

Blawenburg Beacon

Blawenburg Reformed Church

Serving God and the Community Since 1832



From Pastor Jeff

May 19, 2023

Greetings Friends and Members of the Blawenburg Reformed Church,

It is my honor to lead off this cheerful edition of the Blawenburg Beacon. By God's grace, this past season of church life has given us much to celebrate.

The first thing that comes to mind for me is the life and vitality of our preschool. The school is led by Director Angela Wright and is overseen by our board of church members. We have a wonderful staff of teachers and assistant teachers. Currently we have eighty-five students across six classes, and I am constantly hearing praise and gratitude from our families about the loving and nurturing atmosphere at the Blawenburg Village School. This year our preschool is wrapping up its second and final year of offering a kindergarten program. While our township was working to restart their program, we were able to provide kindergarten for around thirty students. My own daughter, Margot, is graduating from the preschool in June, and she asked if the school could add a first grade so that she didn't have to leave. In addition to creating a loving and nurturing environment where students learn and grow, and where parents and families can develop relationships of friendship and support, our school has also been financially successful. That financial success has enabled us to continue to care for many areas of our campus.

This spring we are also giving thanks that, with the waning of the pandemic, we have been able to return to so many cherished forms of ministry. This year we were able to have our typical style of worship services in the sanctuary, we were able to gather for potlucks in fellowship hall, and we were able to have special in-person services, such as Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday. In addition, we were able to host community gatherings. This spring we will reintroduce communion served by intinction, which helps us experience the blessings and joy of communion as we celebrate that sacred meal together.

continued

Spring 2023

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From Pastor Jeff—continued

This spring we give thanks for new life and new energy in our congregation. Earlier this spring Angie Rebert, Laura Warren, and Gina Williams officially joined the BRC by expressing their faith and vows to the church before our Board of Elders. As a congregation, we will welcome them and vow our support to them in worship on Sunday, May 28. It is a joyful experience to welcome new siblings into our church family and I am so grateful for their contributions among us.

While we welcome new members, we will also be praying for seminarian Ben Van Haitsma, as he departs New Jersey. Sunday, May 21, will be Ben's last Sunday with us before he begins a time of travel and transition which will eventually lead him to Oman where he will contribute to the interfaith work of the Al-Amana Centre all of this next academic year. We give thanks to God for Ben's presence and contributions among us this past year.

We will miss Ben next year, but I am happy to report that we will welcome another seminarian into the work of our church. Princeton Seminary student Robbie Bendalius will have an internship with us starting next September and stretching until May of 2024. Robbie's home church is an RCA church in the Hudson Valley, where his mother serves as the minister. Robbie will have a rounded experience at BRC. He will help with worship, pastoral care, and with other ministry duties as well.

Truly, as we reflect on the spring gone by, we see that God has given us many reasons to be grateful and I trust that God will continue to bless us throughout the rest of the year.

Sincerely, Pastor Jeff

Blawenburg Beacon

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Have a talk with God!

Visit **Prayer Corner** on our website!
<https://www.blawenburgchurch.org/prayercorner>

Our 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.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - 8:00am - 4:00pm
Tuesday - 7:30am - 9:30am
Wednesday - 8:00am - 1:00pm
Thursday - 8:00am - 1:00pm
Friday - 8:30am - 12:30pm

The Sale of a Pew

Blawenburg July 18 - 1877
Received of Mrs Maggie
Van Zandt - the sum of
Seventy dollars, for, all the
right, and title, to a Pew in
Blawenburg Church in the middle
Block, east-Isle and known as
No 4. Said Pew was deeded
to John A Voorhees in 1834 by
a Committee duly authorized
by the Church, and is hereby
transferred on the same
conditions as therein expressed.
Signed
David C. Voorhees
Executor of Estate of
John A Voorhees.

