



# The Blawenburg Beacon

*Newsletter for the members and friends of the Blawenburg Reformed Church*

Spring 2021

April 23, 2021

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Greetings Friends,

Starting on Sunday, May 2, our worship of God will unfold in a new way. Each week a worship service will be offered in the sanctuary at 9:30am. Pastor Jeff, Music Director Katie Connolly, and volunteers from the congregation will help to host and lead the service. Those who wish to attend the service in-person will be welcomed to attend in the sanctuary under certain safety precautions. Each week the services will also be streamed live over Zoom and on Facebook Live.

To offer an in-person worship experience, while COVID-19 is still a present danger, we have made important decisions about the content of the service. We have also decided on safety measures which we will implement in the sanctuary. A full explanation of both the style changes and safety measures will be shared through the church email and church website. If you are not currently on the weekly eNews list, please reach out to [office@blawenburgchurch.org](mailto:office@blawenburgchurch.org) and ask to be added to that list. Week-to-week we will share relevant information about when and how to access worship

It has been over a year since we offered an indoor and in-person worship experience. I know that some in our congregation have greatly appreciated our remote worship services. I also know that everyone has felt a level of frustration and disappointment with our worship options. This next chapter of our re-opening will be no different. Some will be glad to have the opportunity to return to the sanctuary. It will be a blessing to worship in our sacred space. It will also be a blessing to see one another face-to-face during and after worship. While some will relish this return, some in our congregation will not be able to return. Others will choose to remain remote for the time being. No doubt some will deeply appreciate what this new style of worship will allow. No doubt some will be frustrated and disappointed with the changes that have been instituted. I wish that I could announce a perfect solution, but given the ongoing risks posed by COVID-19 and our responsibility to love and care for one another, we don't have a perfect solution.

Our style of worship has changed many times over the past year. It will no doubt change several more times before we come to a lasting arrangement. What remains constant through all these changes is our reason *for* worship. We are here, and we gather together on Sunday mornings, whether in-person or remotely, to bring our praise, prayers, offerings, and open hearts into the presence of the God who made us and the God who has re-made us through Jesus Christ. Some of what we cherish about worship may change, it may come and go, it may be out of reach for a season, but the focus and reason that we lift up our worship is, as the Psalmist wrote, from everlasting to everlasting.

Whether you tune into worship or walk into worship, I look forward to being there with you. Until then, stay healthy and may you know God's presence.

Sincerely, Reverend Jeff Knol

## ADMINISTRATION

### Pastor Jeff on The Restoration Team Plans

As you may know, a fundraising team led by David Cochran called the “SOS” or “Save our Steeple” campaign raised over \$150,000 towards the restoration needs of our historic church campus. The restoration project was conceived in part due to the need to address issues posed by a colony of bats which has been living in our sanctuary’s attic and bell tower.

This spring, the restoration team, headed by Peggy Querec and Eric Perkins, have been making strides towards accomplishing the first two priorities for the restoration work. The team is planning to have the exterior of the sanctuary and steeple repaired and painted this summer. While the scheduling is not yet finalized, the hope will be to accomplish this exterior work by the fall. When this exterior work is completed, we will be able to safely evict our flying friends and address the issues they have caused in the interior of the steeple and attic.

In addition to these plans, the restoration team is working to understand what else can be accomplished with our funding towards the preservation of our historic sanctuary. For now, you can plan to see painters working on the exterior of the sanctuary this summer. Thank you for your support to the SOS campaign!



### Did you know that you can support the church when you shop on Amazon?

**AmazonSmile** is a simple and automatic way for you to support Blawenburg Church every time you shop, at no cost to you. If you use **Amazon.com** on a regular basis, shopping through **AmazonSmile is just as convenient and easy, but with only one extra step.** To shop at **AmazonSmile simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)** from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may want to add a bookmark to **AmazonSmile** to make it even easier to return and start your shopping. Every time you make an eligible **AmazonSmile** purchase, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to BRC. The first time you shop at **AmazonSmile please select Blawenburg Reformed Church as your organization.** **AmazonSmile** will remember your selection, and then every purchase you make through it will result in a donation. You can manage your purchases and other account information on **Amazon.com** and **AmazonSmile** using a single account, or create a new account if you don’t have one. **THANK YOU!**



### 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.*

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

### A Blawenburg Easter April 4, 2021



Once again Jean Beachell worked her magic and our sanctuary was beautifully decorated for Easter. The flowers were given by members and friends in honor or in memory of loved ones.



