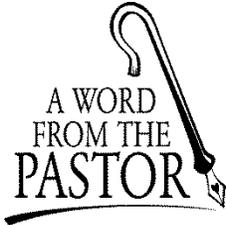


Good Tidings

The Newsletter of Brick Presbyterian Church

February 2016

Pastor Doug's Thoughts on Tolerance and Convictions In a Conflicted World



I saw a bumper sticker some time ago that read: *"Tolerance is the Luxury of Those without Conviction."* The words floated in my mind for a bit. For a moment I could comprehend how someone might say that. Then, I wondered, "What Jesus might think about that bumper sticker?" Jesus was certainly a person of great conviction, sharing God's love and grace with all sorts of people. Jesus preached and read scripture in the temple. Yet, temple authorities were critical of Jesus' healing the sick on the Sabbath and letting his disciples glean grain when hungry on the Sabbath.

In the parable of the "Good Samaritan" Jesus offended those who had contempt for the Samaritans by holding up a Samaritan as an example of compassion. Those who were convinced good people ought to avoid "sinners" and other "less righteous" people were critical of Jesus' eating and drinking with "sinners," as well as his visit to the home of a corrupt tax-collector like Zacchaeus.

While Jesus forgave those who repented – while Jesus welcomed sinners – while the Lord also dined with those who were critical of him, one would be hard pressed to say Jesus was a man without conviction. Quite the contrary! Jesus in his love and divine concern for all people (rich or poor – church pillars or church dropouts – Jew or Gentile – standup citizens or scandal ridden souls) stood by his convictions of divine love and righteousness without being self-righteous and intolerant of those who did not share or embrace God's great love for us all. The biblical portrait of Jesus reveals the embodiment of a great conviction that loves those with whom one does not agree and whose values one may not share, without sacrificing faith, conviction or principal.

I wonder if the bumper sticker I saw conveyed more an attitude of masked self-righteousness and a judgmental spirit rather than a firm faith and conviction which can stand strong and compassionate without being antagonistic or wishy-washy.

There is a dangerous temptation to discount those who accept others without accepting differences in conviction, belief, or behavior. Conviction and tolerance need not be exclusive. Heart-felt convictions need not force us to discount others because we aren't where they are. This may be worth considering as we deal with those with whom we find little in common in our daily conversations and relationships. Imagine how the world might be improved if we understood and embraced more of Jesus' approach to others. Paul's letter of 1 Corinthians 13 is worth reviewing regarding how we handle our convictions and one another. It's something to consider in a month of valentines.

“INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY”

In times of inclement weather, especially during this upcoming winter season, or for other adverse conditions, the congregation is reminded to tune in to the following radio stations to hear if the church is closed:

WOBM, 92.7 FM
The Hawk, 105.7 FM
The Point, 94.3 AM



For Sunday worship services, the earliest time for such closure announcements would normally be after 7:30 AM.

You may also check the Church Website for weather related closings and cancellations by going to www.brickpresby.com



EASTER FLOWER DONATIONS

The envelopes for flower donations can be found in the pews starting on February 28, 2016 and remaining until March 13, 2016. If you would like to donate an Easter flower please do so during this time frame to ensure inclusion in the bulletin. Also, please print clearly on the envelope. Thank You!

Evangelism/Outreach

Don't forget to “Catch a Friend, Bring ‘Em In” on February 21st. It's coffee hour Sunday, so invite a friend for coffee and fellowship.



Weddings



*United in
Marriage*

Congratulations to Carol Morris and Walter Lockwood who were married at The Pines in Whiting, NJ on January 23, 2016.



Get Your Tickets and Save The Date!

Fun, Food, Fellowship, and Scholarship Fundraising!
Saturday, February 13th

On Saturday, February 13th, The Fellowship and Fundraising Committees will be hosting an **Italian Extravaganza Dinner in the Family Life Center!** Baked Ziti, Chicken Parmesan, Meatballs, and Salad are just a few of the delicious foods the Fellowship Committee is cooking up for this occasion. Junior and Senior High Youth Groups will be helping out, and the Fundraising Committee will hold a free-will offering for the Scholarship Fund. Envelopes will be provided for the Scholarship Fund Donation and will be available at our table or at the dinner.

If you would like to bring a dessert or something else to share, that would be greatly appreciated. A signup sheet will be available.

Tickets are FREE and are available at our table outside the Family Life Center. Stop by and get them before they're all gone, so that we know how much food to prepare.

