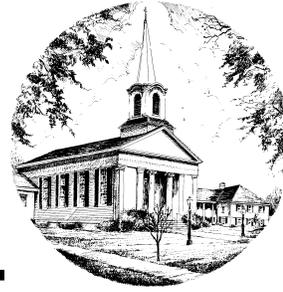




CONTACT



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***South Branch
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TREASURER'S NOTES

As we began December, I was deeply concerned about our current expense budget. We started the month, \$12,406 in the red. As we went through the month, in addition to our regular expenses, several large quarterly payments were made.



Yes, I was worried. How could we possibly make up such a deficit? But then I began having positive thoughts. Hey, there are five Sundays in December, which means an extra offering. Historically, Christmas has been a season of generosity from both our members and our community. Could we actually break even?

On December 31, I tallied up our receipts for the month and found we came really close to achieving our goal. We ended the year, \$326, in the red. What a come-back. Way to go South Branch. But our story does not end there. As I was finalizing my monthly report, I received a late, year-end donation. I am happy to report, we ended month and 2023, \$2,174 in the black. Thank you all for your love and support. Yes, I believe miracles do happen in this special place.



May God continue to bless SBRC and its members.

~ Robyn Friedlander

February Birthdays

- 6 Frank Eckert
- 8 James Nunn
- 13 Collin DePace
- 14 Thomas Bernard
Valerie Franco
- 15 Matthew Burt
- 17 Steve Eckert
- 21 Susan Rohner
- 27 William Wright



February Anniversaries

- 17 Anthony & Dana
DePace
- 20 Tom & Patti
Kletz
- 20 Brent & Holly
Kowalenko



FROM THE PASTOR...

A big thank you to all who remembered me this past Christmas with wonderful gifts of cookies and Wawa gift certificates! Be sure that all of the cookies were thoroughly enjoyed along with a cup of coffee—a perfect pairing. Thank you again!

Thank You

Also, thank you to all who helped with our Christmas traditions and worship services. A lot of time and energy went into making sure that Advent and Christmas were meaningful and joyful opportunities to worship & fellowship. A big thank you to our wonderful choir for your energy and your voices in helping lead worship to praise our gracious God!

As we continue “come down” from our Christmas celebrations, the month of February is approaching quickly and this year that means the start of the Season of Lent on Wednesday, February 14th with our annual Ash Wednesday Prayer Service at 8:00 PM. I can already hear your questions and concerns, “But Pastor Steve, that is Valentine’s Day!!” Well, yes, it is!!

I realize that this might cause a decision to be made on whether to attend the prayer service or appease your spouse/partner/significant other with your usual arrangements of celebrating your love.



Personally, I see this as the perfect opportunity to share the time with your spouse/partner/significant other in two ways: 1) continuing your traditional way of celebrating Valentine’s Day and 2) come to worship together as we approach God in prayer and reflection - after all, God love us too!!

Pastor Steve

CORNERD BEEF & CABBAGE DINNER

SBRC will be holding a Corned Beef Dinner on Saturday, March 16th from 4:00 to 6:30 PM with Chef Tyson presiding over the kitchen. All tickets are \$20 and you can dine in or take out!

Call (908) 369-4956 for tickets or make your reservations by visiting: app.gopassage.com/events/2024-corned-beef. Online tickets available for purchase from Feb. 19th to March 15th.

Menu

- Corned Beef
- Boiled Cabbage
- Parsley Potatoes
- Glazed Carrots
- Cole Slaw
- Rye & Irish Soda Breads
- Assorted Desserts
- Iced Tea, Lemonade, Hot Tea & Coffee



TREX BENCH CHALLENGE



October 2023 started the collection of plastic for another Trex Bench and we have to collect 1,000 lbs over 12 months. At the time, it felt like a huge task and some of us wondered if the church would be able to do it again. If you recall, the first collection was 500 lbs in 6 months and that felt like a big undertaking.

