

MESSENGER

Niskayuna Reformed Church

January 2021

I was somewhat amused by the excitement surrounding the arrival of 2021. There seemed to be a current underlying some comments that the changing of the year would somehow make all of the current struggles of life miraculously disappear. As if the COVID-19 virus knows what year it is, that its contract for existing only existed until the strike of midnight on December 31. This also applied to societal issues, financial woes, and other trials of life. Maybe you were hoping for a more joyful Messenger article from your pastor to begin 2021. I am not being pessimistic, only realistic. While I get the excitement that a new year can bring, life doesn't magically change because a number changes on the end of the date.

In some ways there is hope for 2021. The Chicago Bears somehow backed their way into the playoffs, and once you're in, anything can happen. Sorry Giants fans, the Eagles could have helped you a little bit more. In other news, the arrival of vaccines for COVID-19 at the end of 2020 helps us to believe that this pandemic will end. That life with masks and physical distancing will not be required for eternity. With the changing of the years does come this mentality about change in our own lives. While somewhat arbitrary, because you can always change, the new year provides that lynchpin moment to make that decision to transform yourself. The new year can always serve as a reminder that a new year could equal a new me.

Yet, many things in the world will remain the same. COVID life will remain a reality for at least the next several months. The political strife and division that marked 2020 will not soon go away. Discussions about racial injustice are still ones we need to have. Greed will still exist. Hate will still exist. Hunger will still exist. War will still exist. Diseases will still exist.

Despair still surrounds us, but hope is not lost. I have found a lot of comfort in the Psalms recently. I believe it is because in them I witness the acknowledgment of loss, anger, frustration, and despair yet balanced with hope, love, joy, and faith. For instance, in Psalm 42, we hear the lament that tears have been the food for the psalmist both day and night. The psalmist asks why God has forgotten him, and the psalm still ends with, *"Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God."*

I also witness this paradox in Jesus as he prays in the garden of Gethsemane in chapter twenty-six of Matthew's gospel,

"Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.' And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.'"

Jesus faces a wall of darkness within and without. He engages with the darkness, asking it to be taken from him while also submitting to God's will. What a challenge that is. What faith that takes to be able to do that.

It inspires and challenges me to continue to shine a light even while darkness surrounds me. Maybe the new year is an apt time to recommit myself to doing that the best way I know how. I can acknowledge the pain, the anger, the despair, yet also speak joy, love, and faith. This just might be the most honest witness of the gospel I can give to others.

Peace be with you,

Pastor Jason

Birthdays

3 Roy Burger
5 Arthur Vonk
6 Kim Cerone
7 John Burger
7 Adrean Kreig
8 Bill Dzamba
10 Elizabeth Maclutsky
11 Kim Booth
13 Nick Siver
14 Jessica Holmes
14 Phoebe Stafford
18 Joanna Burger
19 Mason Roth
20 Bill Vincent
21 Jenny Politano

22 Curt Johnson
22 Anna Pustay
23 Cynthia Kuchera
23 Brian Mazza
24 Savannah Gartner
26 Nancy Guild
26 Judy Valente
26 Shirley Vane
28 Jane Green

29 William Booth
29 Linda Freligh
30 Jan Clark
31 Andy Burger



Anniversaries

Brian & Jacki Maclutsky 1
Joe & Judy Battiste 4
Nick & Katie Persons 12
Ron & Barb Valenti 22
Harry & Cynthia Kuchera 24
Bruce & Sharon Rice-Herbst 26

Women's Fellowship Group (WFG)

The WFG will be meeting on **Wednesday, January 13**, at 2:00 pm, via zoom.

Women's Book Group (WBG)

The WBG will meet on **Saturday, January 16th** at 10 am, via zoom.

Please contact Trudy Lehner with questions and login information for **BOTH** groups at 518-346-8952 or tlehner@aol.com. All are welcome to join!

Niskayuna Senior Center

We continue to be available to help our Seniors. Our bus/delivery service continues to be available for Niskayuna residents for grocery, pharmacy, post office runs or delivery of masks. You can reach Matt, our bus driver, at 518-495-6202.