Come on out and enjoy a great night with your Church Family and hopefully raise Scholarship funds for our kids as well!

Memorial Bricks

Once again the Fundraising Committee will be accepting orders for Memorial Bricks. If anyone is interested in ordering a brick for our pathway in the Memorial Garden please pick up an order form on the table when you come into church or download one from the church website. Please fill it out completely and return it to the church office with a check for either \$75.00 for a 4x8 or \$150.00 for an 8x8 including your contact info and we'll add your brick to our walkway. **Please return your order to the church no later than Easter Sunday, March 27th.** This will be the last order placed this year.



Any questions please contact: George Erickson at gverick@yahoo.com

Chick-Fil-A



On Wednesday, February 17th, we will be holding a fundraiser at Chick-Fil-A's Brick location from 5:00-8:00 pm. Please look for flyers outside the FLC and on the website.

HAND BELLS IN WORSHIP?

**RICHARD CHRISTEN, ORGANIST AND
MINISTER OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

Western civilization has for many centuries associated the sound of bells with the Church. They are mentioned in the Bible in Exodus as part of Hebrew worship and are shown decorating the robes of priests. In Zechariah, bells are described as part of the war horses' equipment.

The Latin word CYMBALA, from the Greek KUMBALON meaning cup, was used in early times to mean both cymbals and bells; hence the later confusion when it came to translating the Psalms into English as we know them today;

Praise Him upon the loud cymbals; Praise Him upon the well tuned cymbals.

[Psalm 150] The well tuned cymbals here are actually the hand bells.

During the middle ages, the hand bell had changed into the form similar to what we know today and quickly became one of the basic musical instruments of the church, and pictures of them in use were often included in many medieval illuminated manuscripts. The hand bells were often used to accompany chanting alongside stringed and wind instruments and small organs.

In recent years there has been a tremendous resurgence of interest in hand bells in churches of many denominations, and the role of hand bells has been enormously extended in the life of many churches. Those who make music through hand bells will find that the modern hand bell bears little resemblance apart from shape to the bells of the early churches, yet its purpose remains the same, "to glorify God through music".

Today, hand bell ringing is a wholly appropriate instrument to use in church to promote the ideal of corporate praise. Using hand bells in worship where every ringer learns to work as one body instilling a spirit of fellowship and cooperation, we support one's personal encounter with the Living God in which we find ourselves deepened in our faith and strengthened for service. We believe corporate worship can deeply move us and help us experience God's grace and truth through Jesus Christ by ringing hand bells. Hand bells have a wide public appeal. The visual beauty of ringers performing, as well as the unique sound, has been found to capture the attention of the public when ringing a hymn.

Our intention at BPC is to speak to the real needs of people today through music, corporate prayer, and the spoken Word. Will you help us elevate the use of hand bell ringing by joining us on Monday nights at 7:00 pm in room 102? **1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &**

Youth Group

The Youth Groups will be displaying their Super Bowl Banners and taking donations for the "Souper Bowl of Caring" on February 7th in between services. The donations collected will go to the Ocean County Hunger Relief Program, please come over and put your money on the winning Super Bowl Team.

Upcoming events for the Youth Group are:

February 7th - Souper Bowl of Caring

February 13th - Italian Dinner (serving and clean up)

February 17th - Outing (to be determined)

Let everything that breathes praise the LORD! Psalm 150:6

Deacons

The Board of Deacons would like to thank the congregation for their continued donations to our military men and women.



appreciated!!

Thank you everyone for the wonderful donations to our food bank that provided so many food baskets to be distributed for Christmas. With Easter quickly approaching, we need to replenish the pantry. We currently have an adequate supply of canned vegetables but if you want to make a donation and aren't really sure what we need, here are a few suggestions: cereal, coffee, tea, peanut butter, jelly, gravy, canned fruit, pasta, spaghetti sauce, rice, stuffing, potatoes, cranberry sauce, tuna fish, jello, and macaroni & cheese. All food donations are greatly



Your donations to the Christmas Joy Special Offering totaled \$754. The funds will assist church workers in need and their families through the Board of Pensions, as well as support the education and development of our future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. Your gifts uplift our brothers and sisters in Christ by reducing their burdens and opening new paths of opportunity.

Thank you for your contributions to this special offering.

2016 PER CAPITA IS \$36.00

Per capita
is part of
the glue
that holds
Presbyterians
together

In the box of offering envelopes for the new year, you may have noticed an envelope near the front of the box labeled “per capita.” Like many Presbyterians, you may wonder, “Exactly what does per capita do?”

