

# Good Tidings

The Newsletter of Brick Presbyterian Church

January 2016

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## A Refugee Named Jesus – A Pastoral Pondering



In a few days our calendars will mark the observance of Epiphany and the Light that enters the world's darkness in Christ. It's a time in which we also sing such hymns as those about the Wise Men who first visited Jesus in Bethlehem.

In revisiting the biblical texts about Jesus' birth and early childhood I was reminded of what kind of world our Lord entered, and found it was not a world that was all that gentle and mild. Luke's gospel tells us that Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to be enrolled in a census that was called by the Roman Emperor, Cesar Augustus. The census was in part a way to tax and control the population over which Rome ruled the world. The Pax Romana of that era was a peace maintained by the heavy hand and presence of the Roman army. Luke tells us that Quirinius was a military Governor of Augustus. But did you know as governor he was dealing with a rebellious tribe, the Homonadenses, in Syria?

Looking at Matthew's account of Jesus' birth and early years we find it is not without fear or unrest either. Matthew described a time of political and ethnic tensions. The narrative about the wise men that were searching for Jesus' birth place was filled with intrigue. King Herod and all of Jerusalem were frightened by the prospect of Jesus being born king of the Jews. Matthew reports after finding Jesus the wise men do not return to Herod to disclose where Jesus was born, but rather return home by another route. Herod then orders the death of all children that were two years old or younger in the area around Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph having been warned in a dream take Jesus and flee as refugees to Egypt. It is only two years later after Herod is dead, according to Matthew that Mary, Joseph, and Jesus return home.

The story of the Judeo-Christian faith is filled with the people of faith described in one way or another as refugees. The epic story of Exodus describing the flight from bondage and slavery in search of a Promised Land is probably the best known one. But there are others like the epic story of how Joseph's family came as refugees to Egypt in search of food and water during a time of famine.

These biblical stories and others are not just about Jesus and ancient believers. For me these are stories of faith that are intended to inform our lives and spiritual values. For ancient Israel the memory of their refugee past conditioned them to provide for and be kind to other refugees as we read in Deuteronomy 24:17-18: *"Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this."*

In our time, I invite you to join me in asking yourself: "What would Jesus say or do?" Just what did Jesus mean when he summed up the rule of faith saying in Matthew 22:37-40: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*



## Call for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation and the Corporation of Brick Presbyterian Church

The Annual meeting of the Congregation and Corporation of Brick Presbyterian Church will take place on Sunday, January 31, 2016 in the Family Life Center of the Church at 111 Drum Point Road, Brick, NJ 08723 starting at 12:15 pm (following the 11:00 am worship service). The meeting will begin with a light lunch.

Business to be conducted includes the following: the receiving of annual reports from boards, committees, groups and organizations of the congregation. Other actions will include establishing the Pastor's terms of call, nomination and election of persons to serve on Session, the Board of Deacons and the Standing Nominating Committee. There will also be an important review of the church's financial reports. The meeting will also deal with any constitutionally appropriate business brought forth by members of the congregation from the floor.

It is very important that all members of the congregation be present. Your voice and vote matter. The decisions made at this meeting affect all of us.

If you are the Chair of a Committee/Group that usually has a report in the Annual Meeting Packet, please send your reports via e-mail to [dg.chase@yahoo.com](mailto:dg.chase@yahoo.com).

### “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

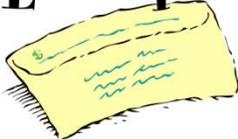


For Sunday worship services, the earliest time for such closure announcements would normally be after 7:30 AM.

**You may also check the Church Website for weather related closings and cancellations by going to [www.brickpresby.com](http://www.brickpresby.com)**

### 2016 OFFERING ENVELOPE BOXES

#### Offering Envelopes



The 2016 offering envelope boxes are now available in the church Narthex. The boxes have donors' names on them and the per capita figure is also on the name label. If you do not find a box with your name or would like to have envelopes, please contact Karen Ellis, our Financial Secretary at [financialsecretary@brickpresby.com](mailto:financialsecretary@brickpresby.com) or call her at home 732-920-374. If you are unable to pick up your envelopes, please let her know and she will be happy to mail them to you.

## HEAR OUR PRAYERS, O LORD!

The Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick, the great preacher of Riverside Drive Church in NYC was quoted as saying, "More things are brought about by prayer than the world will ever realize." This is so very true, as attested by the books: *Prayer Can Change Your Life* and *When Prayer Makes the News*.



Our congregation has a group of people who are dedicated to the ministry of prayer. This Prayer Team prays on a regular basis for those on our church's weekly prayer list, along with praying with and for our congregation and each other. The Prayer Team Ministry invites those who want to commit themselves to a ministry of prayer to contact Pastor Doug Chase, or our Prayer Team co-leaders, Debbie Weber or Arlene Liegl.