When the Blawenburg Church began in 1832, pews were sold to families in order to raise money. The paper above was found in the effects of John Van Zandt, who passed away earlier this year, and it is shared by Richard Van Zandt. It is for the transfer of Pew no. 4 from the estate of John A. Voorhees to Mrs. Maggie Van Zandt. John Voorhees was the local Judge and he had a slave named Harry Brister, who worked on the construction of the church. You can learn more about Harry Brister in Blog 90 of the Tales of Blawenburg (blawenburgtales.com).

Special Interest

O Praise Ye the Lord! A Festival of Hymns

On Sunday, April 23, our choir took part in a Festival of Hymns at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Trenton. The event was the annual Members' Recital of the Central NJ Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, which this year took the form of a Hymn Festival with a hired brass quartet and five participating choirs. The music celebrated the Easter season, and two of the congregational hymns that featured the brass quartet as well as the Cathedral's magnificent pipe organ were the familiar *All People that on Earth Do Dwell* and *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today* in splendid settings.



Our choir (Sam Prince, Ben Van Haitisma, Bernice Van Nostrand, Gina Williams, Barb Reid) was the first choir on the program. We sang *Father, We Thank Thee* by William Albright, which we have sung at Blawenburg. Our piece was preceded by Katie's playing an Albright organ solo work entitled *Nocturne*. The choral piece is a wonderfully untraditional hymn of gratitude and hope for a world gathered under Christ. The keyboard accompaniment lulls by means of slow, lush jazz harmonies, and the whole thing is overlaid with an ostinato series of notes played in any tempo the player desires, as if they are sounds from another church outside the window of the church where the hymn is being sung. At Blawenburg, Barb Reid has played the handbells, but for this event, Barb was joined by two others playing different ostinato instruments, purposely not in sync with each other or the choir. Pictured are Barb with bells and Jay Smith, longtime Flemington Presbyterian Church music



director, playing an Orff xylophone. Not pictured is Mark Williams on an organ flute stop. It was a magical effect.

Katie is the current Dean of the AGO Chapter, and she gave welcoming remarks at the start of the program. The afternoon ended with a massed piece including our choir and about 45 other singers, as well as brass and organ. A reception followed, and the afternoon was enthusiastically received!



Worship During Lent

Ash Wednesday



Jeff led the afternoon service in song, with a message, and by distributing the ashes.

Palm Sunday



We followed our tradition of parading with palms.

The choir provided a lovely anthem entitled *How Beautiful* by Twila Paris.

Worship—continued

Maundy Thursday



The choir sang the benediction at the end of the intimate communion service.



Nancy Curtis provided a delicious meal that we shared after the service.



Easter



Pastor Jeff taught about how Jesus is like a ruler that helps us draw a straight line or like a plumbline that helps us to build true and level. In Jesus' death, God knocked down our old, crooked ways. With Jesus' resurrection, God gives us a plumbline.



Pastor Jeff delivered his Easter message.



The choir sang a glorious anthem, accompanied by our neighbor, Paul Reisen, on trumpet.



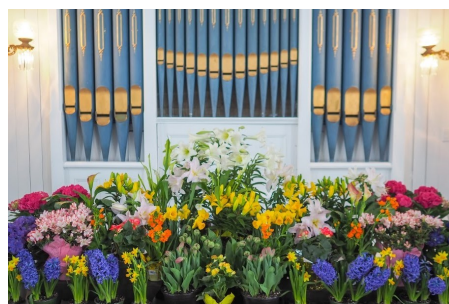
The congregation rose for a responsive reading.

Worship—continued

Easter Morning in the Sanctuary



The artwork of the Blawenburg Village School students adorned the sanctuary on Easter morning. The decorations remained in place in the weeks that followed.



Members of the congregation donated flowers in honor and in memory of loved ones. They were beautifully arranged by Jean Beachell.

Summer Sermon Series: Heaven, Hell, and Christian Hope

In this series Pastor Jeff will lead us in exploring what the Bible teaches about heaven, the difficult topic of hell, and finally some reflections on our final Christian Hope.

