

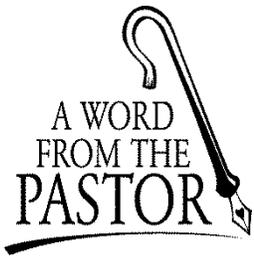
# Good Tidings

The Newsletter of Brick Presbyterian Church

April 2015

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## A Reflection for Easter from Pastor Doug



It was a long and dreary winter. The beauty of fresh fallen snow lost its attractiveness, as it became gray and dirty from plowing and shoveling. Repeat snow storms began to erode the spirits of many people. It was the second coldest February on record for New Jersey. The grey skies, cancelled events, and seemingly endless snow plowing even got some of those who plow tired from their non-stop work.

The weariness of winter wore at our spirits in a way that was reflective of the gravity found in our daily news covering the violent destruction and death that ISIS has perpetuated upon the world. On the domestic scene our nation is weary from the seemingly endless bickering and entrenched divisiveness of our political leaders. Add to this the fatigue that has grown over 2 ½ years of struggling to restore the Jersey Shore, a still less than robust economy, etc..

O how we might relate to Jesus' disciples and the sense of hopelessness they must have felt when they saw Jesus buried in the tomb following his death on the cross. O how it may seem to us that the despair and negativity of the world may have won out.

But wait! Winter does not last forever. I saw some snowbell flowers breaking through the dirty snow along my walk way. I saw a flock of robins picking berries off a tree beside my house. I came to church and I saw people not dug into trenches and drawing lines in the sand to do battle with one another. Instead I saw people relating on a higher plane with one another. They were listening with sensitivity to each other, not to debate, but rather to relate as people who care about one another; people – as children of God – loved by God. I saw people struggling out of the love of Jesus to understand and embrace one another as people first and foremost – rather than as objects with whom one must put on body armor and do battle. I saw in those simple, heart-felt conversations, the Risen Christ, reaching out and embracing another. It was something like the Risen Lord reaching out to Peter who had previously denied knowing Jesus. It was like the Risen Christ outside an empty tomb asking a weeping Mary, out of deep compassion, “Why are you crying?”

It is in moments like that – in human interactions like those, that I take hope and see Jesus Christ Risen. It's when I see people more concerned about loving one another and caring for those in deep pain that I feel the Presence of the Risen and Living Christ. It's Easter! It's spring time. The dreariness of winter is past. Let's embrace God's love, celebrate Christ Risen, and abide in God's love. Alleluia! Christ lives, and so can we.

## Holy Week Worship Schedule



Easter comes early this year, and I am sure that you are ready to celebrate the completion of Lent and the joy of Christ's Resurrection with all of your friends and the faithful here at Brick Presbyterian Church. Our Holy Week Service Schedule is as follows:

On **Palm Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>** we will remember the bitter-sweet triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem at our **9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.** worship services.

At **7:00 p.m. on Maundy Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>** we will gather in the sanctuary to remember our Lord's last meal with his disciples before he is betrayed and arrested. Holy Communion will be observed, and worshippers will be invited to gather in small groups around the Lord's Table to receive the elements. Provisions will be made for those who are unable to come forward.

Then, at **7:00 p.m. on Good Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>** we will gather to remember Jesus' crucifixion with a modified Tenebre worship service. This year's service will be a little more interactive, as we will have a cross to which worshippers will be invited to nail their sins. As in the past there will also be the extinguishing of candles, reminding us of the darkness that came upon the world at Christ's death on the cross.

Then, come **Easter Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>** at both our **9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.** worship hours, we will celebrate the joy of Christ's resurrection and how the disciples came to recognize the Risen Lord in the breaking of bread on that first Easter. Thus, we will be celebrating Holy Communion with the accent being on Christ's victory, the hope of our faith, and new life.

There will be no Sunday School on Easter so families and church school teachers can all participate in praising God for a Risen Christ. Our youth groups will also be having a baked goods sale between services on Easter Sunday.

We sincerely hope you will make every effort to be a part of these very special spiritual observances and bring other family members or friends.

## Blessing of the Pets



*All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all.*

Our God made these precious animals, great and small, and we would like to invite all who have pets to the Blessing of the Animals on Saturday, May 2, 2015 at 10:00 am in the Memorial Garden. Please make sure that your dog is on a leash and your cat is in a carrier. Turtles, rabbits and goldfish are also welcome. We will have special treats for our little friends.

We are also asking for some donations for the Jersey Shore Animal Shelter, such as clean old towels, treats, dog and cat toys, and clean old blankets. There are other items needed on the box in the Family Life Center. Thank you for bringing these donations!