Per capita is an amount of money per member that our congregation pays to our larger Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This money is part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together. Paying per capita is similar to contributing one’s dish to a potluck meal; paying to be connected to the Internet; paying for the benefit of utilities, such as electricity, water, and telephone; or pitching in with other passengers to pay for gasoline for a road trip. It is the money that enables us to work with other Presbyterian churches in our Presbytery and across the country. It is also money that allows us to work with other churches to further the mission of Jesus Christ around the world.

The per capita for 2016 is \$36.00 per member. You may make your per capita payment in a single payment or you may choose to pay it in smaller installments throughout the year. If you choose to submit your per capita in installment payments, please clearly note on the envelope that your payment is for per capita.



As this newsletter went to press, efforts were underway to finalize a budget for 2016. We thank you for the pledge/prayer cards that have been submitted thus far. If you have not already done so, it is not too late to submit your card in support of Christ's work at Brick Presbyterian Church. Every person and every gift makes a difference. Together and with God's help, we can do amazing things for our Lord and our community.

Thank you to those who have submitted a pledge/prayer card. For those who haven't, we pray that you will consider doing so and we continue to welcome your submissions.



ORGAN NOTES

RICHARD CHRISTEN, ORGANIST AND
MINISTER OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

ANOTHER OPENING, ANOTHER SHOW...?

When we consider the different parts, or elements, of the Worship Service it might be thought that we should start with the “opening song.” That is, after all, the first thing that happens in a service, so we might as well start there in our discussion. However, there is something that takes place before that first song, or call to worship, or other specific element that “begins” the service: **the Prelude**.

In modern church life, many churches do little by way of planning for the Prelude. Let me suggest the Prelude is much more deliberate in the life of a Sunday morning, and special attention should be paid to the music that is played during this time.

Many see the Prelude as a reverent and thoughtful time for people to prepare their hearts for interacting with God during worship. Encouragement of a hushed, even silent atmosphere in the sanctuary allows those gathering to consider their need for God’s grace and to wait expectantly for the Spirit to work in their midst in that hour. *Whether one can change the tide of modern church culture to enter quietly such as this is doubtful if it is not already a habit of the congregation, but it could be effective on occasion.*

Prelude is commonly defined as “an introductory performance, action, or event preceding and preparing for the principal or a more important matter.” Notice the inherent assumption that the Prelude is a deliberate activity, something that happens on purpose for a specific reason, and is a preparation for what follows. With that in mind, let’s consider what we might do to plan more effectively for the Prelude in our Worship services.

The main point is that is that someone needs to think about the Prelude and make it part of the planning for the weekly worship service, spending time to integrate the Prelude into the whole service. Allow it to truly fulfill its purpose of preparation, as a **transition from non-worship time to worship time**. Though this is among the least essential elements of worship, the “Prelude” serves a number of helpful functions:

- A time of focused, prayerful response to God.
- A time to respect and honor the practice of reverent silence.
- A signal for a more focused response to worship to begin.

The congregation should understand the Prelude is the first movement of worship, with an accompanying change in behavior and mindset, and begin responding to the presence of God and the purposes of gathered worship. The Prelude is not the call to worship, but they can easily function together.

At a conference on Biblical Worship, entitled “With Joyful Reverence and Awe,” held at the Sioux Falls URC last fall, Rev. Spencer Aalsburg spoke on [“When The Worship Begins on Sunday—How Does Biblical Worship Look in Practice?”](#) While he delved into an explanation of just about every area of a traditional Reformed worship service, Rev. Aalsburg’s comments on the purpose of the Prelude before the service were especially convicting and encouraging:

The Prelude is a time to sit and meditate on what’s about to take place in the worship of God, and we prepare for what is going to be the most important hour and a half of the week. It’s going to involve some preparation. It’s going to involve continued preparation....When there’s something you love and want to set your heart on, as it were, you plan....So, no, this isn’t a time of elevator music, but it’s a work of preparing, meditating on what’s going to happen. It’s not an opportunity to talk to those around you; we’ll have plenty of time to do that after the service. This is the time to prepare yourself to meet with the living God who made heaven and earth—this thrice-holy God who has revealed himself in his Word.

This should challenge us to view the music used in Worship very differently—not as something just for the congregation to *enjoy*, but as something to *help* the congregation worship God. I hope you agree.