

Good Tidings

The Newsletter of Brick Presbyterian Church

May 2014

Taking Christ's Resurrection Seriously: An Easter Reflection by Pastor Doug



Too often we reduce Christ's resurrection to Easter egg hunts, the celebration of Easter lilies breaking forth from winter's barren ground, and the promise of life beyond the grave. But, what if the power of Christ's Resurrection is as much about this life as the next? If the hope we have in the life to come does not transform the way we live in the world now, is that a very life changing hope?

It seems to me that the power of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a power that is meant to inspire us – empower us – and liberate us to truly be the people our Lord and Maker intends. As I was pondering what the Resurrection of Jesus meant to those in the early church, I remembered some things I had forgotten. I recalled those first Christians called themselves "People of the Way." The meaning was clear then, as it referred to a deep and fearless commitment to live as Christ lived. Many of them were persecuted or executed for their faith in the Risen Lord. One of the most famous was Stephen, who was stoned to death by Saul of Tarsus, as we read in Acts 7. Yet, even as Stephen was being stoned to death he prayed for those killing him to be forgiven.

The heavy hand of Rome brought about other executions and placed many in prison for living out their faith in Jesus Christ. That's what ultimately happened to Saul of Tarsus after he converted to the Christian faith, and became known as the Apostle Paul. I cannot help but wonder if his hearing the prayer of a dying Stephen pleading for Saul's forgiveness prepared Saul for his conversion experience of the Risen Lord.

When I consider the prayer seeking Saul's forgiveness by Stephen as the stones were brutally beating him to death, I see something profound about the power of a true belief in the power of Christ's Resurrection. The Resurrection is not just about going to heaven – it's about the power of God that rolls away all the stones that spiritually hold us lifeless in this realm. The power of Christ's resurrection is about being free to live as God people in this life as-well-as the life to come. Christ's resurrection reveals a love greater than hatred – a faithful courage greater than fear – a selflessness that is greater than self-centeredness.

There are many through whom the power of a Risen Christ has been evident. There's Corey ten Boom, a Dutch Christian, whose story is told in the book, *The Hiding Place*. During WWII she and her family were imprisoned by the Nazis for helping Jews escape the Holocaust. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor, imprisoned and eventually executed for opposing Nazi evils. There were the chaplains who gave up their life vest so others might survive the sinking of the USS *Dorchester*. There's the courage of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and those who share his peaceful vision of desegregation, got them beaten, jailed, and in King's case killed. When the power of Christ's resurrection is taken seriously, life is transformed. Things change – fear melts – the earth quakes. Stones are removed. A bit of heaven shines upon the earth. This is not our doing. It is God's doing through Christ in us and through us. When we take the Lord's resurrection seriously we are able to live *in the world* but *not of the world* – for everything has changed.

House of Hope



Saturday, May 10th, 6:30-9:30

Join us for a night of praise music & light refreshments

The House of Hope Presents:

The Music Ministry of The Restoration Church of Lanoka Harbor

Food for Thought Cards

The fund raising committee has partnered with Food for Thoughts Cards to raise money to feed the hungry and help the Deacon's Fund continue their missions and outreach. They are a perfect match – both working on the same values.



Connie Charney (Founder of Food for Thoughts Cards) explains how her company began by saying, “I go to New York City once a week and I pack a peanut butter & jelly sandwich to take along. As I walk downtown, I give the sandwich to someone in need. These are my ‘give-a-sandwich’ days. I’ve been doing it for years and now it’s time to expand that effort.”

Connie took her idea of handing out a sandwich a day and designed these specialized greeting cards to raise funds to help support food pantries or organizations that feed the hungry. We will be selling these greeting cards with multiple themes and sayings including Birthday, Thank You, Anniversary, Congratulations, Thinking of You and Celebrating You. They will be sold individually as well as in multipacks. Anyone wishing to help us sell the cards is welcome to do so. Individual orders will also be taken thru the end of May. Please see our display table outside the Family Life Center or contact Tim Towlen for more information.

An Update on New Eyes for the Needy

The Stewardship and Mission Committee has been collecting reusable old plastic or metal framed eyeglasses, nonprescription sunglasses, hearing aids, costume jewelry and old watches (even broken!) to help support New Eyes For The Needy, Inc. First organized in 1932, New Eyes for the Needy is a New Jersey based nonprofit volunteer organization that recycles the above items and uses them to provide the gift of sight to the poor all over the United States and throughout the world.

Thank you for supporting this worthy effort! We will continue to collect these items in 2014. Please drop them off in the collection box located in the Narthex. For more information, contact Patrice Law at 732-840-8412 or via e-mail at patricealaw@gmail.com.

Deacons

The Board of Deacons would like to thank everyone for their donations to our food bank. The request for baskets was great this year and everyone worked hard and gave generously to provide the 31 baskets requested for Easter.



Please mark your calendars and come out and support our Blood Drive to be held on May 14th from 4-8pm in the Family Life Center. Hope to see you all there!!

Fundraising News

Thank you to everyone who came out to our restaurant fundraiser at Joe's Crabshack on April 9th and 10th. Once again you've helped our Deacons continue doing the great things they're doing in our community. Please keep an eye out for our next fundraiser.



