

Good Tidings

The Newsletter of Brick Presbyterian Church

December 2013

In a Time of Deep Darkness – Good News

As the nights grow colder – the world's evils seem all the bolder
Days seem longer – and night's hold seems stronger

As shepherds watch their flocks by night – longing for dawn's early light
The watchful quietly pray – hoping their flocks do not become a predator's prey

While in a different time and place – hordes of folk in cars scurry about at a frantic pace
Many preoccupied with each place to shop – and racing here and there with no time to stop

Victims all are we in secular seasonal pressures – to find time to embrace the approaching Holy Treasure

Still in the long darkness and shadows of the night – there comes an angelic choir into sight
Its unexpected arrival startles with fear – those to whom they have come so near

The angel declares glad tidings to the humble – that before the messengers tremble
Good News of Great Joy to you we bring – as angelic choirs to God their praises sing

To you, born in Bethlehem whose name is House of Bread – Is One who overcomes your dread
One whose grace is a Great Light – that pierces gloom of the soul's dark night

God incarnate in a Holy Child – so innocent, gentle and mild

The darkness could not overcome that birth of Light – a life that brings our salvation into sight
To those who struggle to cope – this birth is life's unfailing hope

To those who feel unworthy – a Savior's love makes graciously worthy
To those prisoners of guilt and shame – came One who offers us a new name

In the darkness there still shines Great Light – for those with faith's eye sight
For all whose hearts are an open door – who will welcome the Light and adore

This Light overcomes our dread – and gives new life to those whose spirits are like the dead
So now with angelic choirs we sing – God's joy to the world we bring.



If you would like to donate flowers to help in the decoration of the Sanctuary for Christmas, the envelopes for those donations will be in the pews on **Nov. 24, Dec. 1, and Dec. 8, 2013**. We need to cut the donations off at that time so that we can have time to type up the list of donors for inclusion in the Christmas bulletin.



**The Candlelight Christmas Eve Services will be on
Christmas Eve, December 24, 2013
5 p.m. and 8 p.m.**

You are urged to come and enjoy hearing the music and the Christmas story again, ending the evening service with the lighting of the candles.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

There will be only one Worship service on **Dec. 29, 2013, at 10 a.m.** Please come and bring the children and enjoy a service praising our Lord and thanking Him for the gift of his Son.

Christmas Caroling / Nursing Home Visit

The Board of Deacons and the Youth Groups invite you to join us in the delivery of Christmas spirit and so much more to the residents of the Geraldine L. Thompson Care Center on **Saturday, December 14, 2013**. We will leave from the Church parking lot at 1:30 p.m. with the program starting at 2:30 p.m. at the Care Center located at 2350 Hospital Road, Allenwood (Wall Township). We'll share Christmas carols with the residents and Santa Claus will join us as we distribute gifts of lap robes and small personal items that have been provided through the generosity of our congregation. This is a wonderful way to share the joy of our Savior's impending birth with those in our community! We hope you'll join us. For more information, please contact Jean Reilly at jreilly@comcast.net or 732-295-1605.





We invite you to help the Board of Deacons fill requests from our community for food baskets to be distributed to those in need for the Christmas holiday.

Your donations of canned goods and grocery items may be placed in the collection bin in the narthex.

Monetary donations are also welcomed as they are used to purchase items in short supply.

Christmas Program and Festival

The Christmas Program and Festival will be held on **Saturday, December 7, 2013**. The Christmas Program will begin at **3:30** and will be followed by dinner. There will be fun craft stations for the kids and bring your camera for a photo op with Santa. There will also be food - pizza, chicken nuggets, mac & cheese, ziti and French Fries. Please bring a dessert to share. Dress rehearsal for the Christmas Program will be on **Friday, December 6, 2013 at 6:00 pm**. If you have any questions please contact Donnaschlatter@comcast.net or 732-581-4911.



Meet our newest Brother in Christ

The Tent City Committee, in conjunction with the Session and Board of Deacons, would like you to know that we have been partnering with Angelo Villaneuva, an amazing young man who has faced many struggles in his life and journey with the Lord and ended up living in Tent City.

Angelo is a hard-working person who needed some help to transition into more stable living arrangements. Through the grace of God and with the assistance of concerned Christians, he has located a small apartment near his place of employment.

Your donations to the Deacons Fund have been instrumental in providing assistance to Angelo as we have worked with him during the resettlement process. He is so grateful for the outpouring of care and support. A thank you card from him contained the following message:

Thank you..., the entire Brick congregation. You all have made it possible for me to stay above water but, more importantly you have restored my faith in JESUS CHRIST and the LOVE we have for one another! I know God will bless you all too!!

*Thank you
Angelo*

THANK YOU!!!



The Board of Deacons would like to extend heartfelt thanks to the members of this congregation. In the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, we received requests for 50 food baskets - a number unsurpassed in recent history - that we were able to fill only as a result of your generosity. We want you to know that your kindness allowed us to provide supermarket gift cards and grocery items to families whose lives have been impacted by a myriad of difficulties. It was a real blessing for our Board to find that we were able to meet the requests, knowing that this was our congregation's opportunity to offer a very tangible expression of God's love and care to so many in our community. Thank YOU for sharing your blessings and providing the means to make it possible!

Fundraising News

Bontons

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Bon Ton Community Days fundraiser. Thanks to you, we sold over **160** coupon books for our Deacons Fund. That's \$800 to help them fund their many efforts this upcoming holiday.

Memorial Bricks

Thanks to Mark Ellis, we have installed the latest round of Memorial Bricks to our walkway. If you've been waiting for your brick to come in, stop by the Memorial Garden and check them out.