Flowers for the outdoor service enhanced the beauty of Bud's bench.



Pastor Jeff opens the service with Easter greetings and announcements.



Barb Antoniewicz and Pastor Jeff lead us in the opening hymn.



Pastor Jeff delivers the Easter message.



It warms our hearts to see our children learn about the Word of God in person.

# WORSHIP—continued



Over forty people gathered to worship in-person on Easter morning.



A nice mix of members of our congregation, friends, and BVS families.



A family from Hillsborough heard about our service and decided to join us.



The Blodgett family in their Easter finery.



The Knol ladies.

## Worship Schedule

### Season of Easter:

Sunday	April 11	1 John 1:1-2:2
Sunday	April 18	1 John 3:1-7
Sunday	April 25	1 John 3:16-24
Sunday	May 2	1 John 4:7-21
Sunday	May 9	1 John 5:1-6
Thursday	May 13	Ascension Day (no service)
Sunday	May 16	1 John 5:9-13

### Season of Pentecost:

Sunday	May 23	Acts 2:1-21 - <b>Pentecost</b>
Sunday	May 30	Romans 8:12-17 – <b>Trinity Sunday</b>

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

### The Annual Easter Egg Hunt—A Blawenburg Tradition (A huge thanks to Barb Van Liew and Nancy Meyer for making this happen.)



Sisters from a former BVS family enjoyed the Easter egg hunt once more.



Our new friends from Hillsborough joined in the fun.



Winnie and Margot filled their bags.



### A Crafter's Work is Never Done

It is a little known fact that Bernice Van Nostrand and Evelyn Cochran simply never take a break from crafting, and especially quilting. Their beautiful work continues, even though Sinterklaas is on hiatus. Please keep them in mind when thinking about a gift for the next birthday party, wedding, or baby shower that you will be attending. They might just have the perfect handmade gift for you to give. Give either of them a call if this could be the answer to your gift-giving needs. They donate 100% of what they receive to the church.



Bernice is busy doing what she loves. (and does best!)



## Blawenburg Village School

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

Spring is a busy time of year at BVS:

BVS students have enjoyed creating all kinds of artwork and musical instruments as we studied Art and Music Appreciation in March. They were very proud of all the different masterpieces that they created. They spent their time exploring various art and music mediums while using their imaginations. We have quite the artists and musicians at BVS.

In honor of Saint Patrick's Day, our students followed some little green footprints that were left around the school. Who left them there, do you think? At the end of the footprints, a special pot of gold was left for each of us to enjoy. How exciting!

On March 26, our BVS friends had a fun Easter egg hunt, followed by some Easter parties. What a perfect way to begin our Spring Break! The rest of April is filled with many exciting activities as well, including a baseball-themed day and a Spring Fling 1950s Week of 1950s fun.

Garden Week is coming in May, as a culminating activity to the study of plants. Keep an eye out for some beautiful flowers on the playground! Butterfly Week will also take place as we get to watch the life cycle of a butterfly, up close and personal.

BVS is currently enrolling for the 2021-2022 school year and summer camp.

For information, contact Angela Wright, 609.466.6600 or [awright@blawenburgvillageschool.com](mailto:awright@blawenburgvillageschool.com).

Join us on Facebook and Instagram!



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



## Denise Kingdom Grier



It is no secret that 2020 demanded nothing short of a pivot and aim for missions locally and abroad. It truly was a lesson in following the Spirit daily for our team at SFCS. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and the country lockdown, adoptions, foster care placements, and church engagement activities were below target. The pandemic rendered entrepreneurs without a market to see their goods. Upwardly mobile families waiting to adopt had to find rations for themselves and could not consider placements as they would have been pre-pandemic.

