Blawenburg Beacon

Blawenburg Reformed Church

Serving God and the Community Since 1832

November 6, 2026

Dear friends,

As part-time Transitional Pastor, my role is to both serve as Presider and Supervisor for BRC's church leadership, plan and lead worship, and provide pastoral care to the congregation while also leading us through the transitional season.

Where are we in that process?

The *Middle Assembly of Penn-Jersey Handbook for Churches in Transition* foresees five typical tasks of a transitional season: 1) Come to Grips with Heritage, 2) Reconnect with the Middle Assembly (formerly Classis), 3) Examine the Organizational Structure, 4) Conduct a Self-Study, and 5) Conduct a Pastoral Search.

FIVE TYPICAL TASKS OF A TRANSITIONAL SEASON		
TASK	**Estimated Time**	**Progress**
Come to Grips with Heritage	Months 1-6	Began September, Month 4
Reconnect with Middle Assembly	Continual	Don approved as Supervisor. Ongoing conversation with the Middle Assembly.
Examine Organizational Structure	Months 7-12	
Conduct a Self-Study	Months 13-15	
Pastoral Search	Months 18-24	

As you can see, we are still in the first two stages of the process and will likely remain here until early next year. Based on the following figure, I am in the process of interviewing members of our church to learn more about our DNA, "Heritage" and "Mission" in the figure. Here we are asking the question, "Who are we and who has God called us to be?"

Fall 2026

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Contact Us

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We will then discuss our relationship with our community, as we define it, and begin to explore who God is calling us to be, "Future" in the figure below. Then we can discuss what our Leadership, both lay and pastoral, should look like to answer that call.

Let me know if you're interested in discussing our past and future, and we'll plan a time to chat!

(New/Current) Language: Focal Points



Let's continue to seek God's direction together.

Sincerely,

Pastor Don

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Monday - 8am - 1pm
Tuesday - 8am - 1pm
Wednesday - 8:00- 1pm
Thursday - 8:am- 1pm
Friday - 8am - 12pm

Special Interest

Ways to Reach Out

By David Cochran

The Communication and Missions Teams are always looking for ways to reach out to help others. The teams' activities are different, but they have the same supportive goal.

The Missions Team is often seeking ways to provide funds for charitable organizations. They help organizations locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Some examples: locally, they help the Montgomery Food Bank, while regionally, they support SHIP (Samaritan Homeless Interim Program). Nationally, they have sent funds to help in weather emergencies, and internationally, most recently, the team has supported Ben and Maria's mission work in Costa Rica. The congregation has been very supportive of mission efforts by supplementing funds when needs arise.



This ad appeared in the Montgomery News in November, 2026.
Note the QR code and website address, which lead to additional information.

The Communications Team helps the church reach out to others through congregational publications such as the weekly eNews, the quarterly Beacon, and periodic Facebook posts. It has also communicated with the community through local newspaper articles and ads. It launched a new program in September called the Encouragement Project. You may have seen the ad on the Faith page of Montgomery News with encouraging taglines and links to the church website. The team is using its budget this year to run monthly ads such as the one on this page. The website links in the ad (QR code and traditional links) lead to information on the BRC website that expands the information about the tagline and an invitation to worship with us. Communications Team members are each taking a turn writing commentary on the site. They are adding a prayer and song to the commentary and posting it in Prayer Corner this year.

Our goal with all these efforts is to share hope and blessings with people within and outside of our congregation. Paul reminds us in the book of Philippians (2:4), "Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others." With our missions and our communications, we hope to put Paul's words into action.

Worship

All Saints Sunday - November 1



Mark Smith hosts the service, live on Zoom.



Elder Nancy Curtis distributes the bread.



Pastor Don serves the Deacons.



The Elders receive the elements.

Worship—continued



Pastor Don leads the Thanksgiving Prayer following Communion.



Barb Pavlicek lights a candle.



Rita Das, Pastor Don, David Curtis, Dave Cochran, Evelyn Cochran, and Jean Beachell all light candles for loved ones.



Candles for the saints who have gone before us.

Fellowship



We were delighted to celebrate Karanveer's 13th birthday, along with his mom, and his grandma.



