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South Branch Reformed Church

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FROM THE PASTOR...

2025 has faded away as we welcomed the arrival of 2026. Reminds me of the "A War for All Seasons" episode from M*A*S*H. Colonel Potter is dressed up as "Father Time" and Radar is dressed up as the New Year baby. In this episode, Colonel Potter says, "Here's to the New Year: May she be a damned sight better than the old one, and may we all be home before she's over."

Now, while we don't have to worry about being "home" before it is over, I am sure that we all feel the same way about the start of a new year! We take the time to look over all that has been accomplished in the past year, all the things that kept us busy or worried, and look, expectantly, to a new year and a fresh start. We always hope that the new year will be better than the year before - there is always room for improvement!!



SBRC had a busy 2025! A number of planned and unplanned property projects were completed, we worshiped and fellowshiped with each other, and we celebrated 175 years of active ministry in the community! I wonder what God has in store for SBRC in 2026?

As we welcome in 2026, my continued prayer for us is that we hold onto, encourage, and support the ministry of SBRC. 2026 will bring it's own concerns and celebrations, but as long as we hold onto that which God is calling us to be and we continue to support, love, and encourage one another - then nothing is impossible!

I pray that you all have a safe and happy New Year! I pray that God will continue to bless SBRC! I pray that 2026 will be a bit better than 2025!

Happy New Year!



January Birthdays:

- 1 Karen Beni
- 3 Dana DePace
- 5 Brent Kowalenko
- 15 Richard Sarles, Jr
- 20 Louis Mazarrella
- 21 Pam Warner
- 24 Gillian Green
Lowell Kreeger
- 25 Jean Evers

TREASURER’S NOTES

As we prepare to say goodbye to 2025, we reflect on what a busy year it has been. Thanks to our building committee, the funding from endowment, and other donations, many major repairs have been completed to our aging church and parsonage. This was also an important milestone in our history as we celebrated the 150th anniversary of our church. In true SBRC fashion, we continue to support one another as well as those in need beyond our walls.

Yes, this is truly a special place where miracles happen when we work together. Thanks to your generosity, donations are up this month compared to last year. I am happy to report that our current expense budget has moved back in the black. We started November, \$5,855 in the red. But thanks to your generosity and several surprise gifts, we ended the month, \$3,581 in the black. Way to go South Branch. Keep up the excellent work.



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!

2025 ADOPT A FAMILY

SBRC responds in stellar fashion as we sought to bring some Christmas joy to some families in our community. 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 17th 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/2026-roast-pork.

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

MENU

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

WOMEN'S GROUP

The Women's Group would like to extend a HUGE thank you to everyone who contributed socks to our November Warm Socks for the Homeless sock drive. Our hoped-for challenge was to surpass last year's number of 178 pairs of socks. Now you've a hardy goal for next year of 234 pairs of socks that will go to people in Hillsborough Township. Well done! With this year's early arrival of freezing temperatures, these socks will find welcome use. I can't even imagine not having a pair of socks to keep my feet warm in the winter. Can you? So congratulations. It's this giving spirit that honors what our Lord has called us to do, to always seek out the needy and fill their needs.



The Women's Group will start the new year of clipping stamps for the Alliance Stamp Ministry on January 18th. We hope you have saved any Christmas card envelope stamps and can deposit them in the basket in the church office. Anyone in the congregation is welcome to join us for clipping stamps. No previous experience required.

And always try to be mindful of the poorest people in Africa and their medical needs by dropping coins or bills into the River Blindness container at the foot of the steps to the sanctuary. Your donations translate into so much more buying power there.



Many thanks from the Women's Group for all that you do to support God's work here in Hillsborough and around the world. May you have a blessed New Year.

~ Lynne Lothian

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR JANUARY

January 4:

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

January 11:

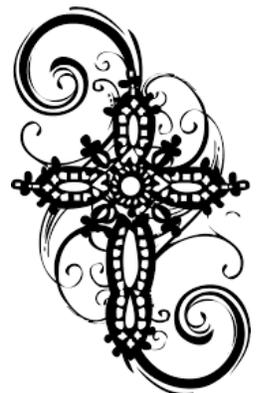
Isaiah 42:1-9
Psalm 29
Acts 10:34-43
Matthew 3:13-17

January 18:

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

January 25:

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



SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

On Sunday, December 14th, SBRC welcome into the visible membership of the church, Valerie Sophia Wengryn, daughter of Vera & Scott Wengryn, as she received the Sacrament of Baptism. We pray that God's continued blessings will be upon her and her family!



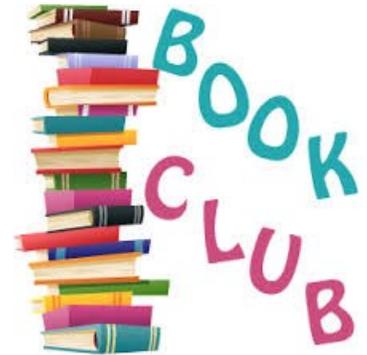
BOOK CLUB

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! 2026 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 8:00pm via Zoom. Why not grab a copy and join in the fun.

2026 Upcoming Books:

- January - "The Authenticity" by Clare Pooley
- February - "Anxious People" by Kristen Hannah
- March - "The Berry Pickers" by Amanda Peters
- April - "How to Age Disgracefully" by Clare Pooley
- May - "How to Read a Book" by Monica Wood
- June - "The Harvey Girls" by Juliette Fay



ORDINATION & INSTALLATION OF CONSISTORY

On Sunday, January 4th, those elected to serve on the Consistory will be installed during our regular worship service.

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

Elected to the **Office of Deacon**: Dan Davenport, Bill Munro, and Nancy Murray

Elected to the **Endowment Committee**: Tracy Davenport and Joe LiBrizzi

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

January 2026

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

2026 CHURCH DINNERS

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the
2026 Church Dinners at SBRC!

Jan. 17th - Roast Pork

March 15th - Corned Beef

April 25th - Roast Beef

Sept. 12th - Ham

Oct. 17th - Chicken Francaise

Nov. 21st - Turkey

Please remember to bring a reusable bag if
you are taking your dinner(s) home.