



The Blawenburg Beacon

February, 2012

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

Part-Time Pastor, Full-Time Church

Part-Time Pastor, Full-Time Church is the title of a book by Robert LaRochelle, wherein he describes the situation many churches find themselves in these days. However, LaRochelle posits that this is not a negative situation at all--or at least it doesn't have to be. In reality, over the sweep of church history, this is the situation most churches have been in--it could almost be described as normative!

So, how do we respond?

- How does Blawenburg Reformed Church grow into this new reality?
- What is the proper role of pastor, officer, and congregation member?
- How do we 'draw back and defend the gates' against the growing threats against the church?
- What do we need to protect?

What can we let go of in this devouring world that would consume the church without remorse?

More specifically, what will be the future?

- What will be the legacy for the next generation?
- What will Blawenburg Church be and do during the next one, five, and ten years of its life?

What will be the end of BRC?

Join us as we work through this **very practical study**. Join us as we begin a **new prayer initiative** for our church.

Dr. Bob Sharman will lead discussion and will bring materials and prompts. Bring to the group your own Bibles and a pen.

This class will run **four weeks**, giving way to weather interruptions and the Church Health Team program.

Start time will be after worship and fellowship. **End time will be 12:30 sharp!**

Adult members and visitors are all welcome. We will meet in the **Cook Hall Parlor** (upper level, west end of the building).

From Your Consistory

Do you feel called to be a leader but feel inadequate?

Read on

Have you already been asked to lead at BRC? Do you think you might be called to lead? Please see the attached flyer for helpful learning opportunities offered by our Classis on March 3rd, open to all members of the church. Let our church office know if you would like to go. On January 21st, Consistory attended a variety of workshops at Princeton Seminary and met afterward to share their experiences. All came away with ideas about how we can do ministry better here in Blawenburg and felt that whenever any of us can take advantage of events like these, they inspire us tremendously and give us confidence. Take heed what our current church leaders say about their enriching workshop experiences:

Lisa White - *I attended Welcoming and Hospitality in the morning. We discussed many ways to welcome strangers into our congregations, particularly ones that do not fit the profile of our membership. In the afternoon, I attended Deacons/Caring Ministers. We learned a lot about how to be a good and caring listener. We also learned how to observe the person we are speaking with so we can know how to approach them in the proper way.*

Joe Pavlicek – *I learned how important it is to educate new candidates for the offices of Elder and Deacon before they make a commitment. Clearly let them know what is expected of them.*

Wendy Herbert - *I attended an afternoon workshop on the church in mission. One idea that caught my attention was "The Church Has Left the Building"----the church replaces a Sunday worship service with a morning spent doing community service projects. A point that caused an "aha" moment for me was the fact that mission programs may also be a tool for evangelism: it is often easier to invite a friend or neighbor to join you on a church service project, than to attend a Bible study. Finally, after hearing of the mission programs run by much larger churches, I left with a real sense of pride in what our small church community accomplishes!*

Nancy D'Alessandro - *I found the Equipping the Saints seminar to be very informative. I attended Welcoming and Hospitality and the Deacon 101 seminars. I left both seminars armed with information that I believe is very useful for Church Officers. I found it interesting to look at processes that we routinely do without thinking. In the Hospitality seminar, for example, we talked about 'what is the right way to welcome someone to our church?' Do we think about why they have come, why they might have left their previous church, and how can we make a connection through a shared story so that person will be comfortable and stay? We also looked at scripture passages that gave examples of hospitality. In the Deacon 101 seminar we looked at the role that the Deacon plays as an active listener and learned about listening for the way a person makes meaning out of their experiences. We also learned about listening as a spiritual meditation practice. I loved the Thomas Merton quote the instructor shared: "My life is a listening, [God's] is a speaking. My salvation is to hear and respond. For this, my life must be silent. Hence my silence is my salvation." Both seminars were chock full of great information and I felt lucky to attend!*

Bob Sharman—*Chip, Bill, and I attended the "Changing Church, Changing Times" workshop which creatively summarized trends and changes over the past half-century, and gave us ideas for how to meet challenges to the church today. I found the workshop to be realistic and hopeful for the future of BRC.*

See the following flyer for the upcoming Classis learning opportunity with many workshops from which to choose. You will feel more adequate and better able to lead after attending.