Dave Cochran and Eric Perkins



Chris Osander, Laura Warren, Elmi Hill, Angie Rebert



A discussion about Sunday's sermon

From left: Jean Beachell, Don Price, Gina Williams, Alan Taback, Chris Osander, Laura Warren, Elmi Hill



Barb Pavlicek, Nancy Cutis, Joe Pavlicek

Birthdays

November

2 Carolyn Smith
4 Vineetha Prince
Yuri Pugliese
8 Jim Corio
9 Ben Van Haitsma
15 Anika Prince
24 Wendy Herbert
25 Sam Prince

December

2 Barb Antoniewicz
25 Shawn Krishnan
Anne Woolley
31 Barb Pavlicek

January

8 Brian Van Liew
9 Alan Taback
17 Linnea Eberly
Katherine Smith
20 Hilde Cavanaugh
25 Jim Beachell
27 Charlotte Malpeso
29 Catherine Murphy
31 Hilde Lewis

February

6 Sonya Hunt
10 Lisa White
11 Emma Tufano
18 Maria Clara Carvalho
Van Haitsma
Gina Williams
22 Keith Sickafoose
28 Elmi Hill
Barb Reid

Blawenburg Village School
PO Box 153, Blawenburg, NJ 08504
609-466-6600
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Trunk or Treat at Blawenburg Village School

A beloved fall event at BVS, our families participated by decorating their cars and handing out treats. The BVS Board was right in the midst of it all, handing out treats and serving coffee.



Director, Angela Wright, and her littlest bee



Evelyn Cochran and Lisa White hand out coloring books and crayons.



Three BVS Board members - Bernice Van Nostrand, Evelyn Cochran, and Lisa White. Also on the Board are Peggy Querec, Sharon Stevens, and Barb Reid.



Paddington Bear is the theme of Bernice's car.

Missions

S.H.I.P. Lunch - September 29

Instead of the usual brown bag lunches, Alan Taback arranged with Lucy's Kitchen and Market to prepare a hot lunch of lasagna, salad, and bread for these folks who typically don't have a hot meal. With the help of our friends at Griggstown Reformed Church, dessert and fruit were provided.



Guests lined up for a delicious hot meal of baked lasagna.



Elmi Hill, Dave and Evelyn Cochran, Alan Taback, and Sonya Hunt served the meal.



Elmi's sister, Dottie, joined us. We were grateful to have her helping hands.



Barb Pavlicek was at the ready to help wherever needed.



An enthusiastic group of volunteers who clearly love their jobs! Dottie, Elmi, Dave, Evelyn, Alan, and Sonya

Missions—continued

A Letter from Ben and Maria



Hi Friends!

Maria and I have been in Costa Rica for just over a week now! Although we are still getting used to the change in schedule and weather (almost every day has been warm, humid mornings and thunderstorms in the afternoon), we are overall adapting well to our new *tico life*.

Right now, our main focus is on improving our Spanish. Luckily for us, Spanish is very similar to Portuguese, so we already have a strong base to build on. There is still a lot for us to learn, though, so we are spending about three hours every day working with a tutor to improve our speaking skills. Although it is a tiring process, it is very satisfying to notice our Spanish speaking and comprehension grow little by little each day!

Along with practicing Spanish, we are also taking time to explore and learn more about Casa Adobe and the city of San Jose. We have been able to participate in some of Casa Adobe's weekly activities, such as their Sunday worship service, and a Tuesday game night with other young adults in the area. We also have enjoyed connecting with Jeison, one of our mentors in the Caminantes program that will start in January. All of this leaves us excited for what the next year will hold!





We are so grateful for your support and prayers as we begin our time in Casa Adobe! We look forward to updating you on our work in the months to come.

Much love,
Ben and Maria Clara

Missions—continued





Dear Rev. Don Price and the Blawenburg Reformed Church Family,

Recently, as I was praying over the churches and individuals who have partnered with me in mission through Setshabelo Family and Child Services in South Africa, I thought of you and the congregation at Blawenburg with deep gratitude.

I want to thank you for your continued faithfulness to this ministry, particularly through the many transitions within the RCA and within your own congregation. I know these seasons can bring uncertainty, difficult decisions, and new demands on a congregation's time and resources. Yet, you have continued to remember the orphaned and vulnerable children of South Africa and the families we are working to strengthen in Botshabelo. Please know that your partnership has mattered, not simply to the mission, but to real children and families whose lives have been changed because you continue to care. Your generosity is helping children find loving families and providing resources that allow families and communities to become more resilient and flourish. I am deeply grateful that you have remained faithful to this work even as you navigate changes of your own.
I also want you to know that **I am praying for Blawenburg as you journey through this season of pastoral transition.** I know that the space between what has been and what is yet to come can be both challenging and full of possibility. My prayer is that God will grant you wisdom, patience, courage, and a renewed sense of who you are called to be together. Rev. Price, I am praying for you as well, as you accompany this congregation through this important season.