Restaurants

If you're interested in our Restaurant Fundraisers, keep an eye out in the bulletin and the website for upcoming events.

Stream Energy Adds Natural Gas



Thank you to everyone who has already signed up for our Stream Energy fundraiser! The good news is if you haven't already switched your electric provider, **it's not too late**. Also, we are excited to announce the addition of the natural gas opportunity.

Now, whether you have already taken advantage of the savings with the electric, or you are new to the opportunity entirely, you can switch your natural gas and help the church! Stream Energy will continue to donate **\$4.00 per month** for each **electric** customer and now an additional **\$1.50 per month** for each **natural gas** customer to our building expansion fund. Just bring us your current electric and/or gas bills and we'll do the rest, or you can log on to our account @ brickpresbyterian.streampowerup.biz. Look for our table at the church, contact us through the church's website, or contact either Jeff Law (732-779-4499 or Lawjeffrey1@gmail.com) or Patrice Law (732-779-7242) for more information. Come join the growing list of people who are helping the church while saving money every month with Stream and **Please** don't switch your energy provider until you talk to us!

Healthy Holiday Eating



the holiday season.

The holiday season is a time to celebrate with family and friends. Unfortunately, for many it also becomes a time for over-eating and weight gain. According to the National Institutes of Health, holiday eating can result in an extra pound or two every year. Over a lifetime, holiday weight gain can really add up. The holidays don't have to mean weight gain. Focus on a healthy balance of food, activity, and fun. By implementing a few simple tips you can stay healthy through

Ten Tips for Healthy Holiday Eating

- Be realistic. Don't try to lose pounds during the holidays, instead try to maintain your current weight.
- Plan time for exercise. Exercise helps relieve holiday stress and prevent weight gain. A moderate and daily increase in exercise can help partially offset increased holiday eating. Try 10- or 15-minute brisk walks twice a day.
- Don't skip meals. Before leaving for a party, eat a light snack like raw vegetables or a piece of fruit to curb your appetite. You will be less tempted to over-indulge.
- Survey party buffets before filling your plate. Choose your favorite foods and skip your least favorite. Include vegetables and fruits to keep your plate balanced.
- Eat until you are satisfied, not stuffed. Savor your favorite holiday treats while eating small portions. Sit down, get comfortable, and enjoy.
- Be careful with beverages. Alcohol can lessen inhibitions and induce overeating; non-alcoholic beverages can be full of calories and sugar.
- If you overeat at one meal go light on the next. It takes 500 calories per day (or 3,500 calories per week) above your normal/maintenance consumption to gain one pound. It is impossible to gain weight from one piece of pie!
- Take the focus off food. Turn candy and cookie making time into non-edible projects like making wreaths, dough art decorations or a gingerbread house. Plan group activities with family and friends that aren't all about food. Try serving a holiday meal to the community, playing games or going on a walking tour of decorated homes.
- Bring your own healthy dish to a holiday gathering.
- Practice Healthy Holiday Cooking. Preparing favorite dishes lower in fat and calories will help promote healthy holiday eating.

Enjoy the holidays, plan a time for activity, incorporate healthy recipes into your holiday meals, and don't restrict yourself from enjoying your favorite holiday foods. In the long run, your mind and body will thank you.

Greta Macaire, R.D., California Pacific Medical Center

OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2014 Offering Boxes with your name on it will be in the Narthex starting Mid-December for you to pick up. If you are unable to pick up your box and wish to receive it, please let me know. Also, if you do not find a box with your name on it and would like one, please let me know.

You may contact me at financialsecretary@brickpresby.com



Please be sure to submit all your 2013 donations by 1/1/14. I will be printing the 2013 statements after that date. Anything received after January 1st will be posted to your 2014 statement. If you have a change of address please be sure to contact me or the church office with your information. Thank you.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Karen Ellis!

Junior High Youth Group

The Youth Groups will be taking donations on Dec. 1st and 8th for their mission project of supplying underprivileged children with Christmas gifts.



There will be Angel ornaments with a special poem attached for anyone who wishes to make a donation to this very worthy cause.

Last year the Youth Groups were able to provide 15 underprivileged children with the best Christmas they have ever had. As we know Christmas is not about the amount of gifts you receive but it is about the gift of giving. Every year the number of children we can provide for goes up thanks to all the support and donations from the congregation. We thank you all for your continued support.

The Shop and Lock In will be on December 13th, we will meet in the Family Life Center at 6:00pm and start out with pizza then continue over to Target then back to the church for an night of wrapping gifts, midnight ice cream sundaes, meaningful fellowship, fun, games and of course very little sleep.



The Nursing Home visit will be the next day at the Geraldine Thompson Nursing Home for Christmas Caroling. We will meet at the church at 1:50pm and are looking for full participation from both youth groups. This annual event brings joy to the elderly.

Did You Know...



that 2.6 million children in rural areas are living below the poverty line? That number is greater than the number of members in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Congregations serving rural communities are especially concerned with the most vulnerable – their children, youth, and elderly. Significant change and economic distress challenge these communities, results of the economic recession and shifts in the agriculture, timber, mining and fishing industries.

In many places, the rural church is often the beacon of hope for its community. Churches are working together and with community agencies in providing hope and practical ministry. Children are invited to participate in various programs. Social service agencies are encouraged to travel to the community and set up shop in a church to meet with families, thus eliminating the need for travel to the agency office and the need for parents to take time off from work. Food programs continue to provide healthy food choices for families. Food pantries often welcome families from neighboring communities who are reluctant to visit a food pantry in their own town. After-school care, day care, and English as a second language are being offered.

Whether we live in rural, suburban, or urban areas, as today's disciples we are being called to become advocates and activists for rural children.