



The Blawenburg Beacon

Newsletter for the members and friends of the Blawenburg Reformed Church

Early Summer 2019

May 24, 2019

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Interfaith Prayer Service

Dear friends of Jesus Christ, recently we had the privilege of hosting an interfaith prayer service for our Montgomery community. When I began here at Blawenburg there were many challenges and opportunities presented by the pastoral search team. One of those challenges and opportunities was the felt need for the congregation to find ways to engage with the people of Montgomery, who have been growing more and more diverse in ethnic and religious backgrounds.

This was an exciting challenge that I was interested to help undertake. Personally, I grew up in a very sheltered “Christian” environment. It seemed to me that almost everything my family did was under the shelter, or umbrella, of our Dutch-Protestant community. When I finished college (at the Dutch-Reformed Calvin College), I was questioning the value of Christians staying so separate from those who were of different denominations, religions, and ethnic identities. The question that seemed to really matter in this regard was, “What would God want for us Christians?”

Jesus gave instructions, which have been helping to guide my ongoing quest to answer that and other related questions. Jesus called us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus also answered the question, “Who is my neighbor?” by telling the story of the good Samaritan, a man who was religiously and ethnically “other” and yet did more for a needy man, who would have viewed the Samaritan as “other,” than did that needy man’s own compatriots.

What is the right way to treat our Muslim, Hindu, and non-religious neighbors? What would God want? The answer that I have come to, at this point in my walk of faith, is to love, welcome, and partner with those, who some might view as “other,” or who might view us as “other,” with little if no reservation.

As a church, I believe that we have a calling to bless and love our neighbors. We do that by being welcoming. We strive to welcome any neighbor who would be interested to learn more about what we believe about Jesus; to offer prayers to God; and join us in worship and service to God. But even if our neighbors are not at this time interested in putting their faith in Jesus Christ, I believe we still have a calling to bestow upon our neighbors God’s love and blessings.

We have been blessed with the resources of a beautiful church campus and I am thrilled that we were able to share that blessing with the interfaith community that gathered here on May 15. I know that the act of sharing our space was deeply appreciated by those who came to the service – I know this because many shook my hand and told me so. I am looking forward to further engagement with our diverse neighbors. Already, in just a few years I have learned and grown, thanks to the engagement with our diverse neighbors, and I trust that God is glad that we are helping to share God’s blessings.

Pastor Jeff Knol

(For pictures, see page 13.)

ADMINISTRATION

SOS Project to Launch this Fall Save our Steeple/Save our Sanctuary

Our old church building will turn 190 in 2020, and it's showing its age. The Properties Team has identified many "issues" that have been let go for too long because of inadequate finances. They realized that if some of the issues are not dealt with, they will be even more costly to remediate in the future.

The list of repairs and improvements is long, and the team has narrowed the list to the most urgent needs. These include:

1. Steeple restoration/damage repair/insulation replacement/exterior lighting replacement/bell support
Reason: Local wildlife (aka bats) have invaded our belfry and taken up residence in our attic. This has caused damage to the insulation and floor of the attic. In addition to the clean-up, we need to seal all the entrances to the belfry/attic, repair damaged wood and paint the steeple, secure the bell and make it easier to ring, and put new lighting on the steeple to remind people that this is God's house.
2. Exterior painting of the church
Reason: It's been more than a decade since the church was painted and it's looking dull and stained. It needs to be power washed, scraped, and repainted.
3. Major organ repair
Reason: Our 1971 Gress-Miles organ was recently evaluated and numerous repairs are needed. It uses 1960s technology and is deficient in the following ways: The contacts and transistor components are very unreliable, which causes numerous dead notes and tone cluster ciphers that can disrupt services. The manual keyboards and key contacts are worn and should be replaced. The stop tablets and contacts also are worn and should be replaced.
4. Repair and repaving driveway and parking areas
Reason: The driveway and parking areas need to be repaved and relined. Last winter's pot holes were filled in with stones as a stop-gap measure, but more substantial treatment is needed.
5. Electrical upgrade of church interior
Reason: Our electrical service in the sanctuary needs to be upgraded to accommodate usage. We need to avoid reduced service and bring it up to code.
6. Painting stairwells and other interior areas of the church
Reason: There are many pews that have paint chips falling from them and need to be stripped and painted. Similarly, the pew doors and other white surfaces in the church need to be cleaned and repainted. The foyer floors were stripped and varnished when the exterior doors were refurbished, but the walls in the stairwells need to be painted.

There are other repairs and maintenance issues, but the team felt that these are the most critical.