Classis of Delaware-Raritan

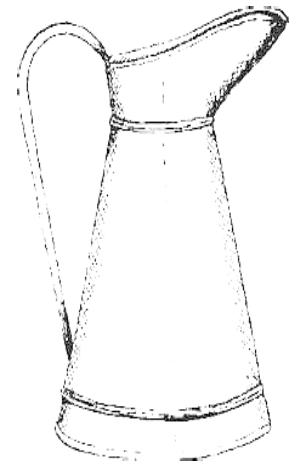
2012 Elder and Deacon Leadership Workshop

Saturday, March 3, 2012

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

South Branch Reformed Church

870 River Road, Hillsborough, NJ 08844



Leading Our Churches Forward:

Guest Speaker: Meredith Neuwsma,
RCA Coordinator for Leadership Development

Workshops to include:

Elders 101 and Deacons 101 – an opportunity to understand what the offices of Elders and Deacons are called to do in our churches and in our communities

Pastors' Chat – Time for our pastors is always at a premium and they never have time to touch base with other pastors. This chat will be just that – time for them to touch base with each other and learn what others are doing within their churches.

A Place to Experience – Ken Tenckinck from The Warwick Conference Center will share the various opportunities available for our churches and families ranging from summer camp for our youths, retreat facilities for our leadership, and ElderHostel for those wishing to experience new lessons.

Where Do We Go Next? – With more churches entering into a maintenance stage in their lives, this workshop will guide our congregations in steps to discern where God may be leading - anywhere from a subtle renewal to a diverse change.

Breaking Out – Community Development Centers (CDCs) have been a successful means to renewing a community struggling with economic issues of unemployment, homelessness, and poverty. This class will take a look at CDCs and how they can be a tool to help us become the Church again.

Using Social Media to Enhance the Church's Outreach – With Facebook, Twitter and the like, ways to involve this generation in what's happening at your church.

Additionally:

Have you wondered who to contact from Classis when an issue arises or when assistance is needed? As a church, we are not islands disconnected from the rest of the denomination. Rather, the Classis of Delaware-Raritan is the body who oversees and works with our churches, not just when problems arise, but to help us maintain a healthy and rich life with God and with each other. We will hear from members of each Classis committee with contact information and how they can be of help to your church.

Continental Breakfast and Lunch Provided. Donations to defray the costs are most welcomed.

??? and RSVP by 2/26 to Rev. Chris Heitcamp with head count from your church for lunch and supplies: heitcamp.ch@gmail.com or 908-892-5418 [C]

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!

Season of Lent

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On the 22nd of this month Christians throughout the world begin the observance of the season of Lent, which is marked by deeper hued liturgical colors, more somber and reflective worship music, and biblical texts on promise and covenant, law and insurrection, and love. It is a season that reminds us of many seasons detailed in the Bible where God's people were made to wander, fast, question their commitment to their faith, and ultimately hunger and thirst more honestly for the living God. Jesus himself wandered in a desert for 40 days, and Lent for the Church is a type of desert experience of prayer, repentance, and searching, though longer than 40 days. It is during this season that we prepare our hearts for the week that changed the world, where the shouts of "Hosanna" turned to "Crucify Him!" in a matter of a few short days. The light of Easter morning can only be truly experienced if we spend some time in the darkness. Lent gives us that opportunity.

Since music is my realm, I will leave lengthier exposition of Lent to Pastor Bob and speak on some differences you might notice during these many weeks. First, you will notice that the usual bombastic, celebratory preludes and postludes will take a break, and give way to music that reflects a Lenten atmosphere. The choir will be offering pieces of musical praise as always from the book of Psalms, but also from the musical heritage of the Church which is rich and vast for a season of reflection and prayer. Know that we will still celebrate on Sunday mornings with our music, but in a spirit of preparation for Easter morning. In all there will be a slimming down, so that when we welcome the risen Christ into the world we can give full voice to our shouts of praise! As is always the case, you are most welcome to join in the ministry of music at BRC anytime.

My song is love unknown,
My Savior's love to me,
Love to the loveless shown that they might lovely be.
O who am I that for my sake,
My Lord should take on frail flesh, and die?

This hymn by Samuel Crossman and John Ireland begs us to pause for a moment and reflect on the life, ministry, and death of Christ during the Lenten season. How did Christ's love make us more lovely? Who are we that Christ came and died for us? What is this love from God that we are so unfamiliar with? All these and many more questions guide us faithfully through the season, to the dawning of that day when Christ rose from the grave.

In faith,



Hospitality

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

Outreach Lunch Menus

February, 2012

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 7

Tomato Soup, Grilled Cheese, Hot Dogs

February 14

Mushroom Soup, Shepherd's Pie

February 21

Potato Soup, Chicken Parm, pasta

February 28

Vegetable beef soup, quiche

Reminder

Please let us know if you, or someone you know, are in need of a visit or are in the hospital.



