



The Blawenburg Beacon

February, 2013

A newsletter for the members and friends
of The Blawenburg Reformed Church

ALPHA Is COMING

by Bob Bradsell

Friday nights beginning March 8th. 6:30 to 9:00.
Bring your questions, bring your doubts...and bring a friend.
Dinner courtesy of **Lucy's Ravioli!**

If you're under the age of 50 or so, you may not recall Peggy Lee singing *Is That All There Is?* But for the rest of us, it was a popular, haunting tune that raised all kinds of questions. Except for the refrain, the lyrics of each verse were spoken rather than sung. In the first verse, Peggy Lee recalls watching her house burn to the ground as a little girl, then being scooped up by her father. She recalls the circus coming to town...and falling in love for the first time. And after each poignant memory, she sings the haunting refrain: *Is That All There Is...? Is That All There Is...*

In the final verse, Lee speaks these words in story-telling fashion:

*" I know what you must be saying to yourselves.
If that's the way she feels about it, why doesn't she just end it all?
Oh, no. Not me. I'm in no hurry for that final disappointment.
For I know just as well as I'm standing here talking to you,
when that final moment comes and I'm breathing my last breath,
I'll be saying to myself...*

Is that all there is? Is that all there is...

It's difficult to know what motivated song writers Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller in 1965, but their words triggered questions in the minds of millions of radio listeners at the time...about their own lives, and loves, and what was important to them. It's why that song, different from the mainstream though it was, rose to the very top of the popular music charts – and stayed there for weeks – in 1969.

Those same words continue to haunt. In the August 15, 2011 *NEW YORKER*, essayist James Wood wrote a piece for that magazine's *A Critic At Large* column, called **“Is That All There Is? Secularism and its discontents.”** Mr. Wood points to some of the starkest examples from contemporary life and asks the very same questions...questions that each of us has surely asked at one time or another.

Wood describes a friend of his as “an analytic philosopher and convinced atheist”, and describes how she sometimes wakes in the middle of the night, anxiously asking herself deep and probing questions. “How can it be,” he cites her as asking, “that this world is the result of an accidental big bang? How could there be no design, no metaphysical purpose?” And he suggests that “in the current intellectual climate, atheists are not supposed to have such thoughts. We are locked into our rival certainties – religiosity on one side, secularism on the other – and to confess to weakness on this order is like a registered Democrat wondering if she is really a Republican, or vice versa.”

Wood goes on to describe how, if the atheist is not supposed to entertain such thoughts, “then, for slightly different reasons, neither is the religious believer. Religions assume that they are not valid questions because they have already answered them; atheism assumes (the same) because it cannot answer them.”

But we all have these questions. Many years ago, a pastor in this very church shared with this writer a thought that seemed odd at the time. “Most of the people in the pews every Sunday,” that pastor said, “aren't certain what they truly believe.”

And that's what *ALPHA* is for.

If you have questions, bring them. No question is too foolish to ask.

The *ALPHA* course is an opportunity...to wonder, to ask, to discuss. *And it's also a dinner party.*

ALPHA begins Friday evening, March 8th, and goes for ten weeks. It will start at 6:30 and will go til about 9:00, in Cook Hall. Mark your calendars, and come prepared to enjoy a great pasta dinner courtesy of *Lucy's Ravioli*. And bring a friend...perhaps that friend you've been nervous about inviting to a church service (they'll feel right at home).

Have questions before you even ask your questions? Talk to one of those helping to organize the course: *Alan Taback, Pastor Bob, Wendy Herbert, Ethel Terhune, Barbara Pavlicek or Catherine Murphy.*



The Blawenburg Reformed Church is a family of God's people united in Christ through the Holy Spirit. We commit our gifts to worship, hospitality, life-long learning, serving those in need, and proclaiming the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Worship

We gather as a community to celebrate God's presence among us!



Music Ministry

by Katie Connolly, Director of Music



Share your musical talents. Make a joyful noise with choir and bells! Our **vocal choir** will convene again for the upcoming Lenten/Easter season with regular Sunday morning **rehearsals** on **February 3rd at 9:00 a.m.** Bring your coffee! Please feel free to invite others, including people from outside the church, to join us. Maybe you have some friends (from 6th grade through adult) who really would welcome a Lenten and Easter season of church and its music. It's just a nine-week season. Invite anyone who can commit to a regular weekly attendance, which is very much encouraged.

In addition to reconvening our vocal choir, I would like to reconvene our **bell choir** as well. As with the vocal choir, please invite others to join us. I am very excited about the pieces we will play on Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday. They are tricky, gorgeous, and fun. **Rehearsals** are currently scheduled for **Sunday afternoons** after church **beginning February 3rd**. If right after coffee hour is the most convenient time for the majority of people, we will rehearse then. Please let me know. Two additional rehearsals are scheduled for late March.