(Continued on page 3)

For Your Planning Convenience

With the next issue of **The Blawenburg Beacon**, our newsletter will begin being published four times a year: fall, winter, spring, and summer. It will be likened to a quarterly review of past events with a longer look at future events. This will necessitate that we keep our church calendar current so that inaccurate dates are not published. Keep pictures of your events coming at any time. They will be saved on the office computer for the next quarter's issue. To inform readers of immediate information, greater use will be made of the weekly eNews and our newly updated website. A presentation of the website is forthcoming.

ADMINISTRATION—continued

SOS Project cont'd.

How will we pay for all this?

Good question! These repairs are costly and will take time to do. We aren't going to hire a contractor to come in and do everything all at once.

We expect that the cost of these projects will exceed \$200,000. In a small church, it is difficult to raise this amount within the congregation, so we have a three-fold plan to reach our goal:

- We have applied for a grant through the Reformed Church of America. If we are chosen, we would receive \$50,000, which when combined with a \$20,900 insurance payment that we have already received, would pay for the first priority – the steeple.
- We have formed a Preservation Fundraising Team, which consists of worshipers and community members. Our church is certainly a treasure to our worshipers, but it is also a community treasure. Being on the National Register of Historic Places, it is a national treasure as well. We will reach out to many people to ask for help in preserving our church. This team has held an initial meeting and will plan the information and fundraising initiatives.
- We will ask our congregation for help, too. We, of course, need money, but we will also be asking for help with new ways to raise funds through events and the personal contacts that each of us has. We will also be asking for congregational help to reduce costs.

We have called our campaign **SOS – Save our Steeple/Save our Sanctuary**. We are optimistic that we will reach our goal and help restore some of the luster to our sanctuary and property that will help our community show that we care for God's house as God cares for us.

We are not asking you for anything at this time other than to think and pray about the project. Feel free to share ideas for fundraising with members of the Preservation Team throughout the summer. If you are so inclined, we are seeking a female church member to serve on this team.

Thanks in advance for your support.

The Preservation Fundraising Team

- Dave Cochran, Team Leader
- Eric Perkins, Properties and Consistory
- Paul Blodgett, Congregation
- Ann Allen, Community member
- Bruce Daniels, Community member

How is the Staff Doing? – Annual Request for Your Feedback!

Our personnel team, which helps oversee and direct our church staff, would like your feedback. We would like to know your thoughts, celebratory or constructive, for Pastor Jeff, our Music Director and Organist Katie Connolly, and our Administrative Assistant Barb Reid. Feedback should be sent to Bernice VanNostrand, who is the vice president of Consistory and the head of the personnel team. You may email feedback to her email (vsn206@aol.com) or place written feedback in her church mailbox before June 10. If you would like to see the job descriptions for our staff, to better understand the scope of their roles here at church, please email Bernice and she will pass along a digital copy of the job description you request.

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

Palm Sunday and Easter



Palm Sunday—Pastor Jeff and family lead the procession.



Processing to *Hosanna, Loud Hosanna*



Colorful Easter flowers always delight.



Easter Worshipers



Egg hunt after worship

Worship Guide

- May 26 John 14:23-29 - Jesus' Parting Promise
- June 2 Luke 24:44-53 - Jesus' Ascension
- June 9 Genesis 11:1-9 - Pentecost
- June 16 Joint Worship at BRC - Guest Preacher: Reverend Laura Colee
- June 23 Galatians 3:23-29 - Confirmation
- June 30 Galatians 5:1, 13-25 - Fruits of the Spirit
- July 7 Acts 2:37-47 - Breaking Bread Together
- July 14 Acts 8 - Simon the Magician
- July 21 Acts 9 - Tabitha
- July 28 Acts 14 - Paul and Barnabas in Lystra

WORSHIP—continued



Chaplain Nancy Curtis preached on April 28.



Celebration Singers leading *Alleluia, Alleluia!*
Give thanks!



Palms on Palm Sunday



Bouquet honoring the life of Virginia Skillman



Lilies adorn the cross on Easter Sunday morning.



Symbol of Christ, the Light of the World



Many thanks to David and Evelyn Cochran for the recent gift of the two new, to us, silver goblets for communion chalices. They are from Evelyn's parents, the Jordans. Our existing chalices had really taken a beating over the years. We are fortunate to have these handsome replacements!

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



Thank you luncheon for the hard-working rummage sale workers



Enjoying food and fellowship



Chocolate-covered strawberries—Yum! Sonya gets the entertainment award of the year. She knows how to create a lovely luncheon for everyone.



People continued finding treasures to enjoy after the rummage sale was over. Our neighbor, Valerie Hartshorne, and her caregiver, Ketia, are shown here happily trying out two chairs in our 'freecycle' by the sidewalk. The beloved chairs then found new homes with them!