You are always welcome to reach out to us at the office, 518-372-4969 as well. We continue to offer our Gershon's lunch program Tues and Thurs with drive-thru pick-u. In some instances, residents can have lunch delivered. Menus are online at <https://www.niskayuna.org/> – senior news – news & announcements, or you can call us to have the menu emailed or mailed directly. Continue to look for our newsletter, appointment workout classes on Zoom and our face book page. These all offer opportunities to keep your mind and body active.

Stay healthy and active with us til we see you again!

MISSION AND SERVICE COMMITTEE

January Mission of the Month

Our Mission of the Month Collection for January will be for Wildwood Programs. Wildwood first opened its doors over 50 years ago as a local, not for profit organization that was formed when a group of parents found that their children did not fit neatly into existing programs. Today, Wildwood meets the needs of the individuals it supports with a person-centered, holistic approach where a wide range of education, employment, residential, recreation, and counseling services work collaboratively to maximize a person's independence. Your donation will enable Wildwood Programs to continue supporting local families with special needs. Thank you!

Looking ahead

February-Schenectady City Mission

Communion Collections

November: Operation Adopt a Soldier:
\$215 Collected, \$250 Donated

December: Guiding Eyes For the Blind:
Collected:\$405

Once again, we appreciate the generosity of our congregation.

Special Note:

Our Communion Collections run for the entire month. If you are unable to attend church on the 1st Sunday of the month, you may mail your donation to the church. All checks should be made payable to **NRC** and specify on the memo line the name of the organization that you wish to support.

SICM Emergency Food Pantry

We are still collecting disposable adult and child sized face masks. For the months of January through March SiCM is continuing the CAN You Help Food Drive will be collecting Canned There are

collection boxes in the education building for donations. You may drop off your items after 1:30 pm, Monday-Friday. Please see the flyer on the next page for more details.

The Food Pantry is now accepting volunteers - call the pantry at 518-346-4445 for more information.

Monetary donations are also welcome and can often purchase more food per dollar than we often realize. There is a green collection box in the narthex.

Every donation impacts lives.

2021 Volunteer Opportunities

Schenectady City Mission-

Currently the volunteer opportunities for serving dinner are on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions. But there are still ways you can get involved. Please see the following to learn more

<https://citymission.com/get-involved/>

Salvation Army Soup Kitchen-

2021 dates are pending.

Dates are determined on a month-to-month basis

UPCOMING M & SC Events

Brooks BBQ 2021—April 21st and August 18th

Next Meeting:

January 11, 2021 @ 6pm

All are welcome

Please remember the needy, the hungry and the poor.



SICM CANNED GOODS DRIVE

“CAN” YOU HELP? SiCM’s newest campaign for collecting all types of canned food to replenish their Food Pantry throughout the upcoming Winter. NRC will have two blue bins in Education Building for this purpose. This drive will run till March 31, 2021. The Education Building will be open Monday-Friday, **after 1:30 pm**, for you to drop off your canned goods.

Additionally, their food pantry has been remodeled to make it more modern and safer during these COVID-19 times, including plexiglass barriers and development of a “call in” system and delivery options. No walk-in service is operating at this time. Consider taking a tour or volunteering. View their website at [us](#) or contact their office 518-346-4445.



CAN YOU HELP?

SICM remained open all year long to help families in need during COVID-19

NOW WE NEED YOUR HELP

SICM STATS for 2019
691,809 total meals served
total households served **13,301**
4,500 total volunteer hours



Notice Regarding COVID Vaccines

Dear Community Partner:

Schenectady County has recently been informed that Phase IB of the COVID-19 Vaccination distribution will include people 75 years of age and older. This phase could start as early as the second week in January. The purpose of this email is to identify those Schenectady County residents who are 75 years of age and older who are receiving this email: individuals and their family members, clients, constituents, residents of senior apartments and assisted living facilities, community based service providers, and others. This email is not to identify residents of skilled nursing facilities as the vaccination process has already started in those locations. I am asking you to identify those people 75 years of age and older who are interested in receiving the vaccine and to collect the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone Number
- Date of Birth
- Email address

If you are an individual 75 years of age and older who is responding to this email, you will need to have your own computer with email and internet access, as the process for registering for the vaccine is online. If you do not have your own computer equipment, perhaps there is a friend or relative who can assist you. At the time of the vaccination clinic, there will be a weblink that will need to be accessed.