I was grateful to have traveled to Botshabelo in February just before the outbreak and was able to witness firsthand the excitement of children placed in loving families. The staff was refreshed by our team's encouragement and by the support of North American partners. The local stakeholders in the Free State gathered to strategize ways to continue to collaborate for the flourishing of vulnerable children in their region.

### **Blessings of 2020**

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit South Africa, our President was forced to put the country on a 21-day national lockdown. Unfortunately, in the first week of this lockdown about 87,000 cases of gender-based violence (GBV) and/or domestic violence (DV) were reported across South Africa. Then the lockdown lasted for many months.

But God put Setshabelo Family and Child Services (SFCS) in Botshabelo for a reason and they responded immediately. Working with South African Police Services (SAPS), they set up camp at the two police stations in this township of 250,000 people to partner and assist with GBV and DV cases. SFCS's mission is safe and loving families for every child, and GBV and DV are our greatest threats against children and safe, loving families.

One couple had been married for 26 years, with three children. This case came to our office because the wife had tried to commit suicide. Once the health care workers at the hospital found out, they called the police who tried to get her to open a case. But she refused and asked the officers to go reprimand him instead. So they sent her to the Director of SFCS Mrs. Keabetsoe Sekoboto (Kaybe).

The wife retells how violent her husband was and that it led her into depression. In their counseling sessions, she opened up and told Kaybe that the abuse had also affected her children. They had become bitter and angry. The 21-year-old son beat up his father for abusing them and his mother so much that the father was in the process of

Continued on next page...

# MISSIONS—continued

opening a case against his son. This is when Kaybe called the children in and counseled them individually. In their sessions, Kaybe found that the father would beat up the children as well—they grew up in violence and had hate towards their father. Their 25-year-old daughter dreamed of finding poison and killing her father.

Counseling sessions helped the wife reconstruct her self-identity and life. Kaybe then helped the children, too. The father also came to SFCS as the perpetrator who felt he was in the right because he grew up with an abusive father himself. For him, this was “love.” After several family counseling sessions, a family conference helped the father to ask for forgiveness as they continue healing. This family gives us the confidence to know that the interventions SFCS does work to serve the entire family.



## Challenges of 2020

Food insecurity and GBV were the greatest challenges that exacerbated Botshabelo by the pandemic. SFCS added to their very full plate of responsibilities COVID-19 awareness and the importance of wearing masks, distributing food rations, and, most recently, helping families cultivate gardens, especially those on Antiretroviral medications for HIV who require a special diet to metabolize the meds.

GBV has skyrocketed in South Africa due to the lockdown. Reports of brutal rapes of young girls and women leave SFCS to provide the psycho-social counseling and support necessary to help families heal. They have also had to increase their education to men and boys about GBV. In late 2020, they launched a campaign called “Count me in campaign” with community partners to end GBV in South Africa.

## Learnings from 2020

SFCS has much to teach about agility in times of crisis. They are committed to orphaned and vulnerable children and realize that to support them, the entire family needs support to end cycles and behavior that lead to the existence of orphans and vulnerable children. They have their finger on the pulse of their community and become aware of the needs often before churches, police, or schools become aware.



## MISSIONS—continued

### Hopes for 2021

We are looking forward to:

- The flourishing of community gardens for sustainability amidst a pandemic.
- A lifting of the pandemic to open families to adoption with a concern of exposure.
- Increase in funding for our staff, some of whom have been severely unpaid for the amount of work they do.
- Safety for our staff as they travel via public transportation to and from work during COVID-19 and an up-tick in GBV.

### How We Can Pray

- Pray for the safety of our staff as several have tested positive for COVID-19. A staff of 20 can be debilitated if even one person is out due to illness.
- Pray for our staff to find healing from the violence they experience, that they will not be traumatized, and find ways to release the burden.
- Pray for the children of Botshabelo waiting for their adoptive families who must readjust to be able to receive them into their homes.
- Pray for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and gender-based violence. Pray that God's Shalom would quench, heal, and renew with new life and wholeness.