Life-Long Learning Team

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

Nursery - Caitlyn Curtis - caregiver—Nursery is in the center room in Cook Hall for children up thru Pre-K.

K-6th Grade—meets in Cook Hall after the Children’s Sermon.

Adult Sunday School Class—See the article on page 1.



Sunday School



Tuesday Study Group meets in the lounge from 10-11:30 AM. Barb Pavlicek and Bernice Van Nostrand are leading this with a study from Words of Hope. The book that is used is entitled Easter Hope: How Jesus’ Resurrection Changes Life by David Bast. Come whenever you are able and stay for our Tuesday Outreach lunch!

Mary’s and Martha’s



The Mary and Martha Prayer/Study Group is starting a new book. This is a good time for interested ladies to check us out. The book is Mustard Seeds: Thoughts on the Nature of God and Faith by Lynn Coulter, and we will meet again at 7:30 AM on February 11 in Cook Hall. Until then, keep praying for our church and world

Come learn and grow with us!



Blawenburg Village School

P.O. Box 153, Blawenburg, NJ 08504

609-466-6600

blawenburgvillageschool@yahoo.com

Karen Hill, Director

February is a busy month at BVS. We will have a Family Fun Night on Friday, February 10th. This is a great time for our families to spend time together while enjoying a variety of Valentine activities. Our students will also be busy 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. Their name and address can be emailed to blawenburgvillageschool@yahoo.com. We are also very excited to have Suzanne Rose, from the Montgomery Township Health Department, visit the school on February 15th and 16th. She will present the Healthy Kidz Program to our students. It's a wonderful program which reinforces health and nutrition through music and puppets.

We have started enrollment for the 2012-2013 school year. If you are interested in any programs, please contact the school so we can be sure church members receive priority placement. The school will be offering classes for students 2 - 5 years old. Please help us spread the word by telling your family and friends!

Our Mom's Morning Out program has become very popular. It is available on Thursday mornings from 8:30-11:30am, 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 will be provided with a wide range of activities: art exploration, science experiments, cooking projects, dramatics and pretend play, stories, music, snack and outdoor activities. Enrollment is limited so please call or email the school to register.

BVS Pajama Day—
watching a movie in the BVS Library



Pajamas and Hugs
Perfect Together

Missions

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

Soup's On!

(Continuing our mission work with Crawford House)

by Nancy D'Alessandro

The soup was on at Crawford House on January 8th. Our soup team included myself, Bill Herbert, Gracie Johnson, Bernice Van Nostrand, and Lisa White. We were especially happy to have the participation of two of our younger congregants, Olivia Vande Woude and Colby White. The Crawford ladies were given instruction in knife handling and were taught how to slice and dice the vegetables for the soup and the apples for the dessert. After a great flurry of chopping, mixing, cooking, and baking, we all sat down to enjoy the fruits of our labor: Vegetable lentil soup, green salad and apple crisp for dessert. Wonderful fellowship was enjoyed by all.



As a follow up, to encourage healthy eating, Bill and Wendy Herbert visited Crawford House on Monday, January 23rd, and spent an evening discussing nutrition. The report is that everyone enjoyed the information that was shared. We hope to continue this dialogue in the future.



Sinterklaas Donation to the Montgomery Food Bank.

Nancy D'Alessandro, Olivia Vande Woude and Gracie Johnson delivered a check from the Toy Table to Denise Crowley at the Montgomery Food Bank at the Otto Kaufman Center.

Donating an Ark for Heifer

by Sonya Hunt

A big thank you to all of our "Ark Angels" who gave very generously to buy animals for the Heifer International and Christmas benevolence. Blawenburg Church was able to donate \$5,325.00 which purchases an Ark of Animals to be donated around the world. Two of each: cows, sheep, camels, oxen, water buffalo, pigs, beehives, goats, donkeys, ducks, rabbits, guinea pigs, geese, chicks, and llamas.

A thank you was received from Heifer International and is on the Mission Board in Cook Hall.



Gracie and Ethel enjoying our Heifer Giving Tree

Croatia Update

US move from Croatia distorts ‘normal’ for us

By Nancy Titus

My elderly father and I, at very different points in our lives, share an amazing number of similarities. For both of us, everything is a-kilter, a bit distorted, out of proportion.

Even something as simple as understanding what time it is has us both a little fuddled. My father is 87 and has lived alone for 10 years in a very quiet, rural setting, so it is understandable that he could become confused when he has no natural markers dividing his day or his week. My family and I have made an international move, quickly adjusting our watches but having a little more trouble getting our internal sense precisely matched up to the time on the dial and the day on the calendar.