June 4	<i>After We Die</i> - Psalm 88:1-7, Job 3:11-15, Philippians 1:20-26
June 11	<i>God Comes to Us</i> - Isaiah 43:16-21, John 14:23, Revelation 21:1-5
June 18	Pastor Jeff Away on Vacation
June 25	<i>In the Twinkling of an Eye</i> - Ezekiel 37:1-14, Luke 24:36-42, 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 50-58
July 2	<i>Putting an End to Evil</i> - Isaiah 24:21-22, 1 Enoch 21:1-10, Luke 8:26-31, Selections from Revelation 19-20.
July 9	<i>The Question of Eternal Punishment</i> - Matthew 25:41 and Revelation 20:11-15
July 16	<i>Teeth Gnashers</i> - Psalm 35:11-18, Matthew 13:47-50
July 23	<i>Refining Fire and Brimstone</i> - Ezekiel 16:53, Malachi 3:1-7, Acts 2:1-4
July 30	Pastor Jeff Away on Vacation
August 6	<i>Signs of Hope</i>
August 13	<i>The Way to Eternal Life</i> - Matthew 19:16-22
August 20	<i>Eternal Life Starts Now</i> - John 15:5, 1 Corinthians 15:20, Galatians 5:22-23

Worship—continued

Worship on May 7

The service was led by the laity.



Alan Taback led us in much of the service, including the welcome and opening prayer, and lighting of the Christ candle.



Dave Cochran led us in the Call to Worship, our Prayer of Confession, and the Words of Assurance.



Our friend, and Princeton seminarian, Ben Van Haitsma, delivered the sermon.



Bernice VanNostrand led us in the prayers of the people and gave the closing blessing.

Worship—continued



The Scouts joined us in worship on February 26.



BVS students sang in church on March 26.



Jean Beachell's lovely handiwork



Two lovely ladies (Katie Connolly and Gina Williams) thought alike in their choice of dress on a beautiful spring morning.

Fellowship

Pot Luck Lunches



The crew that makes them happen: Nancy, Pam, Barb VL, Dave, & Evelyn



Sharon, Jim, Barb VL, Ben, & Lee



Margot, Jamie, Gracie, Jeff, & Charlotte

Fellowship Hour After Church



We celebrate a birthday with Joe.



It took not a moment for Melody to warm up to Pastor Jeff.

Birthdays

May

- 6 Bob Harrison
- 7 Irene Harrison
Princess Lewis
- 16 Barb Bradsell
- 22 Ethel Terhune
- 26 Chip Parmele
Angie Rebert
- 27 Don Terhune
- 29 Angelina Han
- 31 Eric Perkins

June

- 3 Melody Banto
- 6 Ellen Clinton
Laura Warren
- 7 Alan Querec
Bernice VanNostrand
- 10 Chris Osander
- 13 Lee Bekir
- 14 Dave Cochran
- 18 Nancy Curtis
- 21 Jenphe Clinton
- 26 Melissa Blodgett
- 27 Paul Blodgett

July

- 2 Kevin Clancy
- 12 Lisa Hunt
- 16 Adelaide Blodgett
Mark Smith
- 20 Cheryl Miller
- 21 Palmer White
- 24 Buddy Cavanaugh
Ronell Lewis
- 25 Preetham Prince
- 27 Nathan Han
Pete Weiland

August

- 6 Anna Bekir
Sue Perkins
- 11 Nancy Meyer
- 18 Barbara VanLiew
Annie Ann Tarpeh
- 19 Tom Hunt
- 21 Pam Bainbridge
- 24 Andrea Eberly
Ophelia Lewis
Diana Pfannebecker
- 26 Akemi Pugliese
- 31 Rick White

Fellowship—continued



Ophelia Lewis and all of her girls—from left, Ellen, Annie Ann, Ronell, Princess, Jenphe, Melody, and Ophelia



Dave and Barb Blauw joined us for lunch on April 20. (They are standing in the back between Dave Cochran and Don Terhune.) Dave was the pastor here at Blawenburg from 1982—1994. They now live in Holland, MI. We had a wonderful time catching up!



Mary and Martha book and lunch group shares a meal after discussing *Gilead*, by Marilynne Robinson. Around the table are Barb P, Bernice, Katherine, Angie, Anne, Hilde, Gina, and Gracie. Missing is Sonya.

