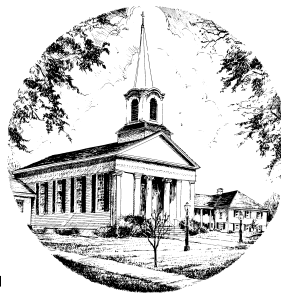


# CONTACT



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***South Branch  
Reformed Church***

**870 River Road  
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## TREASURER'S NOTE

The season of Advent is quickly approaching. Soon it will be Christmas, followed by the end of another year.

And what a year it has been! We closed out the final expenses from Ida after the main electrical panels were installed in June. We made it through the hurricane season without being flooded. We purchased an amazing line of defense (the Portadam Flood Defender system) to help protect our building from future floods. What a joy it was to see so many of you attend the training session and then construct the wall designed to protect our church. Thanks to your generosity throughout the year, we were able to bring joy to those less fortunate families in our community. Thanks for your support, our church dinners were very profitable.



It is obvious we enjoy coming together whether in the sanctuary, at coffee hour, at a potluck dinner, discussion at a book club, in a study group, and especially in an emergency or disaster. Strangers tell us they can feel the love we have for our church, for each other and even them when they attend one of our services.

Yes, we are an amazing group when we come together as one. But sadly, despite our efforts, our current expense budget remains in the red. We began the year strong, and the momentum continued till summer. Now we are playing catch up to end the year in the black. We started October, \$15,979 in the red and ended the month \$14,373 in the red.

Like you, I truly feel blessed to be part of this extraordinary, SBRC family. When we work together it makes us stronger and we can accomplish the impossible. We can do this people. Let us end the year in the black.

May God continue to bless SBRC and its members.

Robyn Friedlander

## SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Our annual Sunday School Christmas Pageant will be held during the worship service on December 17th. Rehearsals will be held following worship on December 3rd and 10th and at 8:30 a.m. on the 17th. Every child will be assigned a role in the program, so please make every effort to have him/her attend all the rehearsals to ensure that the pageant is a success. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with Holly Kowalenko or your child's Sunday School teacher.



### December Birthdays:

14	Mary Nunn
15	Judith Coates Sherry Marlatt
17	Pattiann Kletz
26	Lindzey King
28	Harriet Seibert
31	Paige DePace



**Sunday,  
December 24<sup>th</sup>**

Worship at 10:00am

Candlelight Service  
at 8:00pm

### FROM THE PASTOR...

One of the my grandfathers would remind us, “Don’t blink because it will be here before you know it!” As a child, I remember rolling my eyes at that comment as time seemed to move slowly. Now? He was certainly right in his words!

Here we are at the start of the Advent & Christmas Season (when did I blink??). The sights and the sounds of the season are permeating our senses and our hearts are feeling full as our family and church celebrations begin. Soon, our homes will be full of the scents of holiday meals and decorations. Our smiles are bigger, our spirits are lifted, and our hopes & dreams begin anew!



This year, the Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve share the same day, but in the church we will separate our celebrations! Morning worship will be dedicated to the Fourth Sunday of Advent and the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will usher in our Christmas celebration. No better way to celebrate than spending the day in worship & praise!!



2024 is right around the corner (don’t blink!) and we will end 2023 in worship! A perfect opportunity to gather in praise for all of God’s love and presence this past year.

I pray that your gatherings and celebrations this Christmas Season will be full of love and laughter and I pray that the New Year will bring you peace and prosperity! I also pray that SBRC will continue to be successful in fulfilling the ministry we are asked to do and to be faithful disciples!

Merry Christmas!



*Pastor [Signature]*



## 2023 ADOPT A FAMILY!

There is a meme going around that depicts someone being asked “What do you want for Christmas” and the answer is “lately I’ve been into gas and groceries.” It may make you chuckle, but the truth is that



it hits close to home for many families – even in our community. For most of us Christmas is a time of overindulgence – of gifts under the tree, filled stockings, and large family gatherings.



Imagine wondering how to be able to celebrate Christmas at all. Who has bath towels as the first item on their Christmas list? Simple things that we all take for granted mean the world to those struggling during this holiday season.

Here at South Branch we will once again be working with the Hillsborough Food Pantry to fulfill some holiday wishes by adopting some of the client families. Each client has submitted a “wish list” of three items each under \$35 to the food pantry. South Branch will be “adopting” 12 of these clients for a total of 36 gifts.

Ornaments with gift tags for each person will be distributed on Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> – grab yours on the way out of church. Place the ornament on the tree in the parlor to help decorate – hang on to the tag.

Gifts need to be returned to church unwrapped with the tags attached by December 17<sup>th</sup>. Questions? Please see Joanne Powell.



