

# Good Tidings

The Newsletter of Brick Presbyterian Church

April 2011

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## Pastoral Reflections After An Apocalyptic Tragedy



What has befallen Japan in the wake of an 8.9 earthquake, coupled with the horror of the resulting tsunami, and the resulting damage and radioactive dangers from severely damaged nuclear power plants is truly of apocalyptic proportion. I cannot begin to imagine the total scope of this event, nor what our brothers and sisters in Japan must be dealing with or feeling there.

To have seen video images of entire communities swept away by the tsunami, to see entire areas lying in rubble from the earth's tumultuous shaking, and to know that places on the west coast of our shores have been tragically hit by the force of that event goes beyond words.

In the midst of all this, what can anyone say? Not much perhaps. The pain of those left to grieve the loss of their loved ones, to mourn the loss of their lives as they once knew them, to wonder what will come of them now is immeasurable.

What has befallen Japan reminds us just how fragile and uncertain all human life is. The video images coming from Japan puts our everyday lives into a different perspective. So what can we make of this tumultuous catastrophe?

Perhaps that life is fragile and uncertain and should be treated with great care and respect. All any of us have is the given moment – a moment to love those who are a part of our lives and care for them in such a way that we will have no regrets later.

Perhaps we are to realize we all need one another as individuals and as nations, in both the good times and the tragic. It is encouraging to learn that already 91 nations have rallied to the aid of Japan and its people in a time of great pain and suffering. The Christian mystic and poet John Donne in *Meditation XVII* wrote these familiar words:

*"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee."*

We may reconsider what is important and where we invest our time and resources. We may rethink what we choose to get upset about in life. Suddenly cold coffee, flat tires, traffic jams and late running buses aren't such a big deal are they? Perhaps we may reallocate the funds we were going to spend on amusement, for making a difference in a place where people are in real distress.

Perhaps, we will pray a little more for others, especially for those in Japan – for their comfort and relief – for relief workers and for guidance in how we might help. We might pray prayers of gratitude for what is good in our lives and treat each day as a very precious gift that ought not to be taken for granted.

We may realize just how dependent upon God and one another we really are, and so pray as our risen Lord once did for unity – unity with God our Maker and unity with one another.



# HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**Palm Sunday, April 17th - 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM**  
**Maundy Thursday, April 21st - 7:00 PM**  
**Good Friday, April 22nd - 7:00 PM**  
**Easter Sunday, April 24th - 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM**

**Please mark your calendars accordingly!**

## DID YOU KNOW???

...that we will join with millions of Christians on April 17<sup>th</sup>, to celebrate Palm Sunday and we will also share resources that change lives, through One Great Hour of Sharing? Our gifts share God's love by supporting ministries around the world. These ministries help people find safe refuge, start new lives and work together to strengthen their families and communities. Our gifts help support the *Presbyterian Hunger Program*, the *Self Development of People*, and the *Presbyterian Disaster Assistance*. Please prayerfully consider your donation which will be received Palm Sunday.



*Peter began to speak: "I now realize that it is true that God treats everyone on the same basis. Whoever fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him, no matter what race he belongs to." ACTS 10: 34,35*

*Excerpted from the 2011 General Assembly Mission Council website  
By your Mission Committee*

## PENTECOST



**Wear Red for Pentecost**

We will be celebrating Pentecost Sunday on June 12th. We are asking everyone to wear red which signifies the "fiery tongue" referred to in Acts 2:3. Please mark your calendars and wear red on June 12th.

## FUNDRAISING NEWS

### MEMORIAL BRICK SALE

The Fundraising Committee is continuing to take orders for our Memorial Brick sale. We are offering 2 sizes of bricks: 4x8" and 8x8". The bricks will be engraved and used to line the edge of the walkway through the Memorial Garden. Order forms are available on the church website and in the Narthex. Please fill out an order form and return it to the Church in an envelope saying "Memorial Brick Fundraiser" with a check made out to Brick Presbyterian Church. Bricks sized at 4 x 8" are \$75.00, and 8 x 8" bricks are \$150.00. Any questions may be directed through the Church website's fundraising link, or at Church. Look for our table with sample bricks in the Narthex. Please get all orders in to the Church office by April 17<sup>th</sup>.