Coffee Hour Appreciation

I would like to thank all the church members who provided coffee from January to June. Everyone enjoys the special fellowship following church every Sunday.

A new schedule comes out each month. If you have not been assigned a Sunday and would like to be, please let me know. Also, if you are finding it difficult to manage the coffee and refreshments, let me know and I can assign a helper.

Thanks again,
Evelyn

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

The Mary and Martha book group will meet on Wednesday, May 29 at 6:15pm, at Bernice's home. The group will wrap-up their discussion of Brennan Manning's book, The Ragamuffin Gospel. Max Lucado describes this book in the following way: "*Brennan does a masterful job of blowing the dust off of shop-worn theology and allowing God's grace to do what only God's grace can do--amaze.*" Eugene Peterson further says: "*This is a zestful and accurate portrayal that tells us unmistakably that the gospel is good, dazzlingly good.*" And musician and recording artist, Michael Card reveals an emotional response to the book: "*I found deep comfort in realizing that Jesus loves even me, a ragamuffin, just as I am.*" A dinner of salmon and beef sliders, salad, and a fruit dessert will close the evening. Let Bernice know if you would like to take part.

A Unique Learning Opportunity

On June 11, 12, and 13, around 450 Montgomery third graders will visit the church in groups of 50 to learn about what life was like in Blawenburg in the past 200 years. They will learn about how the church broke away from Harlingen and became the centerpiece of Blawenburg. Dave Cochran will present this program, and has been doing so for a number of years. Each year, the children amaze and amuse us with their perspectives on the church. When asked how they knew the church was old, one student said "Because there are so many cobwebs." Hmm...

Having served as Dave's unofficial photographer, I've sat in on many of his sessions in years past. To my amazement, each time I learned something new about our church. If you think that this might happen for you, why don't you come out and listen to one of the sessions? They start at 9:30am on June 11, 12, and 13 and run approximately one half hour. I promise you an informative, as well as an entertaining half hour!

Barb Reid



Save the Date

October 12 & 13



We will again give tours of our church.

We will need your help!



Blawenburg Village School

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

May is full of activities at BVS...

During the month of May, the students at BVS will participate in Garden Week. We will become expert gardeners as we transform the flower beds around the schoolhouse. We will also learn about butterflies as each class watches them hatch in their classroom.

May 10th was a very special day for our BVS Moms, as we honored them for Mother's Day during "Muffins with Mom". We sang two sweet songs, made a beautiful frame, had a delicious breakfast, and even took a special picture with that most special woman in our lives.

On Friday, May 17th, our students enjoyed Outdoors Day. This was a very fun day, where all of our classes spent the entire morning on our playgrounds.

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

July 8 - July 12 BVS is Going to the Zoo, Zoo, Zoo!

July 15 - July 19 BVS is Out of this World!

July 22 - July 26 BVS is Sailing the Ocean Blue!

July 29 - August 2 BVS Builds with One Hammer!

We are currently enrolling students for the 2019-2020 school year. Classes will be offered for students ages 2-5.

BVS is on Facebook so please take a minute to like our page! There are great pictures of our many events.



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

Mission Activities

Montgomery Food Pantry



Instead of the five promised food baskets, we were able to fill seven Holiday Meal Baskets for families in Montgomery Township. Thank you for your generosity.

Samaritan Homeless Interim Program



On April 30, through the combined efforts of BRC and GRC, a tasty meal was served in Somerville for the SHIP guests. Our next time to serve the community is July 30.

Run With Rotary



We ran and rambled in the rain in our hot pink shirts which helped to earn the remaining money needed for SHIP to purchase their much-needed mobile kitchen.




Success is on the faces of Pastor Jeff and Tom (in window), the founder of SHIP.

MISSIONS—continued

Habitat for Humanity Proceeds from Rummage Sale

As a result of the proceeds from our rummage sale earlier this month, the Missions Team is pleased to be able to donate 20% of the total income to missions. This year our mission of choice is Habitat for Humanity, Raritan Valley Branch, which serves Somerset and Hunterdon Counties. The specific area that we are supporting with our \$1,000.00 donation is the Home Safety & Repair Program.

On the next page, there is a flier from Habitat which explains this program. And below, there is information about the newly-opened Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Manville. This store provides a wonderful way for us to declutter our homes all year (with items that we can't sell at our rummage sales!) or to find a missing piece to our china set, and even an appliance for a second home—all at very reasonable prices. With both of these programs there are volunteer opportunities. Check them out to see how you may help.