The group's next meeting will be on **Monday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m.** in the church parlor. At that time the group will not only be praying together, but also holding a discussion on "How Do We Discern What God Wants Us to Pray For?" If the Lord is calling you to this ministry, contact Pastor Doug.



**Bring in the New Year Pancake Breakfast  
Sunday, January 10, 2016  
Between Services in the FLC**

### Youth Group



The Youth Groups would like to thank the congregation for their support with the "Earn your Wings" mission project. The groups were able to provide 6 families totaling 19 children with a Christmas that they would not have had without your donations. The Social Workers we coordinate with to get these needy families are always so touched by the generosity of our church members.

The Jr High Youth Group will resume their meetings starting January 10th in the Family Life Center from 6:00 to 7:30pm.

Both Youth Groups will also be hosting Coffee Hour on January 17th to show our appreciation to the congregation for all their support.

January 31st both groups will meet in the Family Life Center to create the banners for the "Souper Bowl of Caring" which will be held on February 7th.

*"All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,  
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees." Psalm 25:10*

## Evangelism/Outreach

Don't forget to "Catch a Friend, Bring 'Em in" on January 17<sup>th</sup>. It's coffee hour Sunday, so invite a friend for coffee and fellowship.



There is a new prayer ribbon – WHITE, which indicates a prayer for PEACE.



## ORGAN NOTES

**RICHARD CHRISTEN,  
MINISTER OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

From the earliest days of the church, the singing of hymns has been an integral part of Christian Worship. In the book of Acts we find Paul and Silas "singing hymns to God" (Acts 16:25) while chained in the jail at Philippi.

It was also the apostle Paul who admonished believers with these words; "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:19-20).

The tradition of singing in worship is far older than even Paul and the early Christians. Many centuries earlier, Moses and his sister, Miriam, led the nation of Israel in song after their miraculous escape through the Red Sea. And who can forget King David, Israel's beloved singer, who composed numerous Psalms expressing both personal and corporate praise? Centuries later, translations of the psalms would provide the nurturing cradle for the English hymnody we know today.

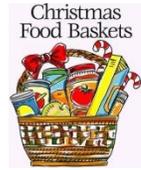
Singing hymns is not only an important means for teaching Christian truth, but also to express praise to your Creator and Savior! One can communicate with God in a way that goes beyond mere words, but includes the grateful feelings of your heart – feelings awakened by the experience of forgiveness and the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.

**Make a promise to yourself** as we start **2016**, to lift your heart and voice in praise to the Lord of all peoples and centuries – Jesus Christ. Join the chorus of believers as you express praise and commitment to God, and worship God through the long legacy and treasury of Christian hymns. Look forward to the day when all believers will join in one great chorus around God's throne. It was Isaac Watts who once said, "The singing of God's praise is the part of Worship most closely related to heaven."

**Make a commitment for 2016** to sing out during our corporate worship services, to join the **chancel choir** or the **hand bell choir**, and experience the fulfilling joy of music. Meet the hymn-writers and discover how God's work in their lives left the legacy of hymns we have to share today.

## Deacons

The Deacons prepared food baskets for the Christmas Celebration in December. Also, the Deacons together with the Senior and Junior High youth groups sang carols and distributed small appropriate gifts to residents at the Geraldine Thompson Nursing Home.



## Our Climb toward the Summit in the Financial Himalayas at BPC

Your financial officers, along with the Finance and the Stewardship Committees, want to thank everyone for your prayers of support as we seek to see how we can best serve our Lord, and meet the needs of God's people in our ministry for 2016.

So far, you, our partners in Christ's ministry, have given us reason to feel encouraged, as we seek to climb the mountain of financial challenges in our congregation's ministry to serve God's people in our area and address global needs for Christ. More of you have made pledges this year than in the past. The early numbers reported by our Financial Secretary, Karen Ellis, are encouraging. However, we still have a long climb before we reach the summit of financial needs to carry out Christ's work in 2016.

Those who have climbed Mt. Everest, and other great mountains, know the importance each member of the party plays in making it to the summit. If you haven't turned in a pledge/ prayer card in support of Christ's work at Brick Presbyterian Church, it's not too late to do so. For those who have turned in pledge and prayer cards we say Thank You. For those who haven't done so, we pray you will consider doing so.

Every person and every gift makes a difference. Together we can, with God's help, do amazing things for our Lord and our community.

## FUNDRAISING



We hope everyone enjoyed our Christmas Shopping/Restaurants Coupon and Flyer Packet. Thank you for your continued support of our efforts. A very special thank you to the volunteers who helped us with gift-wrapping at Barnes & Noble and Boscov's. We couldn't have participated in this fundraiser without you!

