every effort to announce our closing in the media. We will also put a message on the church's answering machine. (If phone service is out, this, of course, is not possible.) Check the TV and radio stations, call the church, 370-4751, or call the Pastors, 399-3823, to find out if worship is canceled if you hear that a snow emergency has been declared.

## **Communion Offering Will Go To Joan Nicole Prince Home**



We celebrate the Lord's Supper on Sunday, November 1, All Saints Sunday. A communion thanksgiving offering will be received that day for the Joan Nicole Prince Community Home, 22 Glenview Drive in Scotia. Although the home is not accepting patients at this time, they are raising operating funds and hope to re-open in the Spring. Volunteers will be trained and guests screened after January 1. Call 346-5471 to volunteer. Their website has more information: [joannicoleprincehome.org](http://joannicoleprincehome.org).

The Prince Home provides end of life care for one or two people and is privately funded. It is not supported by federal, state or local funds. There is a mortgage on the house, \$125,000 of which remains. The house is not held by Hospice, nor by a health care facility or organization. All of the money comes from individual and corporate donors. There is a Holiday Bazaar on Saturday, November 14 at the Home. See the flyer on the bulletin boards.

Designate your Communion Thanksgiving Offering by using the special envelope in your box of offering envelopes, or by using the special offering envelopes available that Sunday morning in worship.

## **Thanksgiving Worship Announced**

Thanksgiving Eve worship will be held in our Sanctuary on Wednesday evening, November 25 at 7:30. Join others in your church family for this time of worship. We'll sing some of the traditional Thanksgiving hymns, and give God thanks for life and life's blessings. Make our national day of thanksgiving more than just a day off. See you in worship on Thanksgiving Eve!

We receive an offering of food on Thanksgiving Eve for the Schenectady Inner City Food Pantry. This year they especially need baby food and Enfamil with Iron, as well as dry mixes like noodles, soups and potato dishes. We also receive an offering that night for the SICM Food Pantry. Your boxes of offering envelopes have a Thanksgiving holiday envelope in them. This is one way for us to share our bounty with some of our neighbors in need.

## **Consecrate Your Pledge November 22**

This year Thanksgiving Sunday, November 22 is our Consecration Sunday. Consecration Sunday is the time in the life of our church when in our worship we consecrate our pledges of our coming year's giving. Thinking seriously about our giving, and making and consecrating our pledges helps us grow as disciples of Christ. Consecration Sunday is a time to reflect on the blessings we've received, and to consider how we will give back to God.

Parents, this is a good time to speak to your children about giving, and help them develop their own discipline of regular, systematic giving. Offering envelopes can help. Make sure that your child has a box of offering envelopes from Sunday School. Offerings are taken in our Sunday School classes, and all the money offered there goes to a special mission that the students select themselves.

Many among us make deliberate, faith-building decisions on Consecration Sunday. That's why we celebrate as well as worship. Coffee and donuts will be served that day after 8:00 worship and a buffet luncheon will be served after 10:00 worship. Make Consecration Sunday a significant part of your own faith and growth in Christ.

## **Confirmation Classes Offered To Youth**

Pastors Craig and Jan Hoffman and Coordinator of Christian Living Sunny Baldwin will offer a series of confirmation classes for youth considering making a public confession of faith. These classes meet Sunday afternoons, beginning January 24, with time off during public school vacations. On Sunday, January 24, we will meet with young people and their parents to discuss expectations and go over the calendar. The classes explore what it means to be a Christian. At the end of the series, youth decide if they wish to make their public confession of faith and be confirmed. Confirmation will take place on Pentecost Sunday, May 23.

Are you, or is your son or daughter interested? Would you like more information? Please talk to Pastor Craig or Jan, or to Sunny. They're looking forward to talking with you.

## 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>
October week #1	208	196
October week #2	199	213
October week #3	237	288
October week #4	200	228
October Average	211	231
YTD Average	215	228

## Finances Given For October

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

<u>GIVING</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
October	\$30,047	\$26,464	\$3,583	14%
Total for the Year	\$255,686	\$252,889	\$2,797	1%

## News From Our Cemetery Committee

Our church has three cemeteries: the one in front of the church, the Sanders Cemetery on Ballston Avenue, and Park Cemetery on Sacandaga Road. Park Cemetery is our only one where there are still vacant burial sites and urn garden sites for people to purchase.