OUR FIRST EVER VENDOR/CRAFT SHOW! Saturday May 31st @ Brick Presbyterian Church

On Saturday May 31st we will host over 50 vendors in our Family Life Center. Admission is free so please plan on coming out to this event. Please watch for more info as we get closer to the date. Or follow the link below:

<http://njvendors.com/events/counties-m-w/ocean/brick-nj-may-champ-network-craft-and-vendor-fair/>

If you're interested in setting up a table at our event please contact Melanie Menzo @ ChampNet411@yahoo.com

Stream Energy: Are You Ready For The Summer?



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! The summer months are well behind us but we still use electric and natural gas all year long. Regardless of your consumption Stream Energy will continue to donate **\$4.00 per month** for each **electric** customer and now and 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!

BRICK CLERGY 3RD ANNUAL STOP HUNGER NOW EVENT REPORT



Thanks to all who supported, attended and participated the Third Brick Clergy Association Stop Hunger Now event on March 23rd. Approximately 200 people were there from nine congregations.

A total of \$2826.29 was generated to the Stop Hunger Now program. Those at the event this past Sunday were able to package over 10,150 meals.

Many people commented on how good it was to have so many people from different house of worship come together to work together on such an important project.

Blessing of the Pets/Animal Shelter Donations Review

On April 5, the Blessing of the Pets was held. It was a sunny day and a well received event. Animals attending included 1 hamster, 1 rabbit, 1 cat, and 32 dogs. All pets were on their best behavior, and the people participating and onlookers had a terrific time. A generous amount of donations for the Jersey Shore Animal Shelter were collected. Thank you to all who donated, we appreciate your generosity.



Thank You from Jersey Shore Animal Center

Dear Brick Presbyterian Church,



I want to sincerely thank you for filling the donation bins with items we are in need of here at the Jersey Shore Animal Center. Every day we face the challenge of caring for 100-200 animals (the numbers go up as kitten season rolls around). You have truly made a difference for our special friends.

I want to commend you for trying to raise awareness for responsible animal ownership, lifetime commitment to one of God's creatures and providing a nurturing and loving home for animals in need.

I have always believed that no good deed would go unnoticed and blessing will come back to you two fold. We sincerely thank you all.

Sincerely,
Patricia Wallace
Executive Director

Did You Know...



...what Blanket Sunday is?

Every year on Mother's Day we give our donations to Church World Service (CWS). Some 8,000 congregations and groups across the U.S. hold blanket events, providing funds to help people in need around the world.

For over 60 years, CWS has worked in partnership with local communities to identify their needs and access the resources they need to build the foundation for a more viable future including:

- Blankets, tents, food and emergency supplies in the wake of a disaster
- Tools and seeds for refugees returning home to replant their fields
- Wells for families living in drought prone areas to provide clean, safe water
- Literacy training and microcredit for women struggling to realize their potential

For Your Information

Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through One Great Hour of Sharing to spread God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world.



Your gifts to this special offering help provide food to the hungry, relief to those affected by natural disasters, and in the helping to empower the poor and oppressed. One Great Hour of Sharing gifts support the following:

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
Presbyterian Huger Program
Self Development of People

*"Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds and to be generous and willing to share."
1 Timothy 6:18*

*Excerpted from
www.presbyterianmission.org*

ATTENTION GRADUATES!

Are you or someone in your family graduating from high school, college, graduate school or vo tech this spring? If so, please let us know so we can share the news with your church family. Please include the name, where they're graduating from, and future plans (if known).



What to Say & What Not to Say to Those Facing Illness



“Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place, but far more difficult still, to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment” – Benjamin Franklin

When facing the illness of a friend, family member or colleague, even eloquent and heartfelt words of comfort can make us sound cliché and awkward. We worry we'll say the wrong thing and make our loved one feel worse. Most of us simply do not know what to say when we first learn of a loved one's illness.

Although everyone deals with illness differently, experts advise not to avoid the issue. Initially, a simple statement - I heard about your illness; I'm so sorry - may be the right thing to say.

Here are some things *not* to say with more appropriate words of support.

- ***What can I do to help?*** This question puts the burden back on the person who is ill. Instead, offer to help in specific ways, such as driving the person to and from medical appointments, picking the kids up at school, housecleaning for him/her, cooking his/her favorite meal and dropping it off, babysitting, dog walking, grocery shopping.
- ***My thoughts and prayers are with you.*** While this expression is well received by some, it is cliché. Instead, say, I love you, and pray without announcing it.
- ***Offering medical, alternative therapy or nutrition advice.*** People suffering from illness report being besieged by health advice from family, friends, acquaintances, complete strangers, all of whom mean well. If you feel compelled to offer advice, first ask if your loved one is open to receiving it.
- ***Everything will be okay.*** You don't know that to be true. Say, instead, I'm always here for you.
- ***You look great.*** Even if it's true, it will sound like a lie. Say, instead, I love that color on you. Or, your eyes are so bright and beautiful.

Excerpted from the Spring 2014 newsletter from MetLife

Youth Group



The youth group had an awesome time at the Acquire the Fire event; it proved to be an experience the kids will always remember. We were able to worship and fellowship with over 5000 youths from all over the east coast.

We would like to thank the congregation for their continued support with our bake sales for the Christmas gifts for underprivileged children.

The Junior High Youth Group will be meeting on May 4th and May 18th in the Family Life Center at 6:00pm.