Irene Foley shared at the January meeting of the Consistory that over 400 lbs have been collected and all in just 4 months (we are averaging just over 100 lbs a month). SBRC is well positioned to meet the goal and to meet it early – again! Keep up the great work and soon we will have another bench by the parking lot entrance for all of us to enjoy!

ASH WEDNESDAY PRAYER SERVICE

An annual tradition at SBRC continues this year on Wednesday, February 14th at 8:00 PM in the Sanctuary as we gather for our Ash Wednesday Prayer Service. This day marks the start of the Lenten Season - a time of penitence, humility, confession, and personal reflection.

Pastor Steve will lead us in the Prayer Service and will impose ashes on those wishing to receive following the service. Consider joining us as we enter this solemn & holy time of the church year.



SBRC COMMITTEES

SBRC has eight committees that are chaired by a member of the Consistory. Listed below are the committees & the chairperson:

- Worship** - Emily Muller
- Christian Education** - Dan Davenport
- Property** - Nick Speciale
- Finance & Administration** - Joe LiBrizzi
- Fellowship & Church Life** - Tyson Stramaglia
- Congregational Care** - Holly Kowalenko
- Mission & Social Witness** - Irene Foley
- Church Growth & Outreach** - Holly Kowalenko

We are always looking for church members to participate in the committee and help us to continue our shared ministry. Each chairperson has been encouraged to gather those interested in serving on the committee and if you already know which committee you would like to serve on, please contact the chairperson listed above. Prayerfully consider participating in one of more of the committees and let's explore how God is leading us to new & amazing things in our church and our community!

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR FEBRUARY

February 4:

Isaiah 40:21-31
Psalm 147:1-11
1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Mark 1:29-39

February 11:

2 Kings 2:1-12
Psalm 50:1-6
2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Mark 9:2-9

February 14:

Joel 2:1-2,12-17
Psalm 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6,16-21

February 18:

Genesis 9:8-17
Psalm 25:1-10
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:9-15

February 25:

Genesis 17:1-7,15-16
Psalm 22:23-31
Romans 4:13-25
Mark 8:31-38
Mark 9:2-9

SUNDAY SCHOOL



During the month of February we will continue to learn about Jesus' love for us. On February 4th we will celebrate Valentine's Day with a school-wide activity in the Fireside Room making cards for our Church family and community. We look forward to being together, having fun, and showing our creativity.

Plans are in motion for our annual Pretzel Activity and Easter Celebration on Palm Sunday, March 24th. More information to follow.

We have a lot of fun planned for the rest of the school year and look forward to spending our Sunday mornings together.



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. We had a few snow and rain days during this time but hopefully those are all behind us. As February starts up we are looking forward to transitioning to the Building study. This study is one of our favorites as there is so much to explore all around us.

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 26th. For new students our Open House is scheduled for Saturday, February 10, 2024 at 10am. Please pass along the word to your family and friends. Registration forms will be available on the table in the front foyer.

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

THANK YOU!

I feel blessed to have such a wonderful Church family. Thank you to everyone who visited me, sent cards, and dropped off meals and treats following my surgery. Thank you also for all the prayers, texts, calls, and messages wishing me well and a speedy recovery. A special thank you to my Sunday School team, volunteers and Holly for the wonderful Christmas program presentation; to Nancy for leading my class; and Pastor Steve and the Sunday School staff for keeping the program moving forward in my absence. I am looking forward to being back with you all soon.

Thanks so much!



Tracy Davenport

40 Items in 40 Days A Lenten SBRC Family Challenge

February 14 is the first day of Lent and we have a challenge for you. Each day of Lent, remove one item from your family's closet that you no longer wear or need and place it in a bag. At the end of the 40 days, your bag will be ready for donation. This challenge will lead up to a Spring Clothing Drive, which will be held on a Saturday morning in April in the SBRC Parking Lot, date and time to be determined.

