



CONTACT

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***South Branch
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FROM THE PASTOR...



I am sure that we have all heard the familiar Christmas song “Twelve Days of Christmas”. Some might look forward to hearing it on the radio or whatever streaming service you use and still others might tune in a different channel after hearing it so many times. We might have a favorite singer/artist/arrangement for the song and others just want the traditional version to be played.

I wonder, though, if we understand what the twelve days of Christmas are? I don’t mean the particular gifts given on each day - twelve drummers drumming, eleven pipers piping, etc - but when are actually the twelve days of Christmas? Did you know that the twelve days of Christmas take place in the days following Christmas Day and is meant to be the time of waiting for the Magi to arrive? Even though we are a few days past the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the Season of Christmas continues until the Epiphany on January 6th. So, don’t stop celebrating yet!!

As 2023 comes into view, SBRC remains hopeful and expectant of what will come. We have had our share of challenges that past few years and we have made our way through them as a faithful community of God’s children. While we don’t know what the future holds for us, we remain confident that with God’s continued leading through the Holy Spirit, we will move the ministry of Christ further.

In 2025, SBRC will be celebrating our 175th Anniversary! So, in anticipation of this celebration, I would like to gather a group of people who are interested in planning a celebration honoring our past, recognizing our present, and sharing our hope for the future. We have two years to get things ready!! If you are interested in leading or helping, please let me know.

I pray that 2023 will bring each of you good health & prosperity and that it will bring a renewed commitment to the shared work of SBRC! SBRC is truly a better place when we are all together in worship & work.



Happy New Year!

Pastor St



January Birthdays:

- 1 Karen Simon
- 3 Dana DePace
- 5 Brent Kowalenko
- 12 Michael Muller
- 15 Rich Sarles
- 20 Louis Mazzarella
- 21 Pam Warner
- 22 Alyssa Bernard
Sharon Schwar
- 23 Hazel Fowler
- 24 Gillian Green
- 25 Jean Evers
- 28 Madison Heider
Skylar Heider
- 31 Parker Kazar



January Anniversaries

- 20 Adam & Valerie Franco
- 22 Jonathan & Christina Sarles

TREASURER’S NOTES

The year is nearly over. And what a year it has been. Covid may still be lurking in the shadows, but it has not affected our desire to gather, both inside the sanctuary and out in the community. We were able to restore our kitchen and dining and resume serving church dinners. The Sunday School is bursting with excitement as they learn about Jesus and his love. The choir uplifts us with their music and voices. The generosity of SBRC towards others in need is evident by the overflowing bins of socks, food, and holiday gifts. However, despite all our newfound energy, our current expense budget remains in the red.

We started November, negative \$20,556. The Turkey Dinner was a huge success. The Winter Holiday Fund raiser is doing even better than the Fall fund raiser. The Thanksgiving envelopes were more generous this year. Thank you all for your support. But sadly, I must report that we ended the month, \$19,404 in the red.



Historically, this is the season where generosity abounds both within our walls and from our community. I pray we can end, 2022 in the black.

May God continue to bless SBRC and its members.

~ Robyn Friedlander

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNERS

SBRC was able to provide two full Christmas Dinners to families in our community. The sign-up sheet was filled in one Sunday and all the items were delivered on to the Hillsborough Food Pantry in time for distribution. All of this was possible due to your generosity - we all made someone’s Christmas a little brighter! Thank you all for making SBRC a wonderful family!

WOMEN’S GROUP

The Women's Group met for the first time in 6 months to clip stamps for the Stamp Alliance Ministry. Please save your stamps. And if you don't have the time and inclination to cut or tear off the stamps, simply turn in the entire envelope, and we'll take care of it. It feels good to get back into the swing of things such as this mission. We would have begun sooner, but the Ministry was shut down for a while because of Hurricane Ian and the devastation that it caused in Ft. Myers where they are located. But all is well now.

River blindness mission giving was \$20.00 for this past month. Many thanks to those who drop in their coins (and sometimes dollars) to the container by the stairs at the entrance to the sanctuary. In addition to providing medicine to prevent river blindness, which they hope to eradicate within the next five years, River Blindness Mission also helps to provide eye surgeries. Dr. Faustin Ngounou operates on cataracts for example: \$39 will provide cataract surgery for an adult; \$200 will provide cataract surgery and anesthesia for a child. Local residents do not have such money, but you can help with your coins and dollar bills. Every little bit helps. When you see loose change lying about, remember the good it can do halfway around the world.

ROAST PORK DINNER



SBRC will be holding a Roast Pork Dinner on Saturday, January 21st from 4:00 to 6:30 PM with Chef Tyson presiding over the kitchen. All tickets are \$20.