### Summary of RCA Global Mission Spring 2021 Update

In addition to prayers for Setshabelo Family and Child Services in Botshabelo, South Africa (for which BRC has just paid our one quarter mission share of \$1,675.00 for 2021), we can continue prayers for other RCA Global Missions.

**Pray for** the 130 year-old mission in Bahrain and its three-fold ministry of church, hospital, and school.

**Pray for** the ministries provided through the Gift of Hope catalog such as the holistic ministry of transportation, care, and encouragement: repairing bikes for transportation to work; providing audio Bibles in a person's own language, or helping a grandmother in Nicaragua with food when she unexpectedly became the provider for her five grandchildren.

If you would like to receive the full version of the RCA Global Mission Update, which replaces the RCA Today pamphlet that we will no longer have monthly distributed through our Sunday bulletins, please reach out to [rca.org/publications-and-media/#globalmission](http://rca.org/publications-and-media/#globalmission) This new version will come directly to your home mailbox.



## MISSIONS—continued

The Missions Team is happy to let you know of a new organization among our mission donation recipients. If you have any information that would be helpful to this group that serves Princeton and the Princeton area, please see the last paragraph below and the information at the bottom of the following thank-you letter.



Dear Barbara,

On behalf of our board, I want to personally thank you for your recent generous gift of \$500 to Share My Meals that was processed on February 22, 2021.

Your contribution during this unprecedented crisis will allow us to provide healthy meals for the weeks ahead.

When we launched Share My Meals in January 2020, our intent was to fight food insecurity and food waste by distributing healthy meals surplus from cafeterias of corporations and universities to vulnerable people in our Princeton community.

Since January 2020 we have delivered thousands of meals directly to the homes of more than 125 families enrolled in our program. With the lockdown under COVID-19, we expanded and adjusted our operations overnight in order to respond to the needs of the increased number of food-insecure people in Princeton.

Thanks to the support of four local restaurants that are cooking for us at cost of goods and to our precious team of 40 volunteers, Share My Meals has been able to distribute more than 45,000 healthy meals in the past than 12 months.

Our work wouldn't be possible without the generous help and support of people like you. If you would like to be more involved or wish to connect us with potential foodservice partners, or donors, please contact me at [elisabeth@sharemy meals.org](mailto:elisabeth@sharemy meals.org).

Stay safe and positive,  
With gratitude,



Elisabeth Calvarin  
Vice President and Treasurer of Share My Meals Inc.

Note: Share My Meals, a 501 (c)(3) not for profit organization, has not provided any goods or services, in whole or in part, to you in consideration for this voluntary cash contribution. If you wish to claim the tax deductibility of this gift in the U.S., please retain this acknowledgment letter for your files. Share My Meals EIN number is 84-4149439.

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[www.sharemy meals.org](http://www.sharemy meals.org)

# MISSIONS—continued

## Lunches for SHIP March 29, 2021 (Next SHIP lunch is June 29)



Peggy, Bernice and Evelyn make the sandwiches. Two of the Barbs (P and R) pitched in as well.



Sixty complete bag lunches made in just over an hour. The Barbs delivered them to the SHIP office in Somerville the following morning.

Heifer International gratefully recognizes

### Blawenburg Reformed Church

for your contribution of healthy animals and training  
in their care to help struggling families overcome a life of hunger and poverty.  
*"The Earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Psalm 24:1*

*Pierre N. Fauran*  
Heifer International

February 2021  
Date

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL 00000026

Thank you for continuing to support Heifer virtually in the midst of the pandemic.

## PROPERTIES

In spite of being slowed down by Covid-19, your Properties Team has been hard at work...**doing** as well as planning for **when we can do more soon**. Since our last Beacon, on December 12, we had our workday, with the Scouts' help, and the leaves which were pretty overwhelming, were all raked and removed. We'll plan on starting earlier on them this coming fall.