## CHICK-FIL-A

On Tuesday, January 12 and Wednesday, February 17 we will be holding fundraisers at Chick-Fil-A's Brick location from 5:00 - 8:00 p.m. Please for flyers outside the FLC and also on the website.



## STREAM ENERGY



Stream Energy continues to make monthly donations to Brick Presbyterian Church if you sign up with them for savings on your gas and/or electric bills. See Patrice to find out how you can save money this winter!



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If you are able to read the title above and count it without reading, then we can use you in the **BPC Hand Bell Choir (with chimes)**. *The Hand Bell Choir may be the ultimate expression of music-making as a community of believers.* The ensemble cannot function without each individual; at the same time, the contribution of each individual is meaningless apart from the whole. There is no ‘i’ in ensemble.

A Hand Bell ensemble generally requires at least twelve ringers (minimum) to perform the three-octave range of music required by traditional repertoire. Although it is sometimes possible to perform this music with fewer people, the ringer might be challenged to handle multiple bells in one hand and/or switching quickly from one bell to another. Furthermore, if the ensemble is operating with the minimum number, even one absence at a rehearsal or service can make it very difficult for the ensemble to perform.

**BUT WAIT**, there’s hope! There is **YOU!** **YOU** can help us perform anthems and hymn accompaniments without the challenges mentioned above; and without any special talent required, *other than reading the title above*, we have a great team of ringers who will assist you as you learn to mark your music and **RING THOSE BELLS!**

Our weekly rehearsals for 2016 are held on Monday evenings beginning at 7:00 pm in Room 102. We learn the music, the ringing technique and how God worked in the lives of the composers who gave us the legacy of music we enjoy today. In addition we enjoy a fun fellowship and a good time with new friends.

I have heard so many excellent comments on the music you enjoy and now you can become a part of this vital ministry. We are commanded to “*speak to each other in psalms and spiritual songs,*” and the Hand Bell Choir is one venue that allows you to bring the joy of music to others and fulfill this command. Will **YOU** join us?

**Richard Christen**  
Minister of  
Instrumental Music



## Health Ministry Health Tips for the New Year



Year after year we make resolutions to exercise regularly, eat well, and give up smoking and other bad habits. Following such basic rules can cut heart disease risk by 80 percent, diabetes risk by 90 percent and cancer risk by 50 percent, according to the Harvard Nurses' Health Study.

**Wear a pedometer.** New research suggests that routinely wearing a pedometer encourages people to walk about an extra mile each day, lose weight, and lower their blood pressure.

**Don't forget strength training,** involving both the upper and lower body. Too many people neglect resistance exercise, particularly women for whom it's crucial for preventing muscle and bone loss with age.

**Don't pop too many vitamins.** Enthusiasm for vitamin pills is high, but evidence for their benefits is low. Try to get vitamins from foods and consider a multivitamin for insurance.

**Eat at least two fish meals per week.** The evidence is strong that the oils in darker types of fish, such as salmon, tuna, mackerel and herring, are beneficial for the heart and brain and may even lower risk of cancer.

**Talk to your doctor about taking aspirin** for heart protection but don't assume that it's right for you. And be aware that aspirin has some serious risks, including gastrointestinal bleeding.

**Drink water.** No matter where you are, water should always be the first thing you reach for when you're thirsty. Water truly is essential.

**Sleep 8 hours a night.** A number of recent studies have confirmed that you really do need at least 8 hours a night.

**Keep sugar and caffeine -- the "legal evils" -- to a minimum.** It's hard to believe, but decreasing sugar actually increases people's energy, by minimizing the highs and lows that sweet foods triggers.

**Consider acupuncture and massage** as valid therapies for chronic problems, such as back pain and neuropathy. Seeing a good massage therapist for neck strain may work better than taking extra strength Tylenol and/or Advil regularly.

**If you smoke, quit.** There is nothing good about it. If you're having trouble quitting, start smoking less today -- smoke only half a cigarette, and skip as many of your usual smokes as you can -- and get help right away.

**Don't focus on dieting. Focus on eating.** If you're hungry, you're more likely to overeat, especially in the evening. It's better to eat enough during the day to avoid hunger pangs and uncontrolled eating at night.

**Budget your food as you do your money.** Divide your calories out across the day to keep yourself well fed.

**Eat three different foods at every meal.** Don't eat a scoop of tuna for lunch -- eat tuna on a roll with a salad.

**Eating won't solve emotional problems.** Many people eat to make themselves feel better when they're upset.

**Don't drink too many calories.** It's easy to drink calories without noticing: that eggnog latte at Starbucks has nearly as many calories as a Big Mac.