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***South Branch
Reformed Church***

**870 River Road
Hillsborough, NJ
08844**

**Office: (908) 369-4956
Fax: (908) 369-4602**

**Web:
www.sbrchurch.org**

 **@SBRChurch**

 **sbrchurch**

FROM THE PASTOR...

This year's Advent Study utilized the book "An Unlikely Advent" by Rachel Billups and she guided us through the lesser known characters of the familiar Christmas narrative: Zechariah & Elizabeth, King Herod, the Magi, and the Shepherds. We know of them from the readings and our own nativity sets, but Rachel encouraged and challenged us to consider their roles in the story as well as in our own stories.



I wrote last year, "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." I still think those words ring true for us! Truthfully, have you ever thought about Zechariah & Elizabeth apart from the Christmas narrative? Do you remember who they are and the role they played? Have you ever thought about the shepherds and what they were thinking as they heard the message from the heavenly hosts? Were they afraid, curious, or just looking for something to do outside of watching their flocks by night?



Again, 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! Let the words sink in and follow Mary's example by the pondering all these things in your heart.

A new year is approaching and a new opportunity for us to recommit ourselves to God and God's Church! The new year will bring opportunities for us to gather in worship and fellowship as well as in celebration as SBRC begins it's 175th year of Christian Work & Witness to our community.

Happy New Year!

Pastor [Signature]





January Birthdays:

- 3 Dana DePace
- 5 Brent Kowalenko
- 12 Michael Muller
- 15 Richard Sarles, Jr
- 20 Louis Mazzarella
- 21 Pam Warner
- 22 Sharon Schwar
- 24 Gillian Green
- 25 Jean Evers

TREASURER’S NOTES

I cannot believe 2024 is nearly over. As always, the SBRC family has been especially busy making improvements to our beautiful building and its surrounding grounds. We are eager to support one another and genuinely enjoy each other’s company whether at worship, coffee hour, Bible studies or special events. But we do not stop there. We are always looking for ways to spread this love and joy beyond our walls. At Christmas time we especially enjoy reaching out to our community by providing holiday meals and purchasing gifts for those less fortunate, so they could have a more joyful holiday.

Yes, there is a lot of energy and joy radiating from SBRC this year. Donations are up this month compared to former years. I am happy to report our current expense budget moved into the black. This has not happened in several years. We started November, \$7,562 in the red. But thanks to everyone’s generosity and some surprise gifts, we ended the month, \$2,043 in the black. Way to go,

South Branch! Keep up the excellent work and we will end 2024 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. 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

SBRC responds in stellar fashion as we sought to bring some Christmas joy to some families in our community. Through the Hillsborough Food Pantry, we adopted twelve clients and provided 36 gifts that they requested. 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 planning & handling the event and deepest thanks to all who participated in making someone’s Christmas a bit better this year!



January Anniversaries

- 20 Adam & Valerie Franco

ROAST PORK DINNER

SBRC will be holding a Roast Pork Dinner on Saturday, January 18th from 4:00pm to 6:30pm, 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/2025-roast-pork.

Limited number of tickets are available & reservations are encouraged!!

MENU

Roast Pork with Stuffing & Gravy
 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 5:

Jeremiah 31:7-14
 Psalm 147:12-20
 Ephesians 1:3-14
 John 1:1-18

January 12:

Isaiah 43:1-7
 Psalm 29
 Acts 8:14-17
 Luke 13:15-17,21-22

January 19:

Isaiah 62:1-5
 Psalm 36:5-10
 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
 John 2:1-11

January 26:

Nehemiah 8:1-10
 Psalm 19
 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
 Luke 4:14-21

IMPORTANT NEWSLETTER UPDATE!

Beginning February 2025, SBRC will be transitioning the monthly newsletter to email/online only! Due to cost increases for postage, paper, and toner, it is no longer feasible for us to continue mailing them out. There will be some printed copies available at the church for those who wish to pick up a copy.



