

Good Tidings

The Newsletter of Brick Presbyterian Church

May 2016

What Sort of Christianity & What Image of Jesus? Pastor Doug's Pondering



When one looks at how politicized religion has become in America and the labels associated with the Christian faith, I sometimes wonder what happened to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Labels like fundamentalist, evangelical, conservative, reform, progressive, liberal, Bible believing, Pentecostal, etc... may have their place in describing various religious expressions. Sometimes the labels that we use and place upon others, or use to describe ourselves, may be problematic in American Christianity.

I recently read an editorial by a theological student who identified himself as an evangelical. He was objecting to how the term “evangelical Christian” had become equated with a political movement and was being associated with political and social positions that were foreign to his understanding of the faith. He stated that the Jesus he knew reached out to people rather than excluded people – had compassion for the poor, the weak, the ill, etc. His Jesus was about forgiveness and grace rather than judgment and condemnation, about love that overcame fear.

Sadly, religion and faith, even the Christian variety, can be used as a weapon not only to combat the “devil,” but as a weapon of the “devil.” There is a vast difference between the Christianity of the Ku Klux Klan that burns crosses and proclaims white supremacy and the Christianity that seeks an end to cross burning, segregation, and violence. There is a vast difference between a faith that builds walls and a faith that builds bridges. There is a vast difference between those who thought they were being faithful following Hitler’s murderous ways of anti-Semitism and those who thought they were being faithful risking their lives to rescue and hide Jews from the Nazi Holocaust. There is a vast difference between a faith talks about love and acceptance and a faith that practices love and acceptance; between a faith that plays it safe and a faith that takes risks.

Labels may have their place in talking about the faith, even the Christian faith. But maybe we would do well to look to those who first embraced the Lordship of a Risen Jesus, who simply called themselves People of the Way, meaning people who followed the way of Jesus? After all, is not the Bible as the Word of God, suppose to point us to Jesus the Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life we all the world so greatly need?

May 5th is designated as National Day of Prayer and Holocaust Remembrance Day. Perhaps that would be a good time to forget our labels, our political religious perspectives and to pray for our nation, church, and ourselves, that we may be faithful to the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Evangelism and Outreach

Isaiah 58:1: *“Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet.”*

Greetings BPC Family. The E and O committee invites you to mark your calendars with three important dates:

Thursday, May 5, 2016 - The National Day of Prayer

This annual observance is held on the first Thursday of May, inviting people of all faiths to pray for our nation. It was created in 1952 by a joint resolution of the United States Congress and signed into law by President Harry S. Truman. Since its inception, this day has continually united Americans from all socio-economic, political, and ethnic backgrounds in prayer while also encouraging personal repentance and righteousness in the culture. The National Day of Prayer belongs to all Americans and is a day that transcends differences, bringing together citizens to celebrate our most beloved freedom; the freedom to humbly come before God and seek His guidance in prayer.



The 65th annual National Day of Prayer, May 5, 2016, is an unprecedented opportunity to see the Lord's healing and renewing power made manifest as we call on citizens to humbly come before His throne. Our theme "Wake Up America!" emphasizes the need for individuals, corporately and individually, to return to the God of Fathers in reverence for His Holy Name. We thank you in advance for making this spiritual discipline a personal priority and for standing with us as we encourage others to incorporate prayer in their lives.

Unite with BPC Church and Community members as we raise our hearts, minds, and voices in prayer. (Paraphrased from The National Day of Prayer Website – for more information visit <http://www.nationaldayofprayer.org>)

BPC National Day of Prayer schedule:

- 6:00 – 6:55 pm – Sanctuary open for silent prayer and reflection
- 7:00 - 7:30 pm – Gather in the FLC for United Prayer led by Pastor Doug Chase
- 7:30 – 8:00 pm – Fellowship and refreshment

Sunday, May 15, 2016
“Catch a friend, bring ‘em in” Sunday
Invite a friend to Family Worship
and fellowship afterwards at our monthly coffee hour.





**Saturday, May 14th
BPC Annual Blessing of the Pets
10 am in the Memorial Garden**

Remember - all dogs must be on a leash and cats in a carrier. If your pet cannot attend the service for any reason, bring a picture with you to hang on our special board designed just for them! Please include your name & address on the back of the picture.