### APPLEBEE'S FUNDRAISER



The Fundraising Committee is pleased to announce to the congregation our next restaurant fundraiser. This one is at **Applebee's in Brick on April 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>**. Please pick up a flyer at our table in the Narthex or print one off our website and bring it to **Applebee's on either Monday the 18th or Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> between 12:00 pm and 10:00 pm** and our Church will receive 10% of your food purchase toward our building campaign. **You must have a flyer with you when you go for us to get the 10 % and you can't hand them out in the restaurant or the parking lot.** So please tell all your friends and give the flyer or the website information to anyone who wants to support our Church. The last two fundraisers were very well attended and wonderful fellowship events for all who were there. Let's make this one the best yet.

**Thank you for supporting our last 2 restaurant fundraisers!**

### CAPITAL CAMPAIGN DRIVE



As of March 15, 2011, we have received a total of 97 pledge commitments as follows: 73 three-year pledges totaling \$136,521.00, 17 one-time pledges totaling \$12,479.00, and 7 pledge cards from families who were unable to support this effort at this time. Therefore, our total capital campaign pledge for these first three years is \$149,000.00.

Unfortunately, based on borrowing the full \$700,000.00 loan, our monthly loan payment will be \$4,700.49 per month or \$169,217.64 over the first 3 years! The projected 3-year shortage is \$20,217.64.

For those of you reading this that haven't made a pledged commitment, please prayerfully consider joining us in cutting down this projected deficit and to help up close this final chapter of "CONTINUING TO BUILD TOGETHER".

## DEACONS

**No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks. ~James Allen**

Thank you so much to everyone who has been participating in giving back to our military. We are so appreciative of all the donations that have been deposited in the box located in the corner of the narthex. We're not done collecting, though! If you haven't had a chance to contribute, we're still accepting all of the items listed in last month's newsletter. Some of the many items you can donate include: shampoo and conditioner, cookies, Chapstick, batteries, granola bars and hard candy. Looking for a complete list of donatable items? There's always one for you to review on the donation box!



## EVERY DROP COUNTS!!



We will again be participating in the Central Jersey Blood Drive, which will take place on Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011. It seems like a long way off, but it will be here before you know it, so mark your calendars and get ready to give blood!

## EASTER FOOD BASKETS

Thanks to the generous grocery and financial contributions from our congregation, the Deacons are able to maintain a food pantry that is used to meet the emergency needs of families. Each year, we also assemble food baskets during the holiday seasons that are distributed to families in our community along with a greeting and an invitation to join our church family.



Once again, the Board of Deacons will be assembling and distributing the baskets the weekend before Easter. Donations of ham, turkey, food and money will be gratefully used to prepare the baskets. If you are able to provide a donation of a ham or turkey, kindly contact the church office at 732-477-0676. Meat donations should be dropped off to the church on the morning of April 18th as we have limited freezer space at this time. If you would like suggestions for needed grocery items, please see the display in the narthex.

Thank you for your support of this ministry. In a very tangible way, we are sharing the love and care of our Lord with our community.

## Eye Health Tips - Simple Tips for Healthy Eyes



Your eyes are an important part of your health. There are many things you can do to keep them healthy and make sure you are seeing your best. Follow these simple steps for maintaining healthy eyes well into your golden years.

**Have a comprehensive dilated eye exam.** You might think your vision is fine or that your eyes are healthy, but visiting your eye care professional for a comprehensive dilated eye exam is the only way to really be sure. When it comes to common vision problems, some people don't realize they could see better with glasses or contact lenses. In addition, many common eye diseases such as glaucoma, diabetic eye disease and age-related macular degeneration often have no warning signs. A dilated eye exam is the only way to detect these diseases in their early stages.

**Know your family's eye health history.** Talk to your family members about their eye health history. It's important to know if anyone has been diagnosed with a disease or condition since many are hereditary. This will help to determine if you are at higher risk for developing an eye disease or condition.

**Eat right to protect your sight.** You've heard carrots are good for your eyes. But eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, particularly dark leafy greens such as spinach, kale, or collard greens is important for keeping your eyes healthy, too. Research has also shown there are eye health benefits from eating fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, tuna, and halibut.

**Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight or obese increases your risk of developing diabetes and other systemic conditions, which can lead to vision loss, such as diabetic eye disease or glaucoma.

**Wear protective eyewear.** Wear protective eyewear when playing sports or doing activities around the home. Protective eyewear includes safety glasses and goggles, safety shields, and eye guards specially designed to provide the correct protection for a certain activity.

**Quit smoking or never start.** Smoking is as bad for your eyes as it is for the rest of your body. Research has linked smoking to an increased risk of developing age-related macular degeneration, cataract, and optic nerve damage, all of which can lead to blindness.