Properly managing a cemetery is a big responsibility. Records need careful keeping. Mowing, pruning, plowing and general maintenance all need faithful attention. Moreover, funds need to be properly managed to insure that there is money to maintain the cemetery long after all the graves have been sold. To tend to this important task, our church has a Board of Cemetery Trustees appointed by our Consistory and assigned the responsibility of faithfully managing these cemeteries. Our Board of Cemetery Trustees is made up of seven people, each serving three-year terms. Our current board is made up of chairman Ken Willcox Jr., Bill Faulkner, Erv Grant, Harris Gregory Jr., Dave Schaefer, Jane Corby and Mike Marré. It also hires a cemetery administrator, currently Clark Adams. Thank all these people when you see them. They tend to an important work for our church.

For many years Beth Worthley has served as the board's secretary, and we thank her so very much for her faithful service. Beth needs to give up her responsibilities, however, and the board is looking for a new secretary. The secretary keeps minutes, and tends to the paperwork that arises from the sale of burial or urn garden sites. The board gives a small stipend for these services. Call Ken Willcox if you'd like to know more, 356-3890.

For more information on purchasing a burial plot or urn garden plot, please contact the board's Cemetery Administrator, Clark Adams, 370-0217.

## Discipleship Project Will End Soon

We have entered the last quarter of this year's Discipleship Project of encouraging each of us to pay attention to our growth in faith. It is amazing to see how many of us have participated. We post the first 5 credits that a person earns on the Discipleship Project bulletin board next to Pastor Jan's office. After that, any additional credits are still applied towards the church goal. Many people have already met their goal of 5 credits, and have even gone beyond. We also have others who want to remain anonymous, but who have nonetheless worked toward the church goal. If you haven't turned in your cards, please do so as soon as possible. All predictions are that we will exceed our church goal of 500 credits. We wonder how far we can go?



## Join Us For Hanging Of The Greens

Our annual Hanging of the Greens will be held on Sunday, November 29, the first Sunday in Advent. We gather at 3:30 to decorate the church inside and out, and make ornaments for our Brink Hall Christmas tree, and cards for our shut-ins. We enjoy a potluck meal together at 5:30. Please bring your own table service and a dish to share. We'll provide dessert and drinks. After supper there is carol singing and even a special visit from St. Nicholas. Plan to join us -- young, old and in between. It helps us plan if you sign up on the sheet posted outside Pastor Craig's office.

This year, instead of an Angel Tree, we are asking for donations of toys for the Salvation Army. Please bring an unwrapped toy appropriate for a child up to 12 years old and place it under the Christmas tree in Brink Hall.

## Here's How To Help Mission Projects At Christmas



Here are ways to include your church's missions in your Christmas gift-giving plans.

The Missions Council will again have a Mitten Tree to collect hats, mittens and scarves for the Salvation Army. We will also collect toys for children through 12 years of age for their gift-giving program. Please don't wrap your gifts. Bring them to Brink Hall by Sunday, December 13 and put them under the tree. The Salvation Army also needs volunteers. Call 346-0222 to sign up to ring the bell at the Christmas Red Kettles, or to help at the Booth Center for women and children. Volunteers are needed to serve breakfast or lunch, pack grocery bags for the food pantry, paint and help with other maintenance tasks throughout the year.

We will also join other Albany Synod Reformed Churches throughout the state and collect gifts for the AIDS Council of Northeastern New York. A list of needed gifts is posted on the bulletin boards and on a pink list outside the church office. Please don't wrap your gifts. Bring them to the church by Monday, December 7. Or take them to the Albany Synod office, 1790 Grand Blvd. in Schenectady between Monday, November 30 and Monday, December 7. The office is open M-F, 8:15 to 4:00, except Fridays between noon and 1:00. For more information on the Aids Council, go to their website, [www.aidsCouncil.org](http://www.aidsCouncil.org).

There is no Angel Tree for client families of Northeast Parent and Child as there has been in past years. The Northeast Parent and Child Society is collecting gifts differently this year. They have created a Holiday Hope Fund through which you can make a donation, buy a gift from their wish list, or order a gift from the Wal-Mart gift registry. Gifts can be dropped off at 530 Franklin St. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor at the Center. Donations allow Northeast clinicians to help impoverished parents budget, plan, and shop for their children during the holiday season. Northeast serves over 6,300 people from 29 counties in New York State. Almost all live at or below the poverty level. Go to their website for more information: [neparentchild.org](http://neparentchild.org), or call 579-3502. See the blue flyers on the bulletin boards.