And....even if you don't have your own furry friend to bless, please consider making a contribution that will bless the animals at Jersey Shore Animal Shelter. A table in the Family Life Center will be set up to receive your gifts. You will find a list there of suggested items. If you have questions contact Paulette Auriemma.

Deacons

The Board of Deacons would like to thank the congregation for their support of our food pantry. The Deacons were able to provide 47 food baskets for the Easter holiday. Of course this means our pantry is greatly depleted so please continue to donate so we can meet the needs of the community.



Blood Drive Coming Soon

Please join us for the Brick Presbyterian Church ANNUAL BLOOD DRIVE. Help save a life... Give blood! Central Jersey Blood Center will be here, and there will be a sign-up sheet at church to schedule your donation appointment beginning Sunday, May 1st. For questions and further information, you can contact Joan Erickson at 732-833-2977 or at jmerick112@yahoo.com.



ANNUAL BLOOD DRIVE

Brick Presbyterian Church – Family Life Center
Wednesday, May 11, 2016
4:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Thank you for giving the gift of life!

**Youth & Teacher Recognition
Sunday, June 12, 2016**



PENTECOST



One of the ways we as Christians observe Pentecost Sunday is by wearing the color red, this signifies the "fiery tongue" referred to in Acts 2:3. This year Pentecost Sunday is May 15. We ask that you mark your calendars and wear red on May 15.



For many years, our church has been helping to keep our neighbors warm by providing blankets through the Church World Service Blanket program to families here in the United States and around the world.

Imagine you are a young parent who is forced to leave your home with your two children. It is a dark night, and you are walking on a dirt road, far from your home town. You stop at a registration center, where you receive critical supplies to help you and your children before continuing the journey. Among those emergency supplies are blankets, including baby blankets. You quickly wrap them around your children to keep them warm. You also receive a light-weight blanket to use for carrying your family's belongings. In the next room at the registration center, you and your children are served a hot meal, including bread and milk. Following the meal, you receive emergency food rations to take with you on your journey. You are able to wash your children using the hygiene kits you receive. *This is a reality for many journeying across Europe right now.*

This year, our church will be taking a special offering on Mother's Day to help provide blankets and other emergency items to mothers and their families all around the world. For only \$10, you can give a blanket that can provide warmth and shelter, comfort and privacy, and healing and hope wherever God's people may need care. These blankets might be the best gift you ever give and you can change a life all at the same time.

Special offering envelopes will be available in the pews on May 1st and in your bulletin on May 8th.

P.S. - If you'd like to honor a special Mom or person in your life with a contribution to CWS blankets, look for the CWS Blanket table in the narthex on Sunday, May 1st to obtain a gift card to share the news with that special person.

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).



FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Outback Restaurant Fundraiser



Thank you to everyone who came out to support our restaurant fundraiser at Outback Steakhouse. We hope you enjoyed a delicious lunch or dinner. Fifteen percent of your check will support the work of our church in our own congregation and in our community.

Stream Energy

Winter, spring, summer or fall, Stream Energy continues to make monthly donations to Brick Presbyterian Church. Sign up now and you will not only see a savings yourself but will also be part of the donation made to our Church. **For additional information you can contact Patrice Law @ 732-779-7242 or patricealaw@gmail.com.**



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 2016. Please drop them off in the collection box located in the Narthex. For more information, contact Patrice Law at 732-779-7242 or via e-mail at patricealaw@gmail.com.



Dear Friends,

It is with sadness in my heart that I bid you all farewell. After prayerful consideration and a lot of soul searching, I decided to relocate to Florida.

I truly loved my job at the church, and will always value the friendships I made while there for over two years. I thank God for the blessing of each of you in my life.

Thank you for welcoming me with open arms and open hearts. Thank you for making my job such a pleasure by extending your kindness to me. Thank you for all the good work you do for the community, each other, and the Lord.

Each day is a precious gift from God. *“This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”* Psalm 118:24 (ESV)

Blessings,
Debbie Voorhees