The Blawenburg Beacon

Newsletter for the members and friends of the Blawenburg Reformed Church

Holiday 2017

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December 8, 2017

Dear Friends,
Christians have spoken of the three comings of Christ: in the flesh in Bethlehem, in our hearts daily, and in glory at the end of time.

The Three-Fold Advent Of Christ –

Advent is a time where we reflect on the coming of Christ. Historically there are three different ways that we think about Christ entering our world during this season. Each is different and each is important to our lives of faith.

Perhaps most prominently, we think about Christ's first coming when he was born on that first Christmas day in the town of Bethlehem. We celebrate that Christ entered our world. We celebrate that he brought with him the love and power of God in a profound way. In coming to earth as a helpless babe, Christ began the work of bringing about our salvation and the good news of God's amazing grace. Christ's first coming is certainly worth our reflection and celebration.

During Advent, we also look ahead to Christ's return. For us this second coming is more mysterious than the first. It is shrouded in prophetic images and visions. And yet it is something which we must consider. For scripture bids us to not think of Christ simply as a character locked in the past. Instead, scripture and our faith bid us to think of Christ as a living Lord who has promised to return to us. For this reason, during Advent we often read passages from the Old Testament that speak about God's promises and future plans for us and our world. During Advent, we remember Christ's first coming, but we also remember that Christ has promised to come again. During Advent, we remember that God's redemptive work is still being worked out and we yearn for its completion.

Finally, during Advent, we think about Christ coming into our lives as individual Christians. Advent is a time for us to make internal space for our Savior and Lord. Advent is a time to unclutter our hearts. It is a time to reflect on what is most important to us, where we place our hope and trust. It is a time to pray that Christ would enter our experience and take, or retake, a place of prominence in our lives. Christ came into our world on that first Christmas. Through the gift of faith, the crucified and risen Christ has entered our personal lives.

As we engage in these traditions of Advent, as we read our devotionals, as we light our candles, as we sing our songs, and decorate our homes, let us reflect on the three-fold Advent of our Lord and Savior. "Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free. From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in Thee…"
Pastor Jeff

ADMINISTRATION SECTION

BRC Mission Statement

The Blawenburg Reformed Church is a covenant community 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.

Consistory Highlights

October Meeting:
A special consistory meeting was held following the October 29th congregational meeting where the budget was discussed. At the special consistory meeting the consistory voted to accept the 2018 budget.

November Meeting:
Joe Pavlicek was chosen to be honored for the work he does as a leader in our church. Joe will be honored with leaders from other Reformed Churches at the Regional Synod's Lay Recognition Dinner scheduled to be held on March 9, 2018.

The consistory approved a change to Pastor Jeff's work days. He will now be working Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. He will be off on Wednesdays and Fridays. The change is temporary.

The January consistory meeting has been moved from January 15th to January 22nd.

A calendar planning meeting was held on November 20th. The calendar dates for the next six months were discussed by church leaders. They'll be added to the BRC master calendar, which is available online.

Our Bells Onstage at McCarter Theater

For the second year in a row, McCarter Theatre has rented our hand bells for its production of *A Christmas Carol*, running December 5-31 this year. With last year's rental fee, we were able to purchase a Bell Tree, enabling a single person to play the set. It's been used regularly on Communion Sundays. This year we plan to replace a longtime missing bell or repair the aging handles on the bells. In addition, our musical personnel will enjoy attending performances on a dozen complimentary tickets! If you attend the production, the bells are onstage, and we hear they're featured more prominently this year than they were last.

For Your Planning Convenience

Beacon material is due to Karen (blawenburgchurch@gmail.com) and Barb P. (bjpmay1998@aol.com) by the date of the deadline. Also, if anyone would like to contribute photos for future Beacons, we welcome them.

Deadline Date	Publication Date
January 26	February 2
March 8	March 16
April 23	April 30

ADMINISTRATION SECTION—Continued

Congratulations to Sally Pillar who celebrated her 90th birthday with a party here in Fellowship Hall on November 5th. She is pictured surrounded by her family. God Bless Sally.

We commit our gifts to* WORSHIP *gathering as a community to celebrate God's presence among us!

Worship Schedule through January 2018

Advent began on December 3rd and led us into the season in which are preparing for the coming of the blessed Christ child.