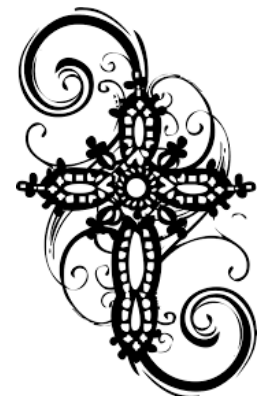
If you currently receive the newsletter via USPS and you would like to continue receiving it, please send your email address to us at newsletter@sbrchurch.org and we will add you to the distribution list. Thank you for your continued prayers, support, and interest in SBRC.



Welcome New Members!!

On Sunday, December 29th, SBRC welcome eight new members into our family during the regular worship service! Those joining us are: Tony & Sue Cole, Glenn & Jessie Hinks, Bob & Ines Kuehn, Maria Sarles, and Khaila Tan. May God continue to bless you and SBRC as we worship and work together.

Welcome



WOMEN'S GROUP

A big thank you to all those who donated socks for the homeless. It's probably hard for most of us to understand this need because many of us have a drawer full of socks. However, right here in Hillsborough Township there are needy people who do not. Your generosity gave 178 pairs of socks to those less fortunate than ourselves.

The Women's Group clipped 478 stamps to mail to Florida where they will be sold to raise money for Spanish Sunday School materials. Please be aware of stamps when you bring in the mail, especially at Christmas card time.

And finally, remember to drop your coins and bills into the River Blindness container to help the poorest of the poor in Africa. Your donations help to prevent river blindness, help to distribute glasses to school children, and help to perform cataract surgery.



- Lynne Lothian

BOOK CLUB

January marks the 10th year of the Book Club at SBRC! A gathering that began in January of 2015 has met faithfully each month to discuss a book, make recommendations for future books, and provided laughter, distraction, refuge, & support during COVID-19. Family members & friends from different states have joined the discussion, new friendships made, and old friendships strengthened - all over books! The Book Club has read 104 books over the past 10 years and 2025 is shaping up to be another great year of books & discussions.

We would love to have more join us! We meet on the last Sunday of the month, from January to November, at 7:00pm via Zoom. Why not grab a copy and join in the fun.

2025 Upcoming Books:

January - "Ordinary Grace" by William Kent Krueger

February - "The Women" by Kristen Hannah

March - "Unlocked" by Karen Kingsbury

April - "Yellowface" by R.F. Kuang



ORDINATION & INSTALLATION OF CONSISTORY

On Sunday, January 5th, 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, and Robert "Tyson" Stramaglia

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

Elected to the **Endowment Committee**: Irene Foley and Patti Kletz

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

January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 <i>Preschool resumes</i> Choir Rehearsal at 7:30 PM in Parlor	3	4
5 Communion Installation of Consistory Remove Sanctuary decorations	6	7	8 Knit, Pray, Crochet 7:00pm at Stockman home	9 Choir Rehearsal at 7:30 PM in Parlor	10	11
12	13	14	15 Elders at 7:00 PM in the Office Consistory at 7:30 PM in the Parlor	16 February Newsletter Items are due! Choir Rehearsal at 7:30 PM in Parlor	17 Dinner Set Up at 7:00 PM	18 Roast Pork Dinner 4:00 PM to 6:30 PM
19 Women's Group	20 <i>Preschool Closed</i>	21	22 Knit, Pray, Crochet 7:00pm at Stockman home	23 Choir Rehearsal at 7:30 PM in Parlor	24	25
26 Book Club at 7:00 PM via Zoom	27	28	29	30 Choir Rehearsal at 7:30 PM in Parlor	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

2025 CHURCH DINNERS

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the 2025 Church Dinners at SBRC!

Jan. 18th - Roast Pork

March 15th - Corned Beef

April 26th - Roast Beef

Sept. 13th - Ham

Oct. 18th - Chicken Francaise

Nov. 15th - 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.