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## BOOK CLUB

The Book Club had a wonderful year and we are looking forward to continuing to read into 2024! Our time together has been filled with great discussions, laughter, and the opportunity to challenge ourselves in different ways. There will be no meeting in December due to the holidays & family/church commitments. In 2024, we will dive into:

December/January - “The Measure” by Nikki Erlick

February - “Radium Girls” by Kate Moore

March - “The Storied Life of AJ Fikry” by Gabrielle Zevin

April - “The Last Castle” by Denise Kiernan

May - “The World Played Chess” by Robert Dugoni

June - “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks” by Rebecca Skloot



## PRESCHOOL NEWS

Merry Christmas!

It is hard to believe December has already begun! We just finished up our Thanksgiving study with our Thanksgiving Gatherings with our Preschool Families. During the Gatherings the children sang their Thanksgiving songs and shared pumpkin pies and corn bread that were made during school. Each class also had created a friendship fruit salad. Children each brought in one piece of fruit to contribute to making a beautiful fruit salad to enjoy with their class.



We have a very exciting December ahead of us. We will start the month off with our Breakfast with Santa on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. This event is a favorite of not only our current and former students but also the staff here at South Branch. All proceeds of the breakfast will benefit the Preschool. The students will then learn all about the Road to Bethlehem and the special visitors they met along the way. On December 19<sup>th</sup> the students will perform in our annual Christmas Program.

When the children return from Christmas break, we will start the year off with our Exercise study. What better way to start off the new year than learning about healthy eating habits and exercise.

We currently have 65 students enrolled across 5 classes. Enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year will begin at the end of January. If there is anything you would like to find out more about, please feel free to call or email the Preschool, at (908) 369-7885, [Preschool@SBRChurch.org](mailto:Preschool@SBRChurch.org). Wishing you all a blessed Christmas and happy new year.

~ Jenn Feaster

## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

November was a wonderful month of giving thanks. Thank you to all who participated in our Month of Gratitude Operation Shoebox collection. We collected several shopping bags of goodies to send to our troops! Your generosity will help boost the spirits of those who are serving our country away from their homes and families this holiday season.

We are excited to meet up with our Church family at Norz Hill Farm & Market for the Holiday Lights hayride at 5:30 PM on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Sign up during coffee hour or by calling the church office, tickets are \$12/per person. All are welcome!



Our students will spend the month of December learning God's Word and preparing for our Christmas Program, which will be presented to the Congregation on December 17<sup>th</sup> during Worship. Practices will be held after Church in the Sanctuary on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. This is a school-wide production, and we may even ask for some adult volunteers! Our final dress rehearsal will be before Church on December 17<sup>th</sup>, watch for details.

There will be no Sunday School class on December 24<sup>th</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup>. We'll be excited to welcome the students back on January 7<sup>th</sup>.

All children ages 2-1/2 – 7<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to join us on Sunday mornings. The Sunday School staff is excited to continue along this journey with their students.

~ Tracy Davenport



# BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

## South Branch Reformed Church Preschool

870 River Road, Hillsborough, NJ 08844

**Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**8:00am to 10:30am**

To alleviate long waits please sign up for a tentative seating time.

3 Seatings: 8:15 9:15 10:00

Admission:	\$15.00	Adults
	\$10.00	Children (ages 3 to 8)
	FREE	Children (2 and under)

Menu: Pancakes, Bacon, Sausage, Coffee, Tea, Orange & Apple Juice

## PRINTED COMPLIMENTARY PICTURE

(RECEIVE A COPY VIA E-MAIL TO SHARE WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS)

Limited number of tickets available.

For ticket orders please call the Preschool office (908-369-7885),  
email: [Preschool@SBRChurch.org](mailto:Preschool@SBRChurch.org) or return this order form.

# December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 <i>Breakfast with Santa from 8:00am to 10:30am</i>
3 Communion Reception of New Members Holiday Hayride at Norz Farm at 5:30pm	4 Advent Study at 7:00pm <i>Preschool Parent Session at 7:00pm</i>	5	6	7  Choir at 7:30pm in Parlor	8	9
10 Congregational Meeting  Christmas in the Parlor at 5:00pm	11  Advent Study at 7:00pm	12	13  Knit, Pry, Crochet 7:00pm at Stockman home	14  Choir at 7:30pm in Parlor	15	16  Newsletter Items Due!
17 Sunday School Christmas Program Gifts & Dinner Items for Food Pantry Due!	18  Advent Study at 7:00pm	19 <i>Preschool Christmas Programs</i>	20  Consistory at 7:30pm in Parlor	21  Choir at 7:30pm in Parlor	22	23
24  Christmas Eve Service at 8:00pm	25 <i>Come let us Adore Him</i> 	26	27	28  Choir at 7:30pm in Parlor	29	30
31						

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. Jennifer Feaster ~ Preschool Director  
Mrs. Maritza Acosta ~ Sexton

## 2024 CHURCH DINNERS

January 20 - Roast Pork  
March 16 - Corned Beef & Cabbage  
April 27 - Roast Beef  
September 7 - Ham  
October 19 - Chicken Cordon Bleu  
November 16 - Turkey

*We are truly grateful for your  
continued support. We look forward  
to seeing & serving you!*