**Be cool and wear your shades.** Sunglasses are a great fashion accessory, but their most important job is to protect your eyes from the sun's ultraviolet rays. When purchasing sunglasses, look for ones that block out 99 to 100 percent of both UV-A and UV-B radiation.

**Give your eyes a rest.** If you spend a lot of time at the computer or focusing on any one thing, you sometimes forget to blink and your eyes can get fatigued. Try the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look away about 20 feet in front of you for 20 seconds. This can help reduce eyestrain.

**Clean your hands and your contact lenses—properly.** To avoid the risk of infection, always wash your hands thoroughly before putting in or taking out your contact lenses. Make sure to disinfect contact lenses as instructed and replace them as appropriate.

**Practice workplace eye safety.** Employers are required to provide a safe work environment. When protective eyewear is required as a part of your job, make a habit of wearing the appropriate type at all times and encourage your coworkers to do the same.

*This information was obtained from the National Institute for Health*

## PRESBYTERIANS AND JAPAN'S TRAGIC SITUATION

As of March 15, 2011

Presbyterian World Mission organization grieves at the loss of life from the most powerful earthquake to hit Japan in at least 100 years. We urge you to pray for those who have lost loved ones in Japan. We also urge you to pray for people in other countries affected by the tsunami.

Nine [mission workers](#) and their families are living and working in various cities in Japan. As of March 14, we have confirmed that seven of the nine, in three different cities, are safe. We will continue to work to contact the other mission workers and will provide updated information here as soon as it is available. None of our mission workers are based geographically close to coastal city of Sendai, nor to any of the areas affected by the tsunami

We have also contacted our partner churches and organizations in Japan and are starting to hear back from them. One of our partners, Yodogawa Christian Hospital in Osaka, writes:



*Thank you so very much for your kind words and prayers. Thankfully, our hospital patients and staff and their families are all safe, but our heart aches as the earthquake disasters are spreading in other parts of Japan. We are praying for God's protection and comfort over those people in the earthquake affected areas. He is our refuge and fortress.*

In the mean time the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance arm of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. has established a fund to gather financial resources to provide relief and assistance Japan and other areas affected by the Tsunami caused by the earthquake.

### **BEARS ON A MISSION**



BEARS ON A MISSION

This is a mission ministry to bring joy to young foster children and children at the area hospitals, such as Brick Medical, Kimball Medical, Community in Toms River and Jersey Shore. If you choose to accept this mission, all you have to do is to make a bear and place it in the basket marked "Bears On a Mission". Knitted instructions for bears are in the narthex.

### **OTHER FRIENDLY ANIMALS**

Freddy Frog, Stinky Skunks, Dogs, Pigs, Owls, Cats, Nutty Squirrels, and Chickens would like to join Bears on a Mission. These animals can be knitted. If you would like to knit one of these animals, check in the Narthex for more information.



## YOUTH GROUP NEWS

### Junior Highs

The youth group had a blast with the new Hamster Balls we purchased, check out the pictures on the church website to see how much fun we had.

We have some big plans for April:

**April 3<sup>rd</sup>** – Laser Tag at 1:30, meet in the church parking lot at 12:00

**April 10<sup>th</sup>** – Meet in fellowship hall to make palm crosses at 6:00pm

**April 17<sup>th</sup>** – Nursing Home Visit to deliver palm crosses.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the Junior High Retreat on May 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> at Camp Johnsonburg.

### SENIOR HIGHS

**April 3<sup>rd</sup>** – time to be announced – meeting

**April 10<sup>th</sup>** – 6:00 pm – make palm crosses

### Fourth and Fifth Grade Retreat

FYI: 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade retreat at Camp Johnsonburg is scheduled for June 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>. Please contact [christianeducation@brickpresby.com](mailto:christianeducation@brickpresby.com) for more info.



### Continuing Education Awards



Application letters for Brick Presbyterian Church's Continuing Education awards are available for pick up in both the main office and the Sunday School office. All details and criteria are explained in the application letter. If you would like the application mailed to you or if you have questions, please contact [christianeducation@brickpresby.com](mailto:christianeducation@brickpresby.com).

## **NEW CHAPLAIN AT BLOOMFIELD COLLEGE**

Bloomfield College (the only Presbyterian Church U.S.A. affiliated college in NJ) has a new part-time college chaplain. The new chaplain is the Rev. Cynthia Betz-Bogoly will be working 15 hours a week for the school. She is a 2005 graduate of Lycoming College with a B.A. degree in Religion and Communication, and has received her M.Div. degree from Princeton Seminary in 2008. She has been pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Phillipsburg, NJ.