We are over the biggest aspects of jetlag, but we are not entirely over the sense of not quite knowing where we are – in time or space or things even deeper.

That disconnect with our surroundings is part of the normal re-entry adjustment that missionaries returning from abroad go through. In many cases, re-entry can cause a crisis of its own, referred to as reverse culture shock. That is especially true if the mission work was done in an area where there is extreme poverty or hardship. I can easily see that such a situation would almost inevitably induce personal crisis.

Our mission setting in Croatia was on the surface not so different from the American scene. There, we had nice large grocery stores in which to shop, and we drove to them in the car provided by you for our use. We lived in a house large enough for each of our three children to have his or her own room (something we may not have here), and we routinely had pizza delivered on Friday nights.

Still, on an essential level it was completely different. The other day, Samuel and I went to buy some supplies for a box we mailed to a friend in Croatia, and as we left the huge store, he commented on how effortless the process was. It is not that the same kind of errand could not have been done in our Croatian context. The mechanics of it would have been more or less the same. Still, a fundamental quality about it was not the same. It is in the way that it was done: the convenience, the friendliness, the array of choices, the low prices, the familiarity. All those things make up some of the background of how we as Americans come to think about things.

You will be glad to know that in this re-entry adjustment, we are not on our own. The Reformed Church in America, through your continued support, has provided a way for our family to deal with the big and small ways our lives have changed because of our service in Croatia. As part of that, later this month, we will attend a Debriefing and Renewal retreat in the Black Forest area of Colorado Springs.

This is a program specifically designed for missionaries returning to the United States after service abroad. This time will give our family a chance to stop and reflect on our experiences over the past years as missionaries. It will allow us to process the joys and struggles of cross-cultural living even as we ponder our future ministry and as we give both into the Lord’s hands.

Also, there will be special sessions for our children. These will be led by those who have lived as missionary kids themselves and understand the special challenges that go with sometimes feeling that the culture of your parents and even your own birthplace is more “foreign” than the “foreign” culture you have grown up in. For our children, the five and a half years they lived in Croatia was a significant part of their lives and sets them apart from their American peers.

Just as my siblings and I have stepped up to accommodate my father’s changing physical needs at this stage in his life, we are happy that the RCA will help us as we adjust to our new life back in the United States. Thank you for this and your continued prayers for us as we make this transitional journey.

Eric and Nancy Titus are RCA missionaries in Osijek, Croatia, where they work at the Evangelical Theological Seminary and with the Reformed Christian Church in Croatia. They have three children: Samuel, 17, Valerie, 14, and Penny, 12.
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Proclaiming

We commit our gifts to ... proclaiming the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Blawenburg Crafters “Got Zippers?”

The Blawenburg Bazaar Crafters have discovered a cute zippered bag but need zippers. Please check your sewing supplies to see if you have some spare zippers to give to Evelyn or Bernice. Thank you.



Additions to Our Rolls New adult member, Jacquie Parmele

by Gracie Johnson

On January 22nd, the Elders formally welcomed **Jacquelyn Parmele** to our membership through Profession of Faith. Many still remember her mother, Helen White, and of course know her son, Chip, and her husband, Roome.

Jacquie is and always has been a champion, and tennis is her game! She was the NJ State tennis champion in high school, growing up in Jersey City. That fame destined Jacquie White to be matched up after her graduation from Skidmore College to Roome Parmele, also a tennis champ in high school as well as Princeton '47. After fighting hard to ‘woo’ her, the pair settled in Dongan Hills, Staten Island, his family home. [You know Staten Island was settled by the Dutch as well as New Amsterdam... it is not a coincidence that Roome has that signature double vowel in his name!] A life-threatening illness for Roome soon after Chip was born cemented Jacquie’s faith early on. After their move to New Jersey, they built their house on Rolling Hill Road in 1969 and continued to fit in lots of family and competitive tennis. Yes, it runs in the family: Jacquie’s mother, Helen White, was always bringing lots of used tennis balls to our rummage sales – worn out from *her* play as well as the others’ – and sons, Chip and Jim, are champs, too!



Of special interest at Jacquie’s meeting with our BRC Elders was her involvement with the ‘Peale Center for Christian Living’. Long a devotee of “The Power of Positive Thinking” and Norman Vincent Peale’s preaching at Marble Collegiate and his newsletters, Jacquie volunteered for the Peale Center’s Prayer Line ministry a dozen years or so ago. After training, she was available for the same evening hour each week for most of eight years to listen and pray with people who called into the center needing help or comfort. Ask her about this meaningful ministry. We welcome Jacquie as our first new adult member of the new year.