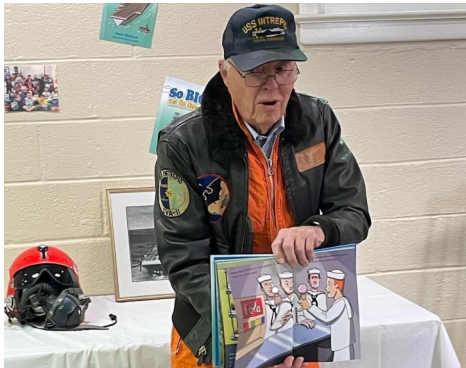
Blawenburg Village School



May is full of activities at BVS...

During this month of May, the students at BVS are participating 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 the little caterpillars change and turn into beautiful butterflies right before their very eyes.

On May 5, Peter Weiland, a congregation member and friend of the Blawenburg Church, came to visit and read us his own book, *So Big, Yet So Small*. It is a book about aircraft carriers and how they can seem so big and so small at different times. The children loved his book and listened carefully as he read.



May 11 and 12 were two very special days for our BVS moms, as we honored them for Mother's Day during "Muffins with Mom." We sang three sweet songs, made a beautiful muffin craft, had a delicious breakfast, and even took a picture with that most special woman in our lives.



Missions

Bike Collection at Blawenburg Church

On May 6, BRC hosted a bike collection event. Folks in our local community donated their unneeded bikes along with a \$10 donation to help with the processing of those bikes. The drive took place in the church parking lot from 9:00am to 1:00pm.

We ran this drive for an organization called ***Bikes for the World***. This group collects bikes in North America and helps to distribute them to communities where they will make the biggest impact around the world. They will be used for transportation to school and work or to get food and water. The time-saving and work-saving help of providing free or affordable bikes can transform people's lives. They work with partner organizations around the world to ensure that donated bikes are fairly distributed to those who need them. Our Scout Troop 46 was here to help with this event. They helped to dismantle the bikes and to load them onto the truck provided by ***Bikes for the World***. More information can be found at the website: <https://www.bikesfortheworld.org/>



We did our best to promote the event.



Our friend and neighbor, Zoltan Nagy, shows the Scouts how to disassemble the bikes.



Barb R, Dave, and Lee helped with registration. Also helping that day were Evelyn, Barb P, Alan, Sharon and Sara Stevens, and Jeff and Margot Knol.



The well-trained scouts prepare the bikes for transport.



Keith Orberg from *Bikes for the World* loads a bike onto the truck with help from the donor.



The bikes are waiting to be loaded.



The truck is filling up.



Members of Troop 46

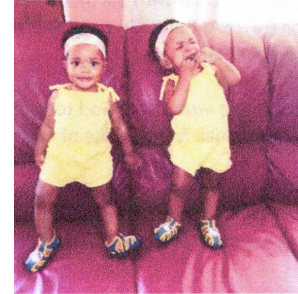
Missions—continued



2022 Year in Review



According to the Rev. Dr. Denise Kingdom Grier, missionary to South Africa and liaison between the RCA and supporting churches, 2022 was a remarkable year for Setshabelo Family and Child Services (SFCS) in South Africa. See the full story of last year on our church's website. When you click on the link, [Global Mission Newsletters](#), you will learn more about the global mission that our church supports by being a partner in mission. Our support of \$1,675.00 was recently sent to help care for children, teens, and adults.



