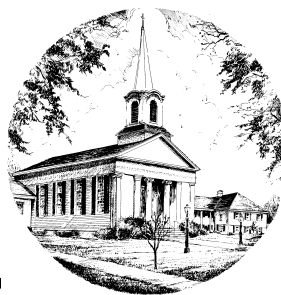


CONTACT



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***South Branch
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FROM THE PASTOR...

During this past Advent season, some gathered with me to hold an Advent Study utilizing the book "Names of the Messiah: An Advent Study" by Walter Brueggemann. The study guided us through the familiar words of Isaiah 9:6, "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" and helped us to focus on the names.

I think it would be fair to say that we all learned a few things about this familiar verse that we hear every year in the Christmas season. Often don't spend much time thinking about what they mean or the importance of what Isaiah was trying to relate to the people of Israel and to each of us!

I do think that this happens with much of the Christmas narrative. We have heard it so many times that we gloss over the importance of the event that we have just celebrated in our church and our homes.



Have you ever sat and thought about the message that Mary received from the angel Gabriel or the words of assurance to Joseph about what Mary was about to experience? Have you ever wondered about what was going through the minds of the shepherds as the glory of the Lord shone around them? Have you ever tried to feel the excitement of the Wise Men as they brought gifts to the one whom the star led them to or even the fear they felt knowing what Herod wanted to do the newborn King?

Even though our Christmas celebrations have come to an end, I encourage each of us to spend some time with the words of the Christmas narrative. Read them over again and read them out loud. Pause and think about the significance of the words and what it means to us as Christians! Talk about what you have read with family, friends, and church members. Share what you have "learned" as you have reflected on the importance of those words. Listen to what others share about what they have learned.

If we do this together, then we will see that Christmas is much more than a "cute little story" that we hear once a year. We will see understand how God's tremendous love for us was and continues to be on full display beginning with the birth of Jesus.



Happy New Year!

Pastor [Signature]



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
- 31 Parker Kazar



January Anniversaries

- 20 Adam & Valerie Franco

TREASURER'S NOTES

The year is almost over, and what a busy year it has been. We received a beautiful bench by collecting 500 pounds of plastic wrapping. We provided meals for two less fortunate families in our community throughout the year so their holidays could be a little brighter. We eagerly accepted the challenge to purchase gifts for several families in our area so their Christmas could be more joyful. We became proactive in protecting our beautiful building from flooding. We supported our church fund raiser dinners, making each one more successful. Yes, there has been a lot of energy and good things happening at SBRC this year.

But sadly, I must report our current expense budget remains in the red. We started November, negative \$14,394. Despite all our efforts, we ended the month, \$12,406 in the red. Historically, this is the season where generosity abounds, both within our walls and from our community. Yes, I believe in miracles and pray we will be able to end 2023 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!

2024 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 twelve clients and provided 48 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!



ROAST PORK DINNER

SBRC will be holding a Roast Pork Dinner on Saturday, January 20th from 4:00 to 6:30 PM with Chef Tyson presiding over the kitchen. All tickets are \$20.00 per dinner.

Call (908) 369-4956 for tickets or pre-purchase tickets by visiting: app.gopassage.com/events/2024-roast-pork. Online tickets available beginning Jan. 1st to Jan. 19th.

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 7:

Genesis 1:1-15
Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11

January 14:

Samuel 3:1-20
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Corinthians 6:12-20
John 1:43-51

January 21:

Jonah 3:1-5
Psalm 62:5-12
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

January 28:

Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm 111
1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Mark 1:21-28

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

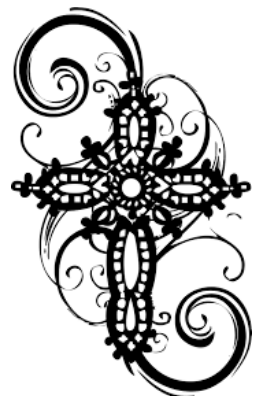
December was a full month for the Sunday School. On Saturday, December 9th, 48 members of our Church family met at Norz Hill Farm and Market for the Holiday Light Hayride and bonfire. It was a spirited time of carols, lights, Christmas displays, and fellowship! We were so blessed to have that time together.



The Sunday School prepared all month and presented our Christmas program "Stories of our Savior" to the congregation on December 17th. We hope you enjoyed the stories and music.

There will be no class on December 24th or 31st and we are looking forward to getting back together following our Christmas break on January 7th, when our normal class schedule resumes.

- Tracy Davenport



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 19th 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 2024. Registration Forms will be available for current students, siblings and church members starting on January 29th. For new students our Open House is scheduled for Saturday, February 10, 2024 at 10am. Please pass along the word to your family and PRESCHOOL 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

ORDINATION & INSTALLATION OF CONSISTORY

On Sunday, January 7th those elected to serve on the Consistory will be installed during our regular worship service.

Elected to the **Office of Elder**: Holly Kowalenko & Emily Muller

Elected to the **Office of Deacon**: Dan Davenport & Bill Munro

Elected to the **Endowment Committee**: Tracy Davenport

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

January 2024

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|-----|--|--|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 Choir Rehearsal at 7:30 PM in Parlor | 5 | 6 |
| 7 Communion Ordination & Installation of Consistory Sunday School resumes Remove Sanctuary decorations | 8 | 9 | 10 Knit, Pray, Crochet 7:00pm at Stockman home | 11 Choir Rehearsal at 7:30 PM in Parlor | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 February Newsletter Items are due! | 17 Elders at 7:00 PM in the Office Consistory at 7:30 PM in the Parlor | 18 Choir Rehearsal at 7:30 PM in Parlor | 19 Dinner Set Up at 7:00 PM | 20 Roast Pork Dinner 4:00 PM to 6:30 PM |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 Knit, Pray, Crochet 7:00pm at Stockman home | 25 Choir Rehearsal at 7:30 PM in Parlor | 26 | 27 |
| 28 Book Club at 7:00 PM via Zoom | 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

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the 2024 Church Dinners at SBRC!

Jan. 20th - Roast Pork

March 16th - Corned Beef

April 27th - Roast Beef

Sept. 7th - Ham

Oct. 19th - Chicken Cordon Bleu

Nov. 16th - Turkey

Our Dining Room is open and we are ready to welcome & serve you! Takeouts remain an option and please remember to bring a reusable bag to take your dinner(s) home.