

CONTACT

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**South Branch
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sbrchurch

FROM THE PASTOR

It has been wonderful to see the Church slowly awakening from the COVID slumber! As restrictions have eased (and some lifted), the building is once again seeing life return as we gather for worship and fellowship. It is great to see many faces returning to in-person worship and wonderful that the opportunity to join us via Zoom will continue as we move forward.

As we look back on the 16 months of COVID-tide, a lot has changed in our daily routine. We still remain a bit cautious while gathering in large crowds, we still try to protect our health as we find ourselves in gatherings, and we might even wear a cautious smile as we try to break free from the habits we developed by “staying put” for over a year. The Church continues to stay on top of information concerning the pandemic and making sure that all sanitation is completed following gatherings.

The pandemic affected many of our fellowship programs as we encouraged members and friends to stay home and join us online. But with that encouragement to stay home, we are seeing a very slow return to being together again. I am confident that this will continue to improve, but don't forget that the Church is trying to create opportunities to gather so that we can, once again, renew connections with one another. So, please take advantage of those opportunities that are begin offered as a lot of time & energy has gone into planning these gatherings! If you have an idea for a way to gather, please let us know and let's make it happen.

As of now, one of my main concerns is our Sunday School program. With the resignation of our volunteer staff, SBRC is left without any teachers for the upcoming year in September. This is concerning because a vital part of our church and church life is fading away. If anyone is interested in volunteering to be part of the Sunday School program, please let me know as soon as possible so that plans can be made for September.

I want to thank each of you for all of your support these past 16 months. You responded to the needs of the Church as well as the needs of our community. You reached out and cared for each other. You maintained your financial commitment and even found ways to donate more as the finances were suffering. THANK YOU!!!

However, our work is not completed! We are still not “out of the woods” and there are many suffering, worldwide, from the effects of the pandemic. So, please continue to keep yourselves healthy and please keep praying for those in the world that are still suffering!

See you in worship!

July Birthdays:

- 01 Tara Mazzarella
- 02 Paul Stabile
- 07 Mark Messineo
- 08 Stella Martorano
Adonis Pitts
- 09 Jannie Johnson
Violet Mazzarella
- 11 Gia Zeban
- 15 Erica Lenzo
Debbie Norz
- 16 Chelsea Ofray
- 17 Jennifer Davidson
- 19 Annette LiBrizzi
- 25 Brian Foley
- 27 Cheryl Speciale
Tyson Stramaglia
- 30 Barbara Eckert



July Anniversaries

- 01 Steve & Jeanette
Hubscher
- 02 Alan & Sharon
Stern
- 10 Paul & Kelly
Stabile
- 18 Nick & Cheryl
Speciale
- 28 Dan & Erica
Lenzo

TREASURER'S NOTE

Summer is here and we are finally seeing some normalcy returning to our lives. Our church building is "re-opening". Or masks are off, allowing us to raise our voices in song to the Lord. However, the effects from the severe winter still hang over us, as we struggle to recoup from the monstrous snow bills.

We started April \$12,899 in the red. Pledges were good, Easter donations were decent, and we received some generous donations towards the snowplow bills. Also, our roast beef dinner was a huge success. We ended April, \$10,109 in the red. It appeared we were moving in the right direction.

However, our momentum slowed significantly in the month of May. Pledges were way down. Our next fund raiser dinner is several months away. Sadly, we ended the month, \$12,094 in the red in current expenses. As you prepare for your well-deserved summer vacations, remember the church expenses must still be paid. Please continue to send in your pledges. And if you have not done so yet, it would be a good time to send in your classis assessment of \$89 per member.

~Robyn Friedlander

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

If you would like to have flowers in the Sanctuary on Sunday, please use the sign-up sheet on the *Church News* bulletin board or reach out to the Church Office at (908) 369-4956 or office@sbrchurch.org. We will let you know which dates are available and take down the information to be included in the Sunday bulletin. Cost is \$40.00 for the flowers on Sunday.



HAM DINNER

The Ham Dinner will be held on Saturday, September 11, 2021 from 4:30pm to 7:00pm with Chef Tyson presiding over the kitchen!

Call (908) 369-4956 to reserve tickets or purchase online at:
app.gopassage.com/events/2021-ham-dinner

Menu

Baked Honey Glazed Ham with Gravy
Au Gratin Potatoes
Pea & Corn Medley
Cole Slaw
Applesauce
Tomato-Cucumber Salad
Dinner Rolls & Butter
Assorted Desserts
Coffee/Tea/Lemonade/Iced Tea

Adults - \$17.00
Children (ages 10 & under) - \$8.00

SUNDAY SCHOOL HELP NEEDED!