Advent:

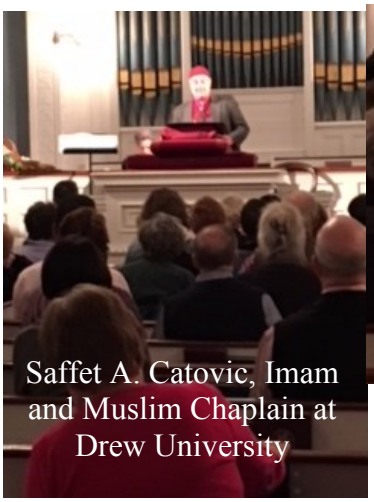
December 10th - Isaiah 40:1-11 and 2 Peter 3:8-15a
December 17th - Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
December 24th - 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 and Luke 1:46b-55
Christmas Eve Service – The Christmas Story from Luke Chapter 2

Epiphany:

December 31—Galatians 4:4-7, Psalm 148, selected passages
January 7th Baptism of the Lord: Mark 1:4-11
January 14th (Pastor Jeff away preaching at Griggstown)
January 21st Jesus Calls Disciples: Mark 1:14-20
January 28th Jesus Teaches with Authority: Mark 1:21-28
February 4th Jesus Proclaims the Message: Mark 1:29-39

WORSHIP—Continued

MONTGOMERY GIVE THANKS!
Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, November 21, 2017, 7:30pm



Saffet A. Catovic, Imam and Muslim Chaplain at Drew University

Choir of Mother of God Orthodox Church

Rev. Tony J. Godlefski, Pastor of MUMC

Rabbi Susan L. Falk of Kehilat Shalom

Choir of MUMC

Pastor Jeff did a wonderful job of convening diverse religious leaders and community members for our Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on November 21st. Sixty people attended from the various religious communities; Katie played; choirs from Montgomery United Methodist and Mother of God Orthodox Church sang. Rabbi Susan Falk, Rev. Dr. Tony Godlefski and Imam Saffet Catovic, Muslim Chaplain at Drew University shared reasons for and the cultures of Thanksgiving in each of their traditions. Father Peter Baktis from the Mother of God Orthodox Church and Dr. Ali Chaudry who is the president of the Islamic Society of Basking Ridge gave opening and closing prayers. Many stayed afterwards to enjoy conversation, fellowship, and the food provided by our Hospitality Team (See p. 8).

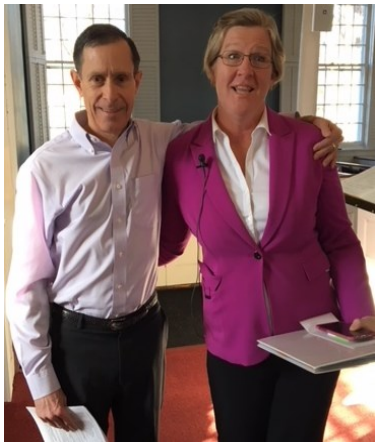
3 Speakers plus
Dr. M. Ali Chaudry

Submitted by Gracie Johnson

WORSHIP—Continued

Thank you to our recent guest preachers:

Kyle Dipre, Student intern from Princeton Theological Seminary, preached on November 12th.



Nancy Curtis, Chaplin, preached on November 26th, pictured with Elder, Chip Parmele.

November Breakfast Worship

Only one child that day, but ...

… even the grown-ups wanted to hear the story.

First Sunday of Advent, December 3rd

Waiting for the fish to bite!

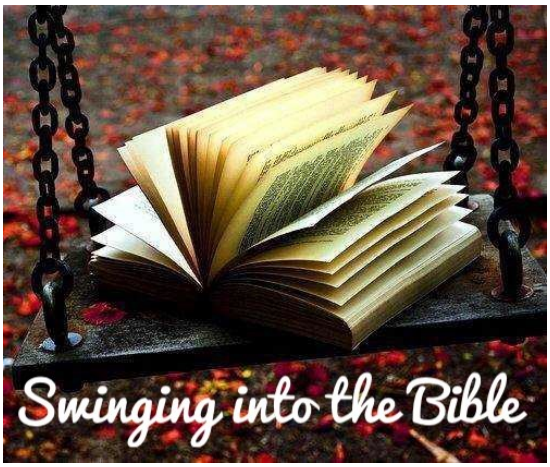
We commit our gifts to **LIFE-LONG LEARNING** *providing spiritual growth opportunities for all.*

Tuesday Morning Bible Study meets at 10am in the church library. Come join us as we read and discuss scripture for the upcoming Sunday message and take time to pray with one another. Coffee and an occasional treat will be provided.