In 2027, I will celebrate my tenth year traveling to South Africa as Mission Liaison to Setshabelo. As I reflect on these years, I am especially grateful for churches like Blawenburg that have continued to walk alongside us. I would love for you and members of your congregation to consider traveling with me in 2027. I've included the link for our February trip, and I'm working to confirm additional opportunities in July and possibly October.

I would love to escort you to this place of extraordinary beauty, horror, resilience, and God's abundance. There is something about being there, meeting the children and families, hearing their stories, and witnessing what God is doing through Setshabelo that I simply cannot communicate in a letter. My hope is that the experience would deepen your congregation's commitment to mission and strengthen our partnership in God's unrelenting promise to orphaned and vulnerable children.

I've also included a toolkit I created to help children understand God's care for orphans and how they, too, can participate in God's gracious work. I hope it will be useful to your congregation.

Finally, I've recently relinquished some of my other vocational responsibilities to make more room for the relationships and ministries that matter deeply to me. That means I have greater freedom to visit churches like Blawenburg, and I would welcome the opportunity to come preach, share stories of Setshabelo, or simply spend time with your congregation.

Missions—continued

And beyond our partnership in South Africa, **please consider me a resource to you during this time of transition.** Having walked alongside congregations through seasons of change myself, I know how important it is to have companions in the journey. Whether through conversation, preaching, encouragement, or whatever else might be helpful, I would be glad to support you in any way I can.

Thank you again for remaining faithful, not only to Setshabelo but to the larger work of God's Kingdom in a changing church and world. I do not take your partnership for granted, and I look forward to all that God may yet do through our shared ministry.

With love, gratitude, and prayers,

Rev. Dr. Denise Kingdom
Mission Liaison
Setshabelo Family and Child Services
RCA Global Mission

Learn more about my mission with Setshabelo

https://reformedchurch.my.salesforce-sites.com/eventlisting/CnP_PaaS_EVT__ExternalRegistrationPage?event_id=a36Vm000008hDTdIAM

https://www.faithward.org/every-child-belongs/

Adult Vacation Bible School
Christmas in July!

Once again this summer, the adults of our church, along with our friends from the Neshanic Reformed Church, came together in fellowship each Tuesday morning in July as they heard the Christmas story told by Bernice Van Nostrand. Their mornings also included discussion, singing, crafts, and, of course, a delicious lunch. Many thanks to Nancy Curtis, the driving force behind this event, for the second year in a row.



Bernice told the Nativity story. She used the same materials that are used when teaching Bible stories to our BVS students.



A candle is lit for each of the participants in the Christmas story: The Prophets, Mary and Joseph, The Shepherds, and The Wise Men.



Nancy gives Bernice a hand.



Friends from Blawenburg and Neshanic come together to hear the stories.

Events—continued



It wouldn't be Vacation Bible School without an art project!



The Master Chefs!
Nancy Curtis, Phyllis Owens, Lisa Hunt



These smiles tell the whole story!
Won't you join them next year?

Journey through the Past
October 10 & 11

Once again this year, the church participated in Somerset County's Journey through the Past.We had the opportunity to tell guests about the rich history of our church. Exhibits, including artifacts and important church documents amassed by Peggy Querec, were on display, as was our church quilt. Saturday afternoon brought a fabulous organ concert of patriotic music, performed by organist, Shea Velloso.



Sonya explained what it was like to worship in the early years.



Laura talks about the early years of the church, its construction, and architecture.



Dave introduced organist Shea Velloso.