You may reach me at: 609-737-9389 and Katie.milly@verizon.net

February Worship Schedule

February 3rd; (green parament); Pastor Bob preaching

February 10th, Transfiguration Sunday (plain white parament); Nancy Curtis preaching
"A Veil Over Blawenburg" Text: Luke 9:28-32

February 17th, 1st Sunday of Lent (purple parament); Alan Taback preaching
"Soul Food" Text: Luke 4:1-13

February 24th, 2nd Sunday of Lent (purple parament); Boy Scout Sunday; Pastor Bob preaching

The following information was taken from the Reformed Church in America's website: www.rca.net. More information about Lent and Easter will be in the March *Beacon*. Note below the meaning of the word "Lent" and the explanation of the liturgical colors. You will see the colors of the paraments change in our chancel during the season. Enjoy pancakes on Shrove Tuesday!

- Editor-

Planning for Lent and Easter

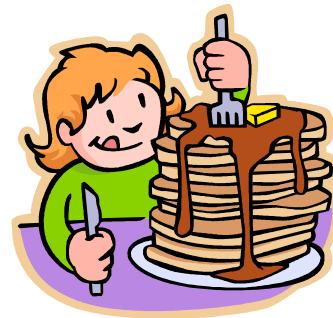
The liturgical season of Lent begins with the solemn observance of Ash Wednesday, February 13 this year, and continues for six weeks, culminating with the church's joyous celebration of Easter, on March 31 this year. Also, during the period of Holy Week, which begins with Passion/Palm Sunday, churches around the world have special worship services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and on Saturday--the Great Vigil of Easter.

The word Lent is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word for springtime, which is a literal translation of the lengthening of the days. In the early church, the Lenten period was used as a time for preparing new converts for Baptism on Easter Sunday. Today it is a time for preparation, reflection, growth, and change. The forty-day period of Lent was established in the middle of the fourth century.

(Sundays are not included in the count, since Sundays are considered "little Easters," all of which celebrate the resurrection.)

The liturgical color for Lent is purple, a solemn color, a color for royalty and repentance. The liturgical color for Easter Sunday and the Sundays between Easter and Pentecost is white, signifying purity. White is the liturgical color also for Christmastide and All Saints' Day (November 1).

Shrove Tuesday, the eve of Lent, has become a time for celebrating. Also known as Fat Tuesday, it is a traditional day to serve pancakes and eat all the foods that will be forbidden during the fasting of Lent. "Shrove" is derived from the Latin word for "shriven" or "confessing of sins." The Mardi Gras (French for "Fat Tuesday") celebrations in Mobile, Alabama, and New Orleans include parades and parties, while the German celebration Fasnacht (eve of fasting) includes eating special donuts.



Ash Wednesday is the official beginning of the Lenten season. It is a day of prayer and public confession of sins. In some churches the sign of the cross is made with ashes on the foreheads of believers. The early Israelites took the ashes from burnt offerings, mixed them with water, and sprinkled them over unclean persons (sinners) and their belongings (Numbers 19:17-18). In the third century, the church began the custom of burning the branches used on Palm Sunday; saving the ashes and marking sinners, such as robbers and murderers with these ashes. Out of sympathy, family and friends of these 'marked' persons began using the ashes also.

Hospitality

“...care for those in our congregation and the greater church community...”

Lunch for Locals Menus

February, 2013

by Nancy Curtis

“We commit our gifts to ... Hospitality”

Every Tuesday, from 11:30 to 1:00, we serve lunch in Cook Hall. Lunch is served buffet style and a free-will donation is accepted (anonymously). This lunch has become a great outreach to the community. We average 25 people but occasionally have 40. I can always use extra help either during the morning hours setting up the dining room or later for kitchen clean-up.
(Perk of helping—leftovers!)

Lunches will always have salad, bread, and beverages.

February 5—Potato soup, chili, tapioca pudding

February 12- Pea soup, chicken & dumplings, pineapple upside down cake

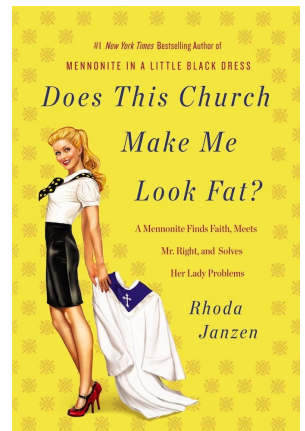
February 19—Corn chowder, shepherds pie, cookies & fruit

February 26—Tomato bisque, baked ziti with meatballs, pie

Life-Long Learning Team

“We commit our gifts to ... life-long learning...”

The Mary and Martha Prayer/Study Group will meet on February 9, 2013, at 7:45 a.m., in Cook Hall. They will begin their discussion on Does This Church Make Me Look Fat?: A Mennonite Finds Faith, Meets Mr. Right, and Solves Her Lady Problems by Rhoda Janzen. Sound interesting? Join us on Saturday, February 9th.