## Deacons

The Board of Deacons would like to thank the congregation for their donations to the food bank. Easter will be here before we know it and the food baskets we provide to many are so appreciated by the recipients. Please keep up the good work and continue to support the food bank with donations.

The Board of Deacons will be hosting a Blood Drive in May and we will let you know as soon as the date is decided. We hope everyone will come out and support the Blood Drive and bring a friend!

Donations for our Military members continue to be provided by our congregation. The donation may seem small but to our dedicated service members it is greatly appreciated. The items are boxed up and sent to our military on a regular basis.



If you have pictures you would like to see on our website, it would be easiest to do if you could submit a maximum of 5 pictures for an event AND write a sentence about each. Just having the pictures doesn't tell anyone much. If there's a brief summary of the pictures, it makes it much more interesting to read. And, since I don't always attend every function, I can't write about what I don't know. I never seem to get the pictures that are submitted posted in a timely manner, so I would appreciate your help in this!

Thanks!

*Kathy* (Webmaster)

## SOMETHING NEW IS COMING TO BRICK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Perhaps you heard it at the Annual Meeting of our Congregation... Maybe you heard it through the grapevine... Brick Presbyterian Church is looking to the future once again, with confidence and great hope.

Those who have been members and friends of the congregation for some time may remember that approximately 20 years ago our church undertook a great process of prayerful discernment, as we sought to examine who we are as a congregation, and what it may be that the Lord was calling us to be as a congregation. Out of that study known as Y.C.A.I.M. (Your Church And It's Mission), our Session and congregation saw what we could be doing in the areas of worship, stewardship, Christian education, and a number of other things. The biggest and most easily seen result of that study was the designing, construction, and payment for what we now call our church's Family Life Center.

A lot has happened in those past 20 plus years within the life of our congregation. The times we live in have changed. Our world has changed. A number of our beloved friends and members who were a part of the Y.C.A.I.M. study are now in God's eternal care. Others have moved for many different reasons. And, thankfully God has lead new members and friends to our spiritual family, the church.

It has been said: "***Where there is no vision, the people perish...***" (Proverbs 29: 18 KJV). But, Brick Presbyterians have a long history of being a people of vision. We believe that the Spirit of God is calling us forward as reported in the Acts of the Apostles; "***...God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams....***" (Acts 2: 17). We are a people who believe God is still able to use us for new and creative things as the Scriptures also declare.

Thus, we will begin a rather lengthy and very important prayerful process of discernment about who we are as a congregation, and what it is that God is calling us to be. Our pastor will be asking the Session, the Board of Deacons, and the entire congregation over the balance of this year to fill out, at various times, a number of different surveys that are intended to collect information about our congregation. These surveys will cover different topics such as worship, religious education, stewardship and mission, etc. There will also be focus groups seeking conversational input. Once all of this information is compiled and organized we will share what we have discovered and hopefully have a better idea of what the Lord is calling us to be and how we might get to that envisioned place. Your pastor and the Session hope you will participate in this effort when these surveys are taken, and when the focus groups are offered. Working through this process together, may the Lord give us a clear sense of hope and vision for our future in our worship, growing in our faith, and in our service of the Lord in the world.

*Thank you!*

**... from Presbyterian World Mission, Presbyterian Mission Agency**

Dear Partner in Christ's Mission:

As we gratefully process all of the year-end gifts for mission co-worker support, I send out thank-you letters that feel belated. The New Year has begun, and already, I'm running to catch up.

For our mission co-workers, they are running to catch up too, wondering when they will witness the impact of their ministries. All around the world, we see profound pain and need. Our mission co-workers are called to serve in the hope of alleviating poverty, mending relationships, and being a tangible witness to God's love in Jesus Christ. There is much to be done and so little time. The impact of our work in Christ's mission can be slow to see.

Then, when we least expect it, we glimpse the Kingdom. A man is healed from deadly anemia; a seminary student celebrates her graduation; a Muslim family stands firm to protect the Christians in their village from violence. Your faithful support of Presbyterian World Mission helps to build the Kingdom here on Earth, slowly and deliberately.

On January 20, 2015, we received a gift of \$1,913.40 for Mark Hare and Jenny Bent. Please extend our gratitude to your pastoral staff and congregation. With your ongoing help, we will continue running toward the vision of that Kingdom.

In gratitude for your faithfulness,

*Elizabeth Little*

Church Support Associate

**Thank you for your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing!**



Your donations to One Great Hour of Sharing support Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program and Self-Development of People as they work in different ways from initial disaster response to ongoing community development serving individuals and communities in need, both nationally and globally. We thank you for sharing God's love with our neighbors in need.

***- The Stewardship and Mission Committee***