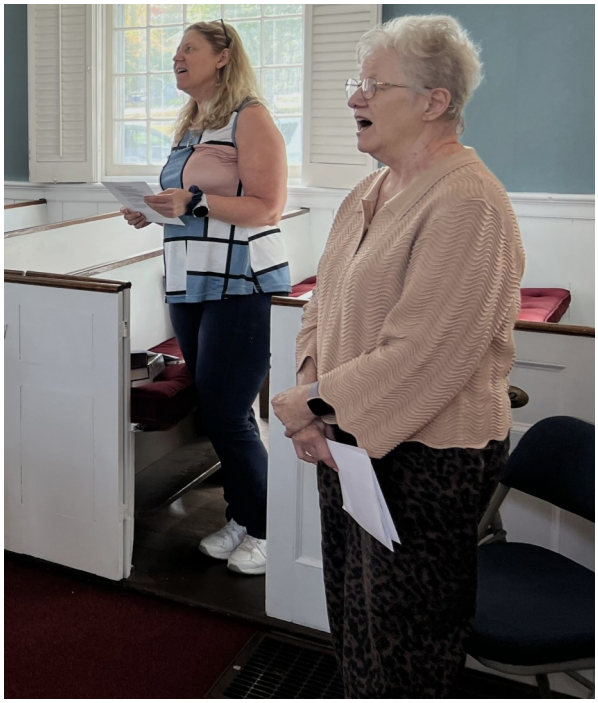


Shea at the organ

Events—continued



Neighbors and friends came to enjoy the music.



Laura and Angie raise up their voices in singing *America, the Beautiful.*



Shea Velloso



Our organist, Kevin Daly, standing alongside Shea. We have Kevin to thank for bringing Shea to us.

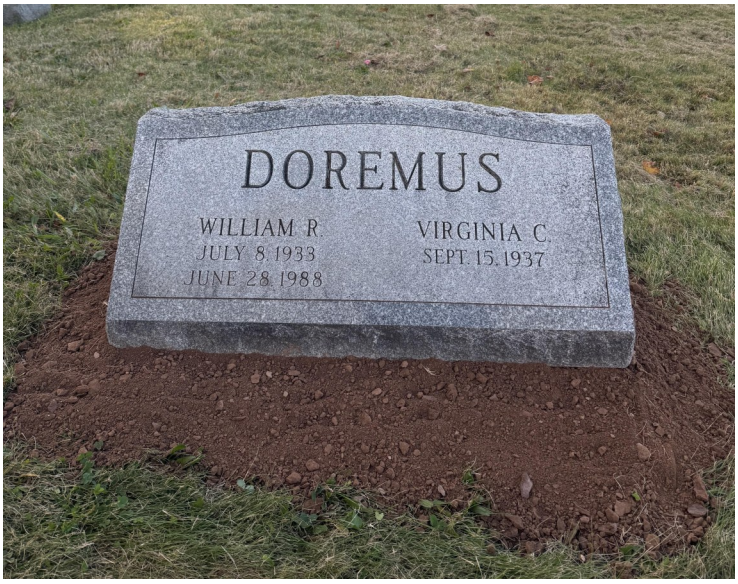
Cemetery

The Cemetery Team, including Evelyn Cochran, Jean Beachell, Elmi Hill, Sonya Hunt, and Eric Perkins, has been very busy this fall. Their work included an improved driveway, the removal and trimming of shrubs and trees, the repair of monuments, and the placement of Veterans' markers. They were able to complete these projects because of generous donations. If you would like to help maintain our cemetery, you can do so by sending a check to the church made payable to Blawenburg Church Cemetery.

Below are monuments repaired by John's Monument Cleaning and Repair Services, out of Somerset.







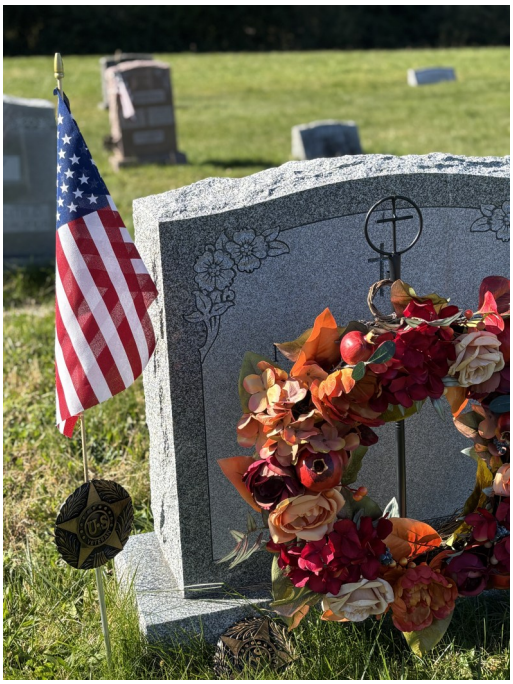
Cemetery





C.H. Paving, the same company that repaved the church driveway, did a beautiful job on the driveway in the cemetery.





Markers to commemorate our Veterans