Look for some interesting life stories from Jacquie and make a point of getting to know her.

The Parmeles are at home at:
Roome [C.R.Jr.] and Jacquie Parmele
131 Rolling Hill Road, Skillman, NJ 08558
[H]609-466-0526

Welcome to our newest young members!

by Gracie Johnson

On January 15th, we were blessed to baptize **Ryan Colten Hunt**, infant son of Shawn and Christine. Proud grandparents, Tom and Lisa, and great-grandparents, Ray and Hope, were attendant as well as Ryan's Aunt Michele with his cousin, Kendall. Members and friends of Christine's family were also present. Andrew, at the keyboard, said he could hardly keep a straight face watching Ryan as he 'sang' with delight during the service!

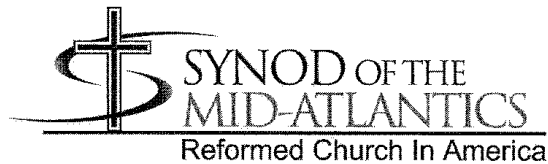


In addition to welcoming Jacquie Parmele to our membership on January 22nd, we also welcomed **Luke William Shaffer** to our church family through baptism. Presenting him were his parents, Kevin and Kim, and Luke's older sister, Kenna. Proudly attending all of our vows were his grandparents, Bill and Connie, and Kevin's sister, Stephanie, and her husband, Alex Obe. Their son, Jackson, and their daughter, Anya, now a BVS Sprout, as well as other proud relatives were in attendance. Luke, now about 2 ½ and cute as can be, was curious about the whole process and smiled delightedly as Dr. Bob 'sprinkled' him with the water of baptism!

Their contact information is here so you may reach out to them:

Shawn and Christine Hunt
32 Arthur Road
Hillsborough, NJ 08844
[Ryan]

Kevin and Kim Shaffer
29 Brookside Drive
Bordentown, NJ 08505-4437
[H]609-499-1608
Kevin@bowlerwine.com
[Kenna & Luke]



2012 LAY RECOGNITION DINNER

"I Am With You Always"

Matthew 28:20

FRIDAY • MARCH 30, 2012

6:00 p.m. Reception

7:00 p.m. Dinner

The Imperia • 1714 Easton Ave • Somerset, NJ 08873

Be there to share and support in this celebration where

Barbara Pavlicek & David Cochran

will be honored by our Synod.


- Great fellowship
- Honor those whose actions show God's presence in the world
- Select honorees and guests to participate in the program and share their stories
- Dinner includes butler passed hors d'oeuvres, salad, Chicken Princess & cheesecake
Sautéed chicken breast, lightly seasoned with garlic, shallots, Riesling wine, artichoke hearts, asparagus tips, and thin strips of fire roasted red peppers

\$50 per person

To make reservations at our church please contact:

Nancy at 609-466-3108 or BRC1832@verizon.net

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



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

ANNIVERSARY

7 Tom & Lisa Hunt

Pot Luck Luncheon

Bring a dish to share!

At the Pot Luck Luncheon on **February 12th**, the Church Health Team will be updating the Congregation on our progress toward reaching our goal of increasing our passionate spirituality. Each table will have a question to discuss during the meal, and then there will be a short summary of the ideas after the luncheon. We hope that you will be able to join us as we share ideas to strengthen our church community.

Summary of Dates

(Please see complete information in body of newsletter.)

	* * * * *	
February 2	12:00 PM	Worship Team
February 9	6:30 PM	Administration & Finance Team
	7:30 PM	Consistory
February 10	6:00 PM	BVS Family Fun Night
February 11	7:30 AM	Mary's and Martha's (see page 6)
February 12	11:45 AM	Pot Luck Lunch
February 14	5:00 PM	Properties Team
February 19	10:00 AM	Worship with Rev. Lynn Capron
February 22		Deadline for Beacon Info
February 26	10:00 AM	Worship with Andrew Long
	* * * * *	
Sundays	8:45 AM	Choir rehearsal
	10:00 AM	Worship with Dr. Sharman unless otherwise posted
		Sunday School - after Children's Sermon
	11:30 AM	Adult Sunday School - Cook Hall lounge (see front page article)
Tuesdays	10:00 AM	Bible Study - Cook Hall lounge
	11:30 to 1:00	Outreach Lunch (see page 5 for menus)
Thursdays	7:30 AM	Men's Breakfast Group - Cook Hall basement
	* * * * *	

Plan Ahead

March 4th - Boy Scout Sunday at BRC
 March 30th - Lay Recognition Dinner (see page 12)

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P.O. Box 266

Blawenburg NJ 08504

Dated Material

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