## Here's What's Happening At Camp Fowler

Camp Fowler will celebrate and give thanks for its summer's theme, "Hunting for Hope," with a Harvest Gathering dinner at the Glen Sanders Mansion on Monday evening, November 9 at 6:00. The evening will include dinner, a silent auction, stories of summer and music. A free will offering will be taken. Contact Jen Kenneally, 399-9032, or email [jakenneally@aol.com](mailto:jakenneally@aol.com) to make reservations.

Fowler is a year-round conference center. Several retreats are scheduled for the winter:

- PSALM Retreat, January 10-12, for artists and those supporting the arts
- Daughters of Eve, February 5-7, for mothers and daughters
- Marriage Enrichment, February 12-14
- Winter Youth Camp for 6<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> graders, February 14-16

Go to the Fowler website for more information, and see the pictures from last summer: [campfowler.org](http://campfowler.org).

## Youth Group Makes Plans For November

FROGS, the youth group of our church for young people in Grades 4 through 8, meet the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month for fun and service. Parents and other adults take turns leading the activities. Here are our November plans.

- Sunday, November 1— We will explore our creativity by having a “Noah’s Ark Lunch,” and by making tie-dye tee shirts. Bring \$1 for lunch and a plain white tee shirt to dye. After lunch we’ll create our own rainbow shirts!
- Sunday, November 15— We’ll meet for lunch at 11:45 and then assemble our Christmas Boxes for Samaritan’s purse. Bring a \$1 for lunch, a shoebox, and items for a child your age and gender. We’ll mix and match the items, and wrap the boxes.

## Teachers Plan Special Advent Program For Youth

Our Sunday School teachers are planning for Advent. This year we will present a new and exciting “Journey to Bethlehem” program in Sunday School. Youth, pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> graders, will be exploring this journey in a different way each week. In their classrooms, students will rotate through a variety of stations and explore the story of Christ’s birth in different ways in each station through music, art, cooking, science, and even computers. The Journey will begin the first Sunday of Advent, November 29, and continue through December 27. Children won’t want to miss this adventure as we learn hands-on about the Christmas story.

## Help Our Youth Fill Shoeboxes

The FROGS, our youth group for 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders, will pack shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child on Sunday, November 18. This program, sponsored by Samaritan’s Purse, strives to bring joy and hope to children in desperate situations by means of gift-filled shoeboxes, and the Good News of God’s love. We thank Kim Monaco for coordinating this effort for our group this year.



If you would like to help, here are some things you might consider:

- **DONATE ITEMS FOR THE SHOEBOXES.** First, we need shoeboxes. Plastic ones are best because youth can reuse them to store belongings. Then we need new gifts. Gift ideas include school supplies, stamp and inkpad sets, coloring and picture books, small toys like cars, balls, musical instruments and jump ropes. They can also use hygiene items, sunglasses, toy jewelry and flashlights with extra batteries. Please avoid food and candy, gum and toothpaste.
- **GIVE MONEY TOWARDS SHIPPING.** Each box costs \$7 to send, and Samaritan’s Purse asks that organizations that donate boxes include the shipping costs as well.
- **PRAY FOR THOSE WHO RECEIVE THE BOXES.** The hope is that children who receive these gifts will realize that God loves them and therefore, it will be a way to help bring many children and families to faith in Christ.
- **VOLUNTEER YOURSELF.** There are numerous drop-off sites in the capital district that are in need of volunteers. You can find out more by going online to [www.samaritanspurse.org](http://www.samaritanspurse.org).

Donations need to be here by Sunday morning, November 18 so that the youth can pack them that day.

## Read A Good Book

Join other readers in your church family at 7:15 on the fourth 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, November 23, we meet next to briefly review with one another some of what each of us has been reading. The group will decide its next selections from those presented.

## What Is “Kids Hope USA?”



KIDS Hope USA is a ministry of mentoring elementary school children using trained volunteers from local congregations. Our consistory has begun investigating KIDS Hope as ministry that might be well suited to our congregation -- one to which we are called. Our Christian Education Council wants all of us to learn something about the program along with our consistory.

KIDS Hope USA began with church people in Holland and Zeeland, Michigan seeking a way to help children at risk and their families. KIDS Hope volunteers give one-on-one help to children in local schools to help them do their studies well and develop healthy self-esteem. KIDS Hope volunteers can change lives, and they can get enormous satisfaction from doing so.