Swinging into the Bible

By Jeff Knol

The Wednesday evening Bible study (WEBS) group is hosted at a different location each week; so if you would like to come, please email me at revjeffknol@gmail.com or pay close attention to the church announcements. We start at 6:30pm and usually are reading and discussing scripture by 7pm. We end the night with prayer around 8pm. Our plan is to study the passages that will be used in worship each week. As Reformed Christians, we believe that God speaks to us in a special way when we prayerfully read and discuss the Bible. If you would like to be a part of this special time, we would love to include you.

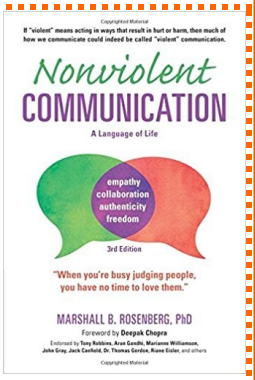


Mary and Martha Book Group

The Mary and Martha group will meet on December 12th at 6:15pm in the home of Bernice Van Nostrand. They will enjoy Christmas readings.

In January, they will begin a study of Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life, …: Life-Changing Tools for Healthy Relationships (Nonviolent Communication Guides) by Marshall B. Rosenberg, PhD.

All women are welcome to join us for a planned pot-luck supper, thoughtful and lively discussion, and prayer time.



amazonsmile

Support our church by shopping via smile.amazon.com and choosing Blawenburg Reformed Church as your charity.

Blawenburg Village School

PO Box 153, Blawenburg, NJ 08504 | 609-466-6600
info@blawenburgvillageschool.com | Karen Hill, Director

We have been working hard and are excited to share our Christmas Concert, On the Road to Bethlehem, on December 9th at 3:00. We hope to see you there!

Alumni are invited to join us in singing, Go Tell It on the Mountain. Please help us spread the word!

At the concert, we will be collecting canned goods for the Montgomery Food Pantry. Please look for the box in the back of the church.

Practicing for their big show

Such angelic little faces

Kids' Night Out
Join the fun on Friday, December 15th, 5:30-8:30-PM
Children ages 2 - 11 are welcome.
Organized and staffed by BVS teachers.
Children are served pizza and dessert.
Enjoy some Christmas crafts, play some games, and watch a Christmas movie.
Children do not need to be registered students of BVS.
Call or email the school to register. Limited spaces available.

We commit our gifts to **HOSPITALITY** *caring for those in our congregation and the greater community.*

Covered-Dish Luncheon—January 7th

Join us for our first annual winter covered-dish luncheon for 2018, following worship. Please bring a dish to share and plan to stay and enjoy everyone's company.

Ovens will be on low during worship to keep your food warm. Drinks and desserts will be provided.

Other covered-dish luncheons will be help on February 4th and March 4th. Be sure to mark your calendar.

We hosted a fellowship time after the Interfaith Service

A time to mix, meet, and mingle

Close conversation

Father Peter and a new friend

Katie and Rabbi Susan

Festive holiday table

We commit our gifts to **MISSIONS** *serving those in need both locally and around the world.*

Volunteering with SHIP - Tuesday, October 31st

On Halloween, BRC had another opportunity to serve at Samaritan's Homeless Interim Program in Somerville. The food was provided. Our volunteers brought service with a smile. We also helped celebrate Director Tom O'Leary's anniversary. Thanks to Kyle Dipre for organizing the event.

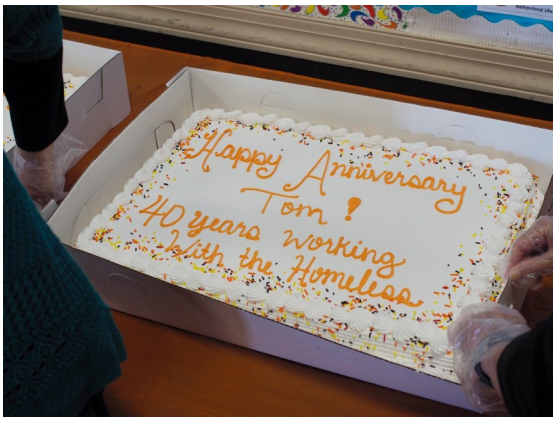
Sonya and Gracie all set up for a festive lunch.

Bernice and Sonya prepping the salad.

Evelyn and Barb P. skip to dessert—gummy worm cupcakes

The BRC crew is ready to serve

Gracie talking with Tom O'Leary



Thanking Tom for his years of service

MISSIONS—Continued

Crop Walk 2017

Many thanks to all 10 walkers in this year's CROP walk and to all who generously supported them and the cause of solving hunger problems locally and globally! Thank you: Gracie & Jo, Jeff & Margot [a rider really!], Nancy Meyer, Catherine Murphy, Clare Schmidt and Linda Musselman and to Kyle and Mimi, who walked on their own. We had two more walkers this year, and raised $2,194, almost double that raised in 2016 [$1,260]. The peanut butter we collected went to Montgomery Food Bank.