Marketplace at Manville—110 North Main Street, Manville, NJ 08835

Shop Donate Volunteer

**Redecorating? Decluttering?
Donate to Change Lives in
the Local Community**

Give Families a Decent Place to Live!



What is a Habitat ReStore?
The Store that Builds Homes... selling gently-used household goods to the public at bargain prices. The proceeds build affordable homes for low- and moderate-income families in the local community and keep items out of landfills!

- Furniture
- Appliances
- Kitchen cabinets
- Artwork
- Home décor
- Building Supplies
- Jewelry
- And More!

Every Donation Changes Lives
Visit rvhabitat.org/restore for more information.

To donate your items, email pictures or descriptions to
restoredonations@rvhabitat.org
or call 908-458-9770.

**Item Drop-Offs Accepted at the
Back of the Building
The Marketplace at Manville;
110 North Main Street 08835
Wednesdays—Saturdays
10 am—1 pm**

Rewarding Volunteer Opportunities
Visit rvhabitat.org/restore/volunteer

Store Hours:
Tues-Sat: 10 am – 6 pm; Thurs: 10 am – 8 pm

Donations Can Include:

Antiques
Appliances – in working order and less than 3 years old
Area and throw rugs
Artwork
Building supplies & materials
Ceiling fans (must have mountings)
Doors and windows
CDs, DVDs, Blu-ray and Vinyl
Furniture
Home décor
Kitchen cabinets
Kitchenware (china, glassware, pots, pans, silverware)
Jewelry
Lamps
Paint (unopened only)
Screens and blinds

Items We Cannot Accept

Computers, printers, TVs more than 2 years old
Tires and batteries
Baby equipment, supplies, toys or cribs
Clothing
Flammable items
Mattresses
Unframed glass



Mission

Seeking to put God's love into action, **Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity** brings people together to build homes, communities, and hope.

Vision

Our vision is a time when everyone in **Hunterdon and Somerset Counties** has a decent place to live.

Building Strength, Stability and Self-Reliance through Shelter in Hunterdon and Somerset Counties!

MISSIONS—continued



Home Safety & Repair Program

A Brush with Kindness 

What is the Home Safety & Repair Program?
 The Home Safety & Repair Program serves the community by bringing together volunteers to perform critical home repairs or safety modifications so that local individuals and families are able to continue to live independently, safely and comfortably in their homes. This program typically serves low-income homeowners including veterans, people with disabilities, and seniors. Some examples of our projects include:

- Leaky roof repair.
- Weatherization projects.
- Exterior door repairs.
- Critical repair projects.
- Hand rail installation.
- Installation of lever grips.
- Widened doorways and more.



Who Does This Program Serve?
 The Home Safety and Repair Program serves:

- An individual or family that is living in an unsafe or unhealthy environment or is in need of a home adaptation to continue to live safely and independently in their home.
- An individual or family that can demonstrate financial need.
- An individual or family that resides in a home in Somerset or Hunterdon County.

Ramps
 Ramps create safer and easier access to homes. In addition to serving people with disabilities, they can be crucial for senior home safety so that in the case of emergency the elderly are able to exit the home quickly and safely. Each ramp that Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity builds is customized to the location where it is installed.



Materials for the Project
 Donated materials and funds will be used whenever possible to help offset project material costs, which are the responsibility of the homeowner. USDA grants or loans are available in some areas. Once the project has been assessed and agreed upon, Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity will procure all materials.

How Do I Get Started?
 To get started email Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity at homerepair@rvhabitat.org or call (908) 704-0016 ext. 12. Give us your name, contact information and a brief description of your need. A volunteer will then contact you to tell you more about this program and gather additional information about your project needs.

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

Rummage Sale



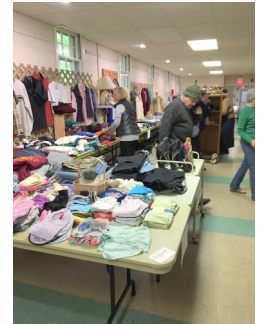
A break in set-up time the day before the sale



A preschool family not only sells toys, but greets our guests as well



A time for gathering before the doors open



Well-organized clothing



A found treasure from under the tent



Household and bric-a-brac



Elaine, our jewelry lady



Check out time with Ginny and Pam

A huge thank you for all of your donations, and the hours of volunteer labor that you put in to make our rummage sale a success. With a total of close to \$5000.00, we will be able to donate \$1000.00 to Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity, our mission this year. The remaining proceeds will be used for the restoration and preservation of our church. The Rescue Mission of Trenton, Habitat ReStore in Manville, and Home Front benefited also from donations of remaining unsold items. ~Sonya

Blue Pomegranate



Two very “listenable” bands made for pleasant evenings. Our last Blue Pomegranate show for this spring will be on June 20.