The Tuesday Morning Study Group meets in Cook Hall lounge from 10 to 11:30. They are reading and discussing The Gospel for the World (Selected Studies in Romans) by David Bast. Over the next several weeks they will be talking about “What God Wants from Us”, “Sleepers, Awake!”, “The Continuing Debt”, and “Belonging”. Come and share your ideas and questions. Alan Taback and Barbara Pavlicek facilitate the discussion.



Blawenburg Village School

P.O. Box 153, Blawenburg, NJ 08504

609-466-6600

blawenburgvillageschool@yahoo.com

Karen Hill, Director

The students at BVS, along with their teachers, will be busy during the month of February making Valentine Cards for those in local nursing homes. If you know of anyone who would enjoy receiving a card, please let us know and we will mail one to them.

We are starting our enrollment process for summer camp and the 2013-2014 school year. If you are interested in a placement, please contact the school so we can be sure church members receive priority placement. Please help us spread the word by telling your family and friends!

Our Summer Camp program will run for 4 weeks, July 8th - August 2nd, 9:00am - 1:00pm.

- July 8th-12th Under the Big Top - The circus is coming to town!
 - July 15th- 19th Kids in the Kitchen - Chefs in training, make your own chef's hat and apron
 - July 22nd-26th Pirates and Princesses - All pirates and princesses will be creating special crafts to take to their castle!
- July 29th-Aug. 2nd Wet and Wild - We will be exploring all aspects of water this week.

Mom's Morning Out is available on Thursday mornings from 9:00-12:00, for a cost of \$30.00/morning. This program is open to all children ages 2 - 6, so please help us spread the word to any Mom in the community who may need a morning to herself. Students are provided with a wide range of activities such as art exploration, science experiments, cooking projects, dramatics and pretend play, stories, music, snack and outdoor activities.

The following activities have been planned for February:

February 7th: Tie Dye Hearts

February 14th: Valentine celebration

February 21st: Making Mittens

February 28th: Fun with Shaving Cream

Please call (609-466-6600) or email (blawenburgvillageschool@yahoo.com) to register.

Pictures on page 7
Winter Fun at BVS



Missions

We commit our gifts to ... serving those in need.

2013 Lenten One Great Hour of Sharing

By sharing in this annual offering event we are joining with seven other denominations to respond to many needs domestically and around the world.

Through One Great Hour of Sharing, RCA congregations raise money that allows Reformed Church World Service (RCWS) and RCA congregations to make a difference and fight hunger in their own communities. The 2012 offering meant that RCWS could provide grants for 88 food pantries, 20 more than in 2011 and 32 more than in 2010. The need was simply greater—nearly every grant application described more people in need and fewer resources to meet those needs. Each offering matters.

This year's theme, "Sharing Brings Joy," is based on 2 Corinthians 9:8. Two years ago we celebrated how sharing brings joy to us, the giver, and then last year how sharing brings joy to others. This year we celebrate how sharing brings joy to God. "2 Cor.9:8: And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.....13: Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others."

Our campaign will once again begin on the first Sunday of Lent, February 17th, and end with our 'alleluia' offering on Easter. Sharing calendars for you or your family to use with coin collection boxes will be available during Lent and offering envelopes in March.

Below are the results of sharing your talents at a soup-making day with the Crawford House women. See page 9 for the article.



Dedication
William J. Herbert
June 2, 1950 - June 20, 2012

This class is dedicated to Bill Herbert, a dear member of Blawenburg Reformed Church. Bill entered into eternal rest on June 20th, 2012. It was Bill's idea to create this program with Crawford House. He cared deeply for the well being of the women who passed through Crawford House's doors and wanted to give them something to help them sustain themselves as they returned to independent living. Bill was a great soup-maker, and realized the easy nutritional benefits of being able to make a homemade soup. I was honored when he first asked me to teach this class and I continue to do so in his honor.

Nancy D'Alessandro



Good times were cooked up with the ladies of Crawford House on Sunday, January 27th. Twenty-three ladies came to Cook Hall for instruction in soup making followed up with a shared meal with helpers and church members. The instruction was led by Nancy D'Alessandro. The classroom portion of the day began with a dedication of the class to Bill Herbert, who was devoted to encouraging the women of Crawford House. The topics of the class included Cooking Safely for Others, Knife Safety and Handling, Benefits of Making Homemade Soup, and Nutrition Information of Legumes: Focus on Lentils. After the classroom portion, the ladies moved into the kitchen where they were divided into groups that made four stockpots of delicious lentil soup from scratch and one group that made a blueberry crisp for 24. Church friend Mary Medici, along with members Evelyn Cochran, Sonya Hunt, Wendy Herbert, Lisa White, and Olivia Vande Woude, assisted the cooks. Once the soup was done, everyone feasted on the soup, baked ziti and salad topped off with blueberry crisp and vanilla ice cream. The women took home lots of leftovers and were very thankful for the experience. Thank you to everyone who helped out and to those who donated money to fund the event. Also, thanks to Gracie Johnson and Mike Vande Woude who did a quick area clean up prior to the event, and to Dave Cochran who drove the girls to Cook Hall and back. The next class, Soup Making part 2, is scheduled for February 24th from 2 – 6 pm in Cook Hall. If you are interested in helping, please email Nancy D'Alessandro at Mikeandnan@aol.com.