Call (908) 369-4956 for tickets or make your reservations by visiting: app.gopassage.com/events/pork-dinner

MENU

Roast Pork
Smashed Potatoes
Succotash O'Brian
Cole Slaw
Bean Salad
Baked Apples
Dinner Rolls
Assorted Desserts
Iced Tea, Lemonade,
Hot Tea, & Coffee

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR JANUARY



January 1:

Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

January 8:

Isaiah 42:1-9
Psalm 29
Acts 10:34-43
Matthew 3:13-17

January 15:

Isaiah 49:1-7
Psalm 40:1-11
1 Corinthians 1:1-9
John 1:29-42

January 22:

Isaiah 9:1-4
Psalm 27:1,4-9
1 Corinthians 1:10-18
Matthew 4:12-23

January 29:

Micah 6:1-8
Psalm 15
1 Corinthians 1:18-31
Matthew 5:1-12

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

December was a full month for the Sunday School. We kicked off the Christmas season together with our Church family at Norz Hill Farm and Market for the Holiday Light Hayride and bonfire. It was a spirited time of carols, lights, Christmas displays, fellowship and a snowball fight! We were so blessed to have that time together.

The month continued and the children learned about the importance of listening during Advent and Christmas Joy (with jumbo marshmallows!) during the Children's Moments with Pastor Steve.

The Sunday School prepared all month and presented our Christmas program to the congregation on December 18th. It was a sweet way to celebrate the 4th Sunday of Advent.

We are looking forward to getting back together following our Christmas break on January 8th, when our normal class schedule resumes.

Wishing our Sunday School and Church Family a very safe and healthy Christmas holiday!

- Tracy Davenport

ADOPT A FAMILY

What an amazing response from SBRC as we sought to bring some Christmas joy into our community. Through the Hillsborough Food Pantry, we adopted two families and provided gifts that they requested. In true SBRC fashion, all of the gifts were claimed on the first Sunday that they were available & everyone brought their gift to the church in time for them to be delivered to the Hillsborough Food Pantry.

Many thanks to Joanne Powell for coming up with the idea and putting it into action! Thank you to everyone who participated!



PRESCHOOL NEWS

Happy New Year!



We had a very busy but exciting December. We started the month off bringing back our Breakfast with Santa. This event was very successful where we were able to raise money for the preschool all while seeing many of our current and past families. On December 20th we held our annual Christmas program for our students where they reenacted the Road to Bethlehem. Before school closed for Christmas Break each class celebrated with class parties organized by our class parents.

As our students return to school from break we love to start the new year off with our Exercise Study. Students learn all about staying active and eating healthy.

It's hard to believe that it's time to start planning for September 2023. Registration Forms will be available for current students, siblings and church members starting on January 26th. For new students our Open House is scheduled for Saturday, February 11, 2023 at 10am. Please pass along the word to your family and friends.

If there is anything you would like to find out more about or to schedule a tour, please feel free to call us at 908-369-7885 or email the Preschool at Preschool@SBRChurch.org.

- Jenn Feaster

YOUTH GROUP

Danielle & Ben Burt and Michael Powell will be leading the Youth Group beginning in January 2023 and they are excited about getting everyone back together following a long break due to the pandemic and flood. We are beginning to form some ideas, but want to meet & hear from those who are interested in participating! Those who are interested are invited to meet on Sunday, January 8th in the Dining Room following worship to bounce around some ideas and figure out plans. Hope to see you there!

- Danielle, Ben, & Mike

ORDINATION & INSTALLATION OF CONSISTORY

On Sunday, January 1st those elected to serve on the Consistory will be installed during our regular worship service.

Elected to the **Office of Elder**: Robyn Friedlander, Joseph LiBrizzi, & Robert Stramaglia

Elected to the **Office of Deacon**: Irene Foley & Nicholas Speciale

Please keep these individuals as well as the whole Consistory in your prayers as they continue to serve the Church of Jesus Christ.

January 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Communion Ordination & Installation of Consistory No Sunday School	2 <i>Preschool Returns</i>	3	4	5 Choir Rehearsal at 7:30 PM in Parlor	6	7 Remove Decorations from Sanctuary at 10:00 AM
8 Sunday School Resumes Youth Group Meeting	9	10	11	12 Choir Rehearsal at 7:30 PM in Parlor	13	14
15 Women's Group	16 February Newsletter Items are due!	17	18 Elders Meeting at 7:00 PM Consistory at 7:30 PM	19 Choir Rehearsal at 7:30 PM in Parlor	20 Dinner Set Up at 7:00 PM	21 Roast Pork Dinner 4:00 PM to 6:30 PM
22	23	24	25	26 Choir Rehearsal at 7:30 PM in Parlor	27	28
29 Book Club at 7:00 PM in Parlor & Zoom	30	31				

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Live & Love Like Jesus

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

ASHLEY LIBRIZZI JUNIOR RECITAL

Ashley LiBrizzi, a junior at Westminster Choir College with a double major in Vocal Performance and Sacred Music, will be performing her Junior Recital at South Branch Reformed Church on Friday, February 3, 2023 at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary.

The recital is in partial fulfillment of the Vocal Performance Bachelors of Music degree at Westminster Choir College. The recital will be approximately 45 minutes with a reception following in the Dining Room. All are welcome & invited to attend.

Come out and support Ashley!