Think back to those pre-pandemic days of SBRC.

Remember watching Pastor Steve speak with the children before the went off to Sunday School? Most of us were waiting to see what answers the children would give during the Children’s Sermon and we all had a good laugh!

Remember watching the Christmas Program presented by the Sunday School? Whether it was the familiar Christmas story or a more modern approach, we all beamed as we watched the children share the real meaning of the Christmas season.

Remember the smell of pretzels baking during Lent? We all looked forward to partaking of the special treat prepared by our children during Coffee Hour.

None of this would be possible without individuals who were dedicated to the Christian Education of our children. However, there is a real possibility that this won’t continue. Pastor Steve is looking for those who are interested in providing a safe space for our children to continue to grow in God’s love through learning & fellowship programs. If you are interested, please speak with Pastor Steve.

REFRESHMENTS AND GREETERS

What better way to welcome people back than gathering in the Dining Room following worship to enjoy some refreshments and talk? Interested in being a smiling & welcoming face for people to see as they enter the Sanctuary? As SBRC continues to “re-open” and welcome everyone back on Sunday mornings, there are many opening on our sign-up sheets for Refreshments and Greeters. Be sure to stop by the *Church News* bulletin board in the hallway to fill in one of the many open spots!



HILLSBOROUGH FOOD PANTRY

SBRC continues to be an active participant in helping those in our community with food insecurities via the Hillsborough Food Pantry. Your continued support of this local mission partnership has ensured that the shelves remained stock and ready for those needing assistance. Below is a list of the items that are most needed:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Peanut Butter | Instant Potatoes |
| Jelly | Rice |
| Mac & Cheese | Coffee |
| Pasta | Canned Fruit |
| Tomato Sauce | Tuna Fish |
| Cereal | Baby Food |
| Personal Care Products | Feminine Products |

All donated items may be brought to the Church on Sunday mornings or contact the Church Office at (908) 369-4956 if you would like to schedule a drop off during the week.

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR JULY

July 4:

- 2 Samuel 5:1-5,9-10
- Psalms 48
- Ezekiel 2:1-5
- Psalms 123
- 2 Corinthians 12:2-10
- Mark 6:1-13

July 11:

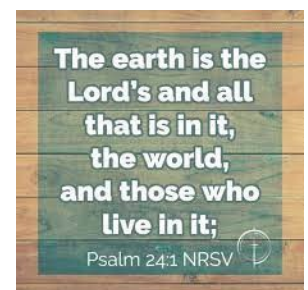
- 2 Samuel 6:1-5,12b-19
- Psalms 24
- Amos 7:7-15
- Psalms 85:8-13
- Ephesians 1:3-14
- Mark 6:14-29

July 18:

- 2 Samuel 7:1-14a
- Psalms 89:20-37
- Jeremiah 23:1-6
- Psalms 23
- Ephesians 2:11-22
- Mark 6:30-34;53-56

January 25:

- 2 Samuel 11:1-15
- Psalms 14
- 2 Kings 4:42-44
- Psalms 145:10-18
- Ephesians 3:14-21
- John 6:1-21





August Birthdays:

- 03 Fern Wallack
- 04 Emily Windus
- 07 Alberta Snyder
- 11 Eric DeCicco
- 16 Sharon Stern
- 17 Lisa Heider
- 20 Evelyn Krautwald
Michael Pitts
- 23 Karen Ettl
- 24 Bea Staats
- 28 Malinda Murray
Freddie Neske



August Anniversaries

- 05 Eric & Whitney
Stickler
- 09 Ben & Danielle
Burt
- 22 James & Renée
Paterno



CHOIR UPDATE!!

On March 16, 2020, SBRC had to close its doors and move worship and fellowship activities completely online! Many aspects of our shared church life went dormant for the past 16 months, but the “light at the end of the tunnel” continues to brighten as we all make progress against COVID-19. We are happy to share that plans are underway for the Junior and Adult Choirs of SBRC to restart!



Junior Choir will start up again in September and all children from Preschool to 8th Grade are invited to join in the fun!

Adult Choir will resume in September and welcomes any interested singers beginning in the 8th Grade.

There is no experience necessary!! All that is necessary is a desire to sing, assist in the worship services through our shared voices, and a willingness to have a great time!

2021 CHURCH DINNERS

The Church Dinners are certainly a wonderful source of fellowship and fun for all involved whether you help out at the dinner, come grab a great meal or do both. It is certainly something we all enjoy and don't want to see end. As a reminder, SBRC will host three more dinners in 2021:

- September 11 Ham Dinner
- October 16 Oktoberfest
- November 13 Turkey Dinner

Thank you for your continued support and energy in providing these wonderful meals to our family and friends of SBRC.