Opportunities to Volunteer in Sandy Recovery

These are opportunities available in the immediate future for groups to volunteer with Sandy Recovery efforts. We anticipate adding additional sites in the coming weeks and months as long-term volunteer organizations develop. If you live in or near an area affected by the storm and desire to help host or coordinate volunteer efforts, please contact the RCA Volunteer Program.

New Brunswick Classis Volunteer Opportunities

Help the churches in the Classis of New Brunswick serve their communities affected by Hurricane Sandy. Our desire is to send volunteers to help in multiple communities along the coast. We currently are setting up sites for groups to serve in Monmouth and Ocean County.

Groups will work primarily in the cleaning and rebuilding of homes. These projects have the capacity to work with both small and large groups and a variety of skill levels. However, groups with skilled volunteers (carpenters, builders, electricians, plumbers, etc.) are especially needed.

Volunteers will stay in RCA churches near the beaches areas hit by the storm. Each host site will have space available for groups to sleep, prepare meals and shower.

Work Available: Cleaning and rebuilding of homes

Group Options Available: Skilled groups, mixed groups

Contact: To volunteer in these communities, contact the RCA Volunteer Program.

Capacity: Multiple groups can be hosted during a given week. Group size typically is under 30, but larger groups may be able to be accommodated as well.

Food and Housing: This will vary depending on which church will be hosting the group. Each site will have space for groups to sleep (bring your own bedding/air mattresses) and shower facilities. Some sites will be providing meals for participants and some will have kitchen facilities available for you to prepare your own meal.

Transportation: Having your own transportation available to go to and from the work site is highly recommended. The Reformed Church of Highland Park has a church van available for groups if needed.

Cost: \$125 materials fee per person.

Properties Team

House cleaning burns calories! So come and get a little extra exercise while helping out the Properties Team spruce up our buildings. On Monday, February 4th at 9:30 AM the parsonage will be cleaned. Then on Thursday, February 7th at 8:30 AM (Early birds get the work done!), kitchen cleaning will begin in Cook Hall kitchen. If you can spare some time, please let **Ethel** know **OR** just show up. Any amount of time is appreciated. Ethel can be reached at **908-359-6027**. She would love to hear from you. Leave a message if there is no answer.



Tear out or print this page. Put it on your frig.
Make someone's day! Wish them a happy birthday or anniversary!



ANNIVERSARY

1 Matt Nichols	10 Lisa White	7 Tom & Lisa Hunt
2 Elaine Zeltner	11 Tom Miner	
6 Sonya Hunt	12 Neil Hunt	
9 Barry Gurzo	25 Tom Johnson	
	28 Elmi Hill	

Summary of Dates

(Please see complete information in body of newsletter.)

February 4	9:30AM	Parsonage cleaning (See p. 10.)
February 5	7:30-9PM	Alpha organizers' training - Cook Hall lounge
February 7	8:30AM	Kitchen cleaning - Cook Hall (See p. 10.)
February 7	1:30PM	BVS Trustees' meeting - Schoolhouse library
February 9	7:45AM	Mary and Martha book group - Cook Hall basement
February 10	10:00AM	Transfiguration Sunday - Nancy Curtis, preaching
February 12		Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day) (See p. 4.) - Your Home
February 12	7:30-9PM	Alpha organizers' training - Cook Hall lounge
February 13		Ash Wednesday (See p. 4.)
February 17	10:00AM	1 st Sunday in Lent - Alan Taback, preaching
February 24	10:00AM	Boy Scout Sunday
February 24	2-6PM	Soup making with Crawford House residents - Cook Hall (See p. 9.)
February 25		Deadline for March Beacon information
February 28	7:30AM	Men's Breakfast Club

Sundays	9:00AM	Vocal Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary (See p. 3.)
	10:00AM	Worship with Dr. Sharman unless otherwise posted
	11:30AM	Adult Sunday School - Cook Hall lounge
	11:30AM	Bell Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary (See p. 3.)
Tuesdays	10:00AM	Bible Study - Cook Hall lounge (See p. 5.)
	11:30 to 1:00	Outreach Lunch (See p. 5 for menus.)

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Dated Material

The Blawenburg Beacon is a publication of the
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