PROCLAMATION—continued

Interfaith Service—May 15



Mayor Sadaf Jaffer



Pastor Jeff



Father Peter Baktis



Rabbi Jacob Adler



Imam Sohaib N. Sultan



A time for discussion



A very interested Montgomery community



Evening prayers



A time of fellowship



PROPERTIES

Ongoing Work on Our Buildings and Grounds

Except for mowing & tree work, most all work on our grounds work is done by volunteers. These chores anyone can do at anytime. Sooo... if you are able and have time: the daffodils need deadheading; the weeds need pulling; and sticks need picking up. We have some other jobs also: edging and mulching; filling holes in the driveway and yard; painting the black handrails; and more. Since these jobs need more direction, and you can help with them, please contact Ethel at 609.922.4118 to let her know.

For well over two years, our team has discussed the exterior painting of our sanctuary. Over this past winter, we began to gather information for the restoration (painting, bell, bats, etc.) of the steeple, especially. Contractors for the painting and bat cleanup for the steeple have been selected. Hopefully the work will get started next spring, and completed by the end of summer 2020. Our insurance claim for the cleanup was accepted and that payment has been received. However, we need to do serious fund raising to cover these costs, and other work that needs doing. Consistory agreed. Dave Cochran has taken on the task of setting up a fund raising committee. (See page 2.)

Ethel Terhune, Property Team Chairperson



These beauties greeted our rummage sale patrons. But the nearby daffodils now need deadheading.

OFFICE HOURS

Mon, Wed, Thurs.

8:00am -1:00pm

Fri—11:00am—12:30pm

*The Blawenburg Beacon
is a publication of*

**Blawenburg
Reformed
Church**

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Pastor
Rev. Jeff Knol

VP of Consistory
Bernice Van Nostrand

**Administrative Assistant
& Beacon Publisher**
Barb Reid

Beacon Editor
Barb Pavlicek

**Summary of Dates
(See articles for more information.)**

Plan Ahead:

May

29 Mary & Martha, 6:15pm, Bernice’s Home
30 Scout Bd. of Review, 6-10pm, CW Ctr/Library

June

2 Worship at Griggstown, 11:00am, GRC
Scout Leader Mtg., 2:00pm, Fellowship Hall
3 Properties Team, 12:30pm, CW Center
Preservation Fund. Team, 7:00pm, Library
4 Scout Executive Mtg., 7:30pm, CW Center
5 Men’s Com. Breakfast, 7:30am F’ship Hall
Elders’ Mtg w/Confirmands, 7:30pm, CW Center
6 Missions Team, 10:15am, Library
Communications Team, 11:00am, Library
Worship Team, 2:00pm, Library
9 Congregational Meeting, 10:00am, Sanctuary
10 BVS No School
11 3rd Grade Field Trip, 9:30am, Sanctuary
12 3rd Grade Field Trip, 9:30am, Sanctuary
13 3rd Grade Field Trip, 9:30am, Sanctuary
BVS Board Mtg., 9:30am, Library
14 Donuts with Dad (BVS), 9:00am, F’ship Hall
16 Worship (Winnie’s Baptism), 9:00am, Sanctuary
17 BVS Picnic, School Grounds
18 Calendar Planning Mtg., 6:30pm, CW Center
Consistory, 7:30pm, CW Center
20 Blue Pomegranate, 7:00pm, Fellowship Hall
21 BVS Graduation, 10:00am, Sanctuary/F’ship Hall
23 Celebration Singers, 8:15am, Sanctuary
Worship (Confirmation), 9:00am, Sanctuary
26 Mary & Martha, 6:15pm, Bernice’s Home

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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

May

25 Tom Sharman
26 Chip Parmele
Jean Seitz
27 Don Terhune
29 Angelina Han
31 Eric Perkins

June

7 Emily Dumler-Winckler
Alan Querec
Bernice VanNostrand
14 Dave Cochran
18 Nancy Curtis
19 Marcia Bradsell
20 Don Thiel
25 Bud Lewis
26 Melissa Blodgett
Susie Van Doren
27 Paul Blodgett
30 Silas Winckler

If anyone would like to contribute photos for future Beacons, we welcome them. Please send photos via email to Barb Pavlicek and Barb Reid by the date of the deadline.

(See p. 2.)

Weekly Events

Tuesday

Bible Study 10:00am

Saturday

AA 8:00pm

Sunday

Worship 9am
Sunday School 10am

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, lifelong learning, serving those in need, and proclaiming the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.



Like us on facebook to view more news and events!