If you are a senior residence, assisted living facility or other type of community based service provider responding on behalf of your residents, etc., if the people you serve have access to their own computer equipment as described above, that is preferred. If that equipment is not available on an individual level, I am asking the facility, apartment building, etc. to be able to provide the necessary computer access in order to be able to register those people.

Schenectady County, either this Department or the County Manager's Office, will also need direct contact information for individuals who are registering on their own, as well as contact information for the residential buildings, assisted living facilities and other community based service organizations in order to communicate information as it becomes available. Please provide your name, organization, phone number and email address.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Here's to a happy, healthy and safe 2021!

Cathryn Bern-Smith, Manager
Department of Senior & Long Term Care Services
107 Nott Terrace, Suite 305
Schenectady, NY 12308-3170

518-382-8481

<https://www.schenectadycounty.com/sltc>

If you click the link, you can email them!!

January 2021

Friday, January 1

Happy New Year
Office Closed
7 pm-AA

Saturday, January 2

No events

Sunday, January 3

Mission-Wildwood

9:30 am-Worship Service (S)
10:45 am-Coffee Hour

Monday, January 4

1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Violin (102)

Tuesday, January 5

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
7 pm-Boy Scouts (FH)

Wednesday, January 6

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
10 am-Mid-week Coffee Hour
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)

Thursday, January 7

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Violin (102)

Friday, January 8

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
7 pm-AA

Saturday, January 9

No events

Sunday, January 10

9:30 am-Worship Service (S)
10:45 am-Coffee Hour
11 am-Sunday School

Monday, January 11

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Violin (102)

Tuesday, January 12

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
7 pm-Boy Scouts (FH)

Wednesday, January 13

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
10 am-Mid-week Coffee Hour
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)

2 pm-WFG

7 pm-Consistory

Thursday, January 14

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)

4 pm-Violin (102)

Friday, January 15

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
7 pm-AA

Saturday, January 16

10 am-WBG

Sunday, January 17

9:30 am-Worship Service (S)
10:45 am-Coffee Hour

Monday, January 18

Office Closed
7:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Violin (102)

Tuesday, January 19

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
7 pm-Boy Scouts (FH)

Wednesday, January 20

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
10 am-Mid-week Coffee Hour
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)

Thursday, January 21

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Violin (102)

Friday, January 22

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
7 pm-AA

Saturday, January 23

No events

Sunday, January 24

9:30 am-Worship Service (S)
10:45 am-Coffee Hour
11 am-Sunday School

Monday, January 25

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
4 pm-Violin (102)

Tuesday, January 26

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
7 pm-Boy Scouts (FH)

Wednesday, January 27

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
10 am-Mid-week Coffee Hour
1:30-6 pm-TSL (FH/104)

4 pm-Violin (102)

Thursday, January 28

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
1:30-6 pm-TSL (FH/104)

4 pm-Violin (102)

Friday, January 29

9:15-12:00 pm-NS (101)
1:30-5:30 pm-TSL (FH/104)
7 pm-AA

Saturday, January 30

No events

Sunday, January 31

9:30 am-Worship Service (S)
10:45 am-Coffee Hour
11 am-Sunday School

Please Note:

When no room is included after an event, it will take place on Zoom

Sunday Service is available online too. Contact the church office if you have not been receiving the online information and wish to join us remotely.

CCC- Congregational Care

CM- City Mission

H & A- History & Archives

M & SC-Mission & Service

WFG-Women's Fellowship Group

WBG-Women's Book Group