Update of May 2023

Our most recent update from Denise shares with supporters a new component added to the work of SFCS. This component reveals the need for safe houses for women as a response to the significant rise in gender-based violence in the community. In addition to the help by RCA-supporting churches, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa is helping, too. Click on the following link to read more. [Global Mission Newsletter](#)



Missions Activity

January – May 2023

From **January through May**, the Missions Team monthly delivered to the Montgomery Food Pantry and Food Bank a variety of food items, cleaning supplies, Shoprite gifts cards, and special items for Easter meals. In **January and by the end of May**, we will have prepared and delivered to Samaritan's Homeless Interim Project headquarters in Somerville 60 brown-bag lunches for each of those months. In **March**, excess fresh food from the Interfaith Prayer Service and Iftar (dinner) and a BVS event was delivered to the Montgomery Food Bank at the Elks where there is refrigeration. This food was quickly distributed to Montgomery residents. In **April**, BRC participated in Run with Rotary. We also helped a local family with a check for \$750.00. In this past month of **May**, we paid our commitment of \$1,675.00 as a partner-in-mission to Setshabelo Family and Child Services in Botshabelo, South Africa. The Missions Team thanks the congregation for their help of tangible contributions and for their prayers for the people in our community and worldwide.

Urban Promise's Trenton Trekkers



On March 25, BRC, along with the Rotary Club of Montgomery/Rocky Hill, hosted an educational event for the Trenton Trekkers. Local historian, Brad Fey presented a program about Black soldiers and Trenton's involvement during the Revolutionary War. The Rotary Club provided a lunch after the program. The center picture above includes Pastor Jeff, Brad Fey, and Christine Hadinger of the Rotary.

Interfaith Prayer Service and Iftar—March 30



Community and faith leaders talk about their religious beliefs and customs. Pictured are Salim Manzar, local Muslim speaker, Rabbi Jacob Adler, of Congregation Kehilat Shalom, and Pastor Jeff, accompanied by Ariana, a BVS student who recited a prayer in Arabic.



Sadaf Jaffer, former Montgomery Mayor and current State Representative relates her experiences as a Muslim woman.



Pastor Jeff listened as daughter Margot, also a BVS student, asked the blessing on Iftar, the meal that followed in fellowship hall.

Around the Campus



A glorious magnolia tree overlooks the parking lot.



Daffodils welcomed the springtime.



Red and white azalea bushes next to Cook Hall



Is the pot of gold in the bell tower?



A sign of God's promise appears over the church.

Book Review

Barb Reid

It started with an idea. A random thought, really. What would happen if a detective retired without being able to solve a cold case? That ponderance, taking place over three years ago, has evolved today into a book titled *Where Are They? The Missing Men of Marlowe Mansion*, authored by church member, neighbor, and our good friend, Dave Cochran.

As the title suggests, the book is a mystery that will keep you guessing. The humorous incidents and comedic dialogue will keep you laughing. The antics and banter of the two main characters, retired detective and now private investigator, Harvey Hawkshaw, and his sidekick, metal collector and former mattress salesperson, Flywheel (no known last name) as they work together to solve the case of the three missing men from the small town of Stillwell, are delightful. Dave's wry humor is evident with the turn of each page.

Dave says this about his style when writing: "In writing jargon, I'm more of a 'panster' than a 'plotter'. I may jot some notes down, but it's seldom that I actually develop an outline before I start to write. Writers call this writing by the seat of your pants, hence pantsier."

He tells us more about the writing of this book: "I used software called Papyrus Author to write much of the book. This software has a word processing area with a place to take notes right next to it. I started taking a lot of random notes and then started writing Chapter One. The more I wrote, the better I knew the characters and the story. I did not know the ending of the whodunit until I wrote it. It was almost as though it wrote itself!"

Dave continues, "Many writers say that the real writing is in the editing. Both Barb Reid, my editor, and I edited each version. Perhaps the hardest part was to have the characters remain 'in character' throughout the book. The good part was that keeping them in character got easier toward the end of the book. I knew them much better than when I began. It took 12 drafts to get to a finished product,"

To find out more about the book and how to order it, go to Dave's website, <https://www.dcochran.net/> and click on the book.

A note from his editor:

I am so grateful that I was given the opportunity to play a part in bringing this work to fruition. As Dave mentioned, there were many rewrites over a period of more than three years, so becoming intimately involved with the story and the characters themselves was inevitable; Harvey and Fly have become my dear friends. In the end, the mystery was indeed solved; those two characters have moved on, and letting them go was a bit sad. But the next project is on the horizon, and I can't wait!