We will be collecting usable and wearable men's, ladies' and children's **clothing** and **shoes** for all seasons and sizes. Also collecting **accessories**: purses, belts, baby accessories, backpacks, hats, scarves, gloves, and ties; **soft household items**: blankets, tablecloths, bed sheets, draperies, and curtains.



None of the clothing is shredded or destroyed and all proceeds from this fundraiser will go towards SBRC's fundraising efforts. Join us in the Lenten challenge and bring that bag as well as many others as you are able to gather (no limit) to the collection drive in April. Share the news with your family, friends, and neighbors, all are welcome.

We are unable to collect in advance, all donations should be brought to the Church on the day and time identified, keep your eye out for more information. Late donations cannot be accepted.

DO NOT BRING ITEMS TO THE CHURCH BEFORE THE COLLECTION DATE!

ICE CREAM FUNDRAISER!

What's the coolest Fundraiser around? Ice Cream of Course.

The 175th Fundraising Committee will be offering a super yummy ice cream flavor of the month from What's the Scoop in Metuchen (continuing our relationship with them)!

Here's how it will work.

- Each quart must be pre-purchased for \$12.00 each.
- You can purchase 1 or more, no limit.
- Cut off will be the Sunday before delivery.
- Pick up will be the following Sunday during coffee hour.
- You can purchase with Check made payable to (SBRC) or cash to Debbie Norz



OR

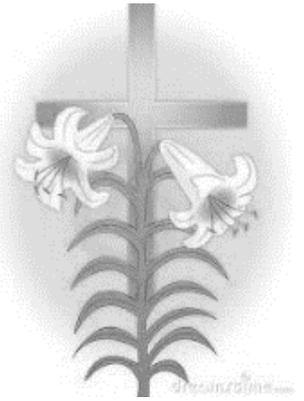
You can purchase with your credit card by using the link below or scanning the QR Code:

Link is:

bit.ly/4aZXXVx



Memorial Easter Lilies



Easter is a time for freshness, beauty, and renewal. This Easter, help us refresh and beautify the Sanctuary.

Memorial lilies, designated “in memory of” or “in honor of” a friend or loved one, may be ordered by using the short form printed below. Please complete the form and return to Karen Abbatiello. If you do not wish to take a lily home, but want to remember or honor a loved one, you may contribute to our Memorial Flower Fund instead.

The cost is \$9.00 each and the deadline for ordering is **Sunday, March 17th**. If paying by check, please write “Easter Lily” in the memo section.

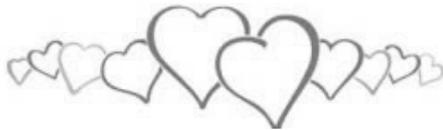
Easter Lily: # _____ **OR** Memorial Fund

Name(s)	Relationship	Given by	Choose one
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			<input type="checkbox"/> In Memory
			<input type="checkbox"/> In Honor
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			<input type="checkbox"/> In Honor
			<input type="checkbox"/> In Memory
			<input type="checkbox"/> In Honor
			<input type="checkbox"/> In Memory

February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Choir at 7:30pm in Parlor	2	3
4 Communion	5	6	7	8 Choir at 7:30pm in Parlor	9	10
11	12	13	14 Ash Wednesday Prayer Service at 8pm	15	16 Newsletter items are due!	17
18	19 Bible Study at 7pm in Parlor	20	21 Consistory at 7:30pm in Parlor	22 Choir at 7:30pm in Parlor	23	24
25 Book Club at 7pm via Zoom	26 Bible Study at 7pm in Parlor	27	28 Knit, Pray, Crochet 7pm at the Stockman home	29 Choir at 7:30pm in Parlor		

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

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

A Sign-Up Sheet for a Lenten Bible Study has been posted on the hallway bulletin board. We will be using "The Third Day" by Tom Berlin as our guide. The group will meet on Mondays at 7:00 PM in the Parlor beginning on February 19th until March 25th (6 weeks).

If you are interested in participating, please sign-up so that Pastor Steve can order the books and other resources needed for our time together. Hope you will join us!!