KIDS Hope USA churches provide at least 10 adult volunteers who spend one hour every week mentoring a child in the school, during class hours. If adopted by our consistory, we hope to work at Scotia's Sacandaga Elementary School. School administrators and teachers identify children that need extra help, and the church assigns a trained person to each child. Teachers provide assignments for mentors to work on with their child, but this is also a time to just listen, encourage, read and have fun. Churches also provide a prayer partner for every volunteer, so that volunteers know they're being held up in prayer while they are with their child. This means that many people can participate, even shut-ins, and be part of making a difference in a child's life.

KIDS Hope USA requires a church to hire a paid coordinator from among its members who works 5 to 10 hours a week. This coordinator is responsible for training and coordinating the volunteers, and for interfacing with the school administrators and teachers. One of the church's ministers must also participate.

Volunteers may not proselytize, but may wear special t-shirts that identify them as KIDS Hope USA volunteers and a member of First Reformed Church. The church, however, may provide opportunities for the children and their families and invite them to come to a special event at church during the school year.

Our sister congregation, the Bellevue Reformed Church, is a KIDS Hope USA church -- the only church in New York State, but not for long. The Lisha's Kill Reformed Church also is beginning this ministry. To learn more, go to the website, [www.kidshopeusa.org](http://www.kidshopeusa.org) or speak to Christian Education Council leaders Pam Walsh or Chris Bodden, or talk to Coordinator of Christian Living Sunny Baldwin or Pastor Jan Hoffman. Your consistory has invited the coordinator from the Bellevue Reformed Church to speak with them at their November meeting to learn more.

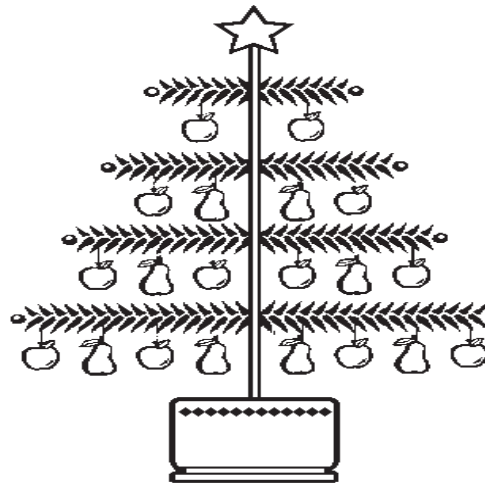
## Table Talk Discusses “Whose Birthday Is It Anyway?”

Whose birthday is it, anyway? On two Sundays, November 8 and 15 that will be the theme of Table Talk, our adult forum that meets after worship at 11:20. (You always have time to get a cup of coffee and bring it with you.) Table Talk will be led those days by Sunny Baldwin and Jan Hoffman, using material entitled, *Whose Birthday is it, Anyway?*

During December we often get caught between Santa Claus and Jesus. Table Talk will help us plan a more rewarding Advent and Christmas holiday. Participants will be given a chance to examine their current practices, listen to the practices of others, and combine all our insights into a workable plan for the holiday season. We often get carried away with unsatisfying expectations and obligations during December. Let's make plans to live how we truly want to celebrate. All ages are welcome. We'll meet in Memorial Lounge. Please sign up on the sheet outside Pastor Craig's office so we have enough resources.

## *December Anniversaries*

William and Natalie Monaghan	1
Kurt and Donna Ahnert	11
Victor and Lillian Teater	22
Don and Maureen Bekkering	26
Dirk and Linda Francois	28
Bruce and Pat McConnelee	28
Jim and Kim Pierce	29
Duane and Pat VanPatten	29
George and Gayle VanHeusen	31



## *December Birthdays*

Carol Arnold	2	Faith Libby	18
Maureen Bekkering	2	Opal Oaks	18
Susan Woznack	2	Ed Naumowicz	19
Sue Penn	3	Crystal Hoey	20
Michael Szemansco	3	Margaret Walker	20
Karl Griffith	5	Michael Carpenter	21
Rebecca Carpenter	9	Jean Hubbell	21
Cathy Deamer	9	Louise Coons	22
Andrew Archibald	10	Bob Atwood	23
Mark Lansing	10	Nelson Corby	23
Kathy Reynolds	10	Dorothy Brooks	24
Glenda Lewis	11	Steve Eddy	25
Tim Monaghan	12	Natalie Monaghan	25
Donna Ahnert	13	Debbie Maloney	27
Zachary Wurz	13	Milton Barton	28
Debra Griffith	14	Sarah Hoffmann	29
Emil Jarczynski	15	Pat VanPatten	29
Kelly Kilgallen	15	Mike Atchley	30
Edward Kedzior	16	Brian Vaccaro	30
Jean Skinner	16	Richard Doyle	31

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