We had three smoke detectors installed in the church attic, replaced a faulty smoke detector in BVS (that caused a scary, screaming alarm sound for the children!) and had our alarm company come to test and certify our existing smoke detectors in all buildings to provide for a report for our Township Fire Marshalls. Our fire extinguishers also have to be tested, certified and replaced occasionally. Our faithful plumber, Geno Keller, just came to repair our water tank so we could regain lost water pressure in sinks and toilets in Cook Hall and BVS...just in time for the County to inspect and hopefully certify our water supply and filtration system. Many of our doors had been acting up, and have since been fixed: the new lock on Cook Hall street door last fall; then a fixed closure on the upper front door; and finally (?) the push bar on the BVS western front door which almost fell off!

The east side of the parsonage has been resided. The fence and the back of the garage roof are still waiting for contractors to repair the other damage from storm Isaias last summer. We are now planning for work to be done inside and out while the Knols are away this summer.

A new outlet has been installed in the BVS library to accommodate an air conditioner. The oil tank outside sustained damage from an ice jam that fell as our heavy winter snows melted, requiring Valley Oil labor and repair. We will be painting another oil tank behind Cook Hall now in milder weather.

We have been 'cold-patching' holes in our pavement, hoping to extend the time until we will have to repave our whole blacktop...but it may need to come sooner than later. The driveway is an item on our SOS plan. We ask for your patience with our bumps and puddles in the meantime!

Do you like to pressure wash or stain and paint? We will need to do that to the playground boardwalk this August, after replacing the oldest, original straight section; the benches in front of church any time; and the parsonage deck this summer.

Now for our beloved sanctuary. Jim Corio has installed shades in three of our southeast windows. We miss our 'grandpa oak' which helped cool those pews. Comcast has installed cable underground thanks to BRC's 'tech' task force. Our electrician is coming to install a needed electrical outlet with connections for ethernet and other cables in anticipation of our returning to in-person/remote worship. We will need help in the coming days cleaning up after a year's absence in there!

Gracie Johnson, Properties Co-Chair



Barb "dead heads" the flowers.



Pam makes the windows in the nursery sparkle.

**PROPERTIES—continued**

**Evidence of Spring at its Best at BRC**



Daffodils line the walkway.



Crocuses: a very early sign of spring



Easter lilies are ready to be planted



This flower is aptly called a Lenten rose!



A planter filled with pansies



The daffodils are in abundance.



The beauty of spring



Hyacinths, as well as little Dutch children, adorn the lawn to the west of Cook Hall.

**OFFICE HOURS**

Mon., Wed., Thurs.

8:00am -1:00pm

Tues—12:00pm-2:00pm

Fri—11:00am—12:30pm

*The Blawenburg Beacon  
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**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

April

- 25 Jacque Parmele
- 26 Sarah Tel
- 27 Lori Bradsell

May

- 6 Bob Harrison
- 7 Irene Harrison
- 11 Craig Seitz
- 16 Barb Bradsell
- 17 Sarah Liao
- 18 Robin Maestriperi
- 22 Ethel Terhune
- 25 Tom Sharman
- 26 Chip Parmele  
Jean Seitz
- 27 Don Terhune
- 29 Angelina Han
- 31 Eric Perkins

June

- 7 Alan Querec  
Bernice Van Nostrand
- 13 Lee Bekir
- 14 Dave Cochran
- 18 Nancy Curtis
- 19 Marcia Bradsell
- 25 Bud Lewis
- 26 Melissa Blodgett  
Susie Van Doren
- 27 Paul Blodgett

July

- 2 Kevin Clancy
- 3 Abigail Schwartz
- 6 Chris Benbow
- 8 Barb Blauw
- 9 Melanie Schwartz
- 12 Lisa Hunt  
Rowan Liao
- 13 Calvin Benbow
- 16 Adelaide Blodgett  
Mark Smith
- 21 Jeananne Wansor  
Palmer White
- 23 Vivi Benbow
- 24 Buddy Cavanaugh
- 25 Preetham Prince
- 27 Nathan Han

**Weekly Events**

Weekdays

Homeward Bound 5:30pm

Tuesday

Bible Study 10:00am

Saturday

AA 8:00pm

Sunday

Worship 9:30am



Like us on facebook to  
view more news and  
events!