Operation Christmas Child Shoes Boxes 2017

Thank you!

Thank you, everyone, for filling Samaritan's Purse gift boxes, making them ready for shipment, and praying for the children and their families who will receive them. Twenty seven boxes from BRC and five more from BVS were delivered to the drop-off point, which in our area is the Evangelical Free Church, to start their journey. Beginning later in December and with special tracking labels, we will be able to follow the boxes' journey online to their destination. Thank you, again, for making 22 girls and 10 boys smile!

Ready to ship!

Final touches. Thank you, Evelyn, Elaine, and Sonya.

Open 'til Epiphany

The Living Gift Market of Heifer International will be open in Fellowship Hall until Epiphany Sunday, December 31st. You may continue to purchase a "live" animal for someone's holiday or birthday gift. Your purchase will help someone to become self sustaining. Thank you!

We commit our gifts to* PROCLAMATION *spreading the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Blue Pomegranate November 16th

Nice crowd enjoying art, music, jewelry, and pottery

Chris Harford and Friends

Join us in 2018 for the spring season. The dates are April 19th, May 17th and June 21st.

Men's Breakfast

The Men's Breakfast will meet on January 3rd at 7:30 am at the Blawenburg Café.

Let Joe know at jpavl1999@aol.com if you plan to attend. Come enjoy a time of food and fellowship with the fellows.

PROCLAMATION—Continued

Game Night November 3rd

We had a large enough crowd that night to form three teams to play Reverse Charades. Chili and corn bread fueled us to play like teenagers!

Pictures from exercise class? Doing calisthenics? NO! Playing Reverse Charades, where one team member does the guessing and the others act out the "clues". No words, no sounds, just action and fun.

Next Game Night—January 5th

Please join us for fun, food, and fellowship on Friday, January 5th, at 7pm in Memorial Hall. Feel free to bring friends. The more the merrier!

PROCLAMATION—Continued

A Sinterklaas Thank You!

Well...we baked, crafted, and cooked. We sorted, cleaned, and priced. We decorated, donated, and bought. Most of all, we prayed. The result was a huge Sinterklaas success!

Let's begin with what is tangible: our total net income was $8,607.00. Eighty percent of that amount ($6,886.00 has been allocated for the restoration and preservation of our beautiful 185 year old church. The remaining 20% ($1,721.00) is allocated to missions. Two hundred fifty ($250.00) dollars will be used to offset the cost of soup making with the Crawford House women later this winter. The remainder of the allocated mission funds is designated for disaster relief. In addition, we received over $600.00 from the Living Gift Market to go directly to Heifer International, whose campaign kicked off with Sinterklaas and will conclude on Epiphany S**unday, December 31st.**

And now for what is not quite so tangible. Repeatedly, throughout the day, we heard that people "reconnected", some after years of being apart. Friends reconnected with friends. Families even reconnected! It was all so very heartwarming to witness!

Once again, thank you from the bottoms of our hearts. We will take the next few weeks to regroup, and then choose next year's date.

In love and gratitude, Gracie and Barb R.

Our "Window Elf" prepping for Sinterklaas
Thank you, Pam.

Start the day with prayer.

Cheerful parking attendants

A welcome from our
greeter, Pastor Jeff

PROCLAMATION—Continued

The day of Sinterklaas has come!

Baked goods table

Our sales team volunteers were kept busy.

The craft ladies, Hilde and Bernice

Lunch anyone?
Lunch Ticket Sellers
Landen & Esther Terhune Jovolos

Heifer International Living Gift Market

Scouts selling wreaths

PROCLAMATION—Continued

Bradsell's Baskets with Barb Bradsell and Cari Rudd

Vendors' Table

Charlotte Malpeso and Allison Clancy

Silent Auction baskets

Happy soup sellers

See more pictures on the church's Facebook page.

White Elephant Treasures

Santas and a wire elf

PROCLAMATION—Continued

Quilt Display

Our thanks to Nancy Curtis, Peter Antoniewicz and all the quilters for making the beautiful Quilt Display possible.

Properties Team Update

Many Thanks

Another reason for thanks giving: Thanks to Troop 46 for their hard work raking leaves and picking up sticks on November 18th. Twenty three scouts and additional leaders turned out on a freezing morning! Join us, and the scouts, December 9th as we continue this huge job.