SBRC IMPROVEMENTS

Many thanks to Steve Hubscher and Tom Kletz for replacing the exterior lights to the parking lots. Over the past few years, the older units stopped working and it was creating a safety issue. The new lights are brighter and light up the parking lots nicely!

As you walk through the building, you might notice that all of the Exit & Emergency Lights have been replaced. This units utilize LED technology and should last a long time!

On June 21-23, the parking lot by the Church Kitchen is off limits as the parking lot has been milled & repaved. This is a much needed repair and will be a welcomed sight. Please do not use this parking lot until the barriers have been removed!

I SCREAM, YOU SCREAM, WE ALL SCREAM FOR ICE CREAM!!



Are you ready South Branch? Mark your calendars to join us for a Community Ice Cream Social at 3pm on July 25th! We are so excited to welcome “What’s the Scoop” and their new ice cream truck to South Branch for some fun and sweet treats. This event will be open to the public to let everyone experience God’s love and the light of South Branch in the community.



The ice cream is on us - you just need to bring your chairs if you want to enjoy your ice cream at church, or you can take it to go. It’s going to be a wonderful day of fun and fellowship - can’t wait to see you there!

WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS!

On Sunday, July 4th, we will welcome Danielle & Thomas Marshall and Blake Kruze into the SBRC family. We pray that God will continue to bless them as they join our church family and ministry and we pray that God will continue to bless the work and mission of SBRC! Be sure to extend a warm SBRC greeting to our newest members!



BOOK CLUB

Throughout the many months of COVID-19, the Book Club faithfully continued meeting via Zoom on the last Sunday of the month at 7pm. On June 27th, the Book Club will meet via Zoom at 7pm to discuss “No Time Like the Future: An Optimist Considers Mortality” by Michael J. Fox.

In July, the Book Club will be reading “The Lager Queen of Minnesota” by J. Ryan Stradal and will meet on Sunday, July 25th at 7pm via Zoom to discuss.

In August, the Book Club will be reading “28 Summers” by Elin Hilderbrand and will meet on Sunday, August 29th at 7pm via Zoom to discuss.



The Book Club is not just for SBRC members! It is open to any member, friend, and family members! We are always looking for more to join us in discussing these books as well as enjoying some time together away from our normal day to day worries. So, pick up a copy and join us for some fun!

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR AUGUST

August 1:

2 Samuel 11:26-12:13a
Psalm 51:1-12
Exodus 16:2-4,9-15
Psalm 78:23-29
Ephesians 4:1-16
John 6:24-35

August 8:

2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15,
31-33
Psalm 130
1 Kings 19:4-8
Psalm 34:1-8
Ephesians 4:25-5:2
John 6:35,41-51

August 15:

1 Kings 2:10-12,
3:3-14
Psalm 111
Proverbs 9:1-6
Psalm 34:9-14
Ephesians 5:15-20
John 6:51-58

August 22:

1 Kings 8:20-30,41-43
Psalm 84
Joshua 24:1-2a,14-18
Psalm 34:15-22
Ephesians 6:10-20
John 6:56-69

August 29:

Song of Solomon
2:8-13
Psalm 45
Deuteronomy
4:1-2,6-9
Psalm 15
James 1:17-27
Mark 7:1-8,14-15,
21-23

South Branch Reformed Church
870 South Branch Road
Hillsborough, NJ 08844



Live & Love Like Jesus

Rev. Stephen Eckert ~ Pastor
Mr. John Colaiacovo ~ Music Director
Mrs. Karen Abbatiello ~ Church Secretary
Mrs. Maureen DeMarco ~ Preschool Director
Mrs. Maritza Acosta ~ Sexton

KNIT, PRAY, CROCHET

Knit, Pray, Crochet is a ministry that gathers on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of the month. It meets at 7pm in the home of Kirsten Stockman. Our ministry involves prayer, laughter, friendship, and the creation of a knitted or crocheted item. We have created prayer shawls, scarves, baby blankets, hats, and Alzheimer fidget muffs. You do not need to be a skilled knitter or crocheter in order to join this wonderful ministry.



Our group will reconvene on September 15 and the dates for the remainder of the year will be: Sept. 15 & 29, Oct. 13 & 27, Nov. 10, and Dec. 8.

Due to Thanksgiving and Christmas there will only be one meeting in the months of November & December. We are looking forward to getting together again and would love new members to consider joining us as well.

~ Kirsten Stockman