Snack time

⇦ A needle in a hay stack?
No, a lost shoe in a leaf pile.
Keep looking, boys!

And … thanks to all our workers cleaning the sanctuary on October 7th, in time for the Weekend Journey Through the Past. It made us aware that we need to do this at least once or twice a year.

Thanks to the Terhunes, Beachells, Jim Corio, and Homeward Bound volunteers for prepping and painting all the baseboards and walls in Fellowship Hall. Since we installed the gutters on the north side for the first time and replaced those on the south, we have curbed the moisture damage, but there was much prepping repair from previous damage. Let's hope this lasts for a while now. It is beautiful!

Wall painting—in process

Completed—looks great!

Properties Team Update—Continued

Finally, our Granpa oak was taken down. Brian, the tree surgeon, said it was hard to tell exactly how old it was because so much of the interior rings were gone, but that it was a minimum of 150 years old and could have been as much as 300 years old! It was already a formidable tree in the earliest pictures of our church. A lot of history it has witnessed!

Going …

Going ...

Gone!

All gone.

OFFICE HOURS

MON 8:30 to 1:30

THUR 8:30 to 3:30

FRI 8:30 to 11:30

The Blawenburg Beacon is a publication of

Blawenburg Reformed Church

424 Route 518
PO Box 266
Blawenburg, NJ 08504

609.466.1832

blawenburgchurch@gmail.com

Pastor
Rev. Jeff Knol

VP of Consistory
Ethel Terhune

Church Administrator & Beacon Publisher
Karen Larsen

Beacon Editor
Barb Pavlicek

Summary of Dates
(See articles for more information.)

Plan Ahead—

Dec. 9 BVS Concert, 3pm
Dec.10 Breakfast Worship, 8:32am
Dec. 12 Mary & Martha, 6:15pm, Bernice's
Dec.17 Worship, 10:00am
Dec.18 Consistory, 7:30pm
Dec.24 Worship,10:00am
Christmas Eve, 5:00pm
Dec.25 Christmas Day
Dec.31 Epiphany Sunday, 10:00am

January

Jan. 2 Bible Study, 10:00am, Church Library
Mary & Martha, 6:15pm, Bernice's
AA, 7:30pm, Fellowship Hall
Jan. 3 Men's Breakfast, 7:30am, B'burg Cafe
Wed. Evening Bible Study, 6:30pm
Jan. 4 Moms' Club, 10:00am, Fellowship Hall
Comm Team, 1:00pm, Church Library
Jan. 5 Game Night, 7:00pm
Jan. 6 Boy Scout Honor Court, 11:00am
Jan. 7 Worship & Communion, 10:00am
Covered Dish Lunch, 11:00am, F'ship Hall
Jan. 8 Property Team, 12:30pm, CW Center
BVS Board Meeting, 7:00pm, CW Center
Jan. 9 Bible Study, 10:00am, Church Library
Mission Team, 11:30am, Church Library
Worship Team, 4:15pm, Church Library
AA, 7:30pm, Fellowship Hall
Jan. 10 Wed. Evening Bible Study, 6:30pm
Jan. 14 Breakfast Worship, 8:32am, F'ship Hall
Worship, 10:00am
Jan. 16 Bible Study, 10:00am, Church Library
AA 7:30pm, Fellowship Hall
Jan. 17 Wed. Evening Bible Study, 6:30pm
Jan. 19 BVS Kids' Night Out, 5:30pm
Jan. 21 Worship, 10:00am
Jan 22 Consistory, 7:30pm, CW Center
Jan. 23 Bible Study, 10:00am, Church Library
AA, 7:30pm, Fellowship Hall
Jan. 24 Wed. Evening Bible Study, 6:30pm
Jan. 28 Worship, 10:00am,
SAVE Presentation, 11am, F'ship Hall

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

December

2 Barb Antoniewicz
9 Kathryn Tel
14 David Blauw
23 T.J. Van Liew
24 George Gurzo
25 Ruth Patterson
26 Theodore Tel
28 Morgan Van Liew
29 Emma Murphy
31 Barb Pavlicek

January

8 Brian Van Liew
9 Jim Eberly
Alan Taback
17 Linnea Eberly
Katherine Smith
25 Jim Beachell
29 Catherine Murphy
31 Tat Hardesty
Hilde Lewis

If you don't see your name listed and it should be, please let Karen know so we can celebrate with you!

If anyone would like to contribute photos for future Beacons, we welcome them. Please send photos via email to Barb Pavlicek and Karen Larsen by the date of the deadline.
(See p. 2.)