

Good Tidings

The Newsletter of Brick Presbyterian Church

December 2023



As I write this article, I am sitting in the San Antonio airport on my way home from the PCUSA CREDO Conference. It is Monday, November 20. Today is a really good time for me to pause and reflect on gratitude, even though I know that you won't read these words until after our official holiday celebrating gratitude has passed. Here are a few things that I am grateful for today. I hope that my mention of them will prompt you to think about the elements of your life that make you grateful!

I start with the easiest source of gratitude: my guys. Today is both my husband and my son's birthday! The word gratitude does not even begin to describe the joy and love that continues to grow between us and for the life that we share.

My second point of gratitude: the CREDO Conference I attended that concluded today. "CREDO is an in-person, weeklong conference focused on pastors' wholeness and well-being. Each conference is led by a team of experienced faculty who guide participants in a visioning and discernment process through four key areas of well-being: spiritual, vocational, physical and emotional health, and financial." Our conference was held in the beautiful heart of hill country in Texas, along the Guadalupe River. The rest, the connections with colleagues, the time focusing on God – all deep – and I am so grateful.

My third point of gratitude: Brick Presbyterian Church, of course! I learn something new about the people and the energy of our congregation every day. I am grateful for the solid foundation our church has been built upon, Jesus Christ. I am so grateful that Christ is the constant that we can rely on. I am also grateful for the ways in which we continue to grow into who God is calling us to be today and tomorrow. I wonder, what about Brick Presbyterian Church makes you grateful?

Of course, these are some of my "big gratitude" items. It's helpful to express gratitude for the smaller, or less obvious things too. For instance, I'm grateful for the shoes on my feet that are nicely broken-in and so comfortable. I'm grateful for the person who pointed out a mistake that I made so that I could make amends. And I'm grateful for the kale salad that I just ate that tastes good and is good for me!

Being grateful is good for us, not just in terms of social capital, but it also helps you have healthier relationships, increase your satisfaction with your current circumstances, and give you the ability to enjoy the little moments in life more fully. Gratitude does good things for our bodies as well. Gratitude comes from a positive mental state which can lower stress, which we all can probably use!

Gratitude is also the best place to start and finish when we pray. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 tells us: "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." I hope you will pray with me: *Thank you, God, thank you, thank you, thank you! Amen!*

With love, Pastor Kristie

WORSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS

Christmas Flowers

Envelopes are in the church pews **until December 17, 2023** to donate for Christmas flowers in memory of, or in honor of, loved ones. Please consider donating to beautify our church for Christmas. Thank you.



The Worship Committee is asking for your help!



We will be decorating the church for Advent and Christmas after the worship service on **November 26th**. We have several trees to decorate and other decorations including the Manger outside. Please consider giving 30 minutes of your time to make our church festive for the holiday season.

We will “undecorate” the church following the service of Epiphany on January 7th. God Bless you and thank you for your help!

Christmas Eve Worship Services



This year **Christmas Eve** is on Sunday. We will have our **10:00 a.m.** service which will be the 4th Sunday of Advent.

At 4:30 p.m. there will be a candlelight service to celebrate Christmas Eve.

Your donation envelopes for 2024 will be put out in the Narthex as usual in mid-December. If you would like envelopes, you may call the church office or call Karen Ellis at 732-232-1495. Thank you and God Bless you all!



INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

In times of inclement weather, especially during this winter season, or for other adverse conditions, the congregation is reminded to check the Church Website for closings, delays, and cancellations by going to www.brickpresby.com.



Please note that radio stations no longer announce weather-related closings, etc.



DEACONS CORNER

Psalm 107:8-9: "Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things."



The Deacons of Brick Presbyterian Church would like to share our sincere gratitude for the congregation's unwavering support of our mission to serve our church and local community through the food bank. So many local families will be physically and spiritually full due to our church's generosity.

Additionally, we would like to wish all the members of Brick Presbyterian Church a wonderful Christmas and New Year! We hope this holiday season is a time of reflection and blessings for all.

FUNDRAISING NEWS

Christmas Wreaths, Poinsettias and Grave Blankets



These items should be available for delivery the first week of December. As soon as we get a definite delivery date it will be announced to everyone.

Christmas Gift Wrapping at Boscov's

Please see our sign-up sheet in the Narthex if you would like to volunteer to help us giftwrap for donations this Holiday season.



Christmas Cookie Sale



CALLING ALL COOKIE BAKERS!!!

Our annual Christmas Cookie Sale is scheduled for **Saturday, December 16, from 12:00 – 4:00**. Buy a container for \$20.00 and fill it to the top with cookies!!

This event will be open to the community so ***we are looking for help from volunteer cookie bakers***. With the generosity of our church members we are able to have a very successful event every year.

Please see the sign-up sheet in the Narthex to volunteer to bake your family favorites and add to the wide variety of cookies in our inventory for the sale.

Christmas Cards

This is a new fundraiser for us. We will be selling specialty Christmas cards, handcrafted in Tennessee. ***These cards are not the typical boxed cards - you have to see them to appreciate them!*** We will have a **limited number** of each of three scenes. Perfect for sending to a special person on your list this year!



Please see Linda, Lynn, or any Fundraising Committee member to purchase.

Hymnal Dedications and Memorial Bricks



Although these two dedications are available throughout the year, ***the Holiday Season is a perfect time to remember or honor a loved one or to commemorate a special date or event with a Hymnal Dedication or a Memorial Brick.***

Please see a Fundraising Committee member for order forms for either of these memorial options.

SHINE BRIGHT!



Thank you to all who have returned your pledge cards!

If you have not already done so, it's not too late to return your card to the church by mail or in the offering plate.

“Bring your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give” (Deuteronomy 12:6), so that we may continue to shine as we share God’s love at BPC and beyond.



CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS



CHURCH SCHOOL BULLETIN BOARD



... but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Savior was born—Christ the Lord!"

Luke 2:10-11

On December 10th, The Christmas Pageant, The Gift of the Animals, will be performed during the church service.

Thanksgiving cards created by the Church School students, were given to Homebound by the Deacons.



- Church School is seeking adult Nursery volunteers for either the 1st Sunday or the 2nd Sunday of each month, from 8:45 to 11:15am.
- Also seeking volunteers to substitute as Church School assistants when needed. Church School is held 8:45 to 9:45am.

For further information, please contact Lorrie Haluza at 732-477-0676 or by email: bpcsundayschool111@gmail.com.

HANDS ON MISSION GROUP

Prayer Squares Needed

Hi Ladies,

Just a thought... Wouldn't it be nice to make prayer squares in Christmas colors? Red, green, white, **or any bright Christmas colors would look awesome**, don't you think? Thank you!



Lori Evans, Coordinator

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING



Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

God has blessed the Church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. The Christmas Joy Offering addresses the support needed by some of our leaders, including supporting leadership development for communities of color, and providing support for Presbyterian church workers in their time of need.

The PC(USA), with its historic commitment to higher learning, has long promoted education and leadership development through the establishment and support of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Your gifts allow these ministries to continue — sustaining a tradition Presbyterians have carried out for nearly 140 years. \$1.1 million of gifts from 2022 are being used to provide education and leadership development skills. Many of the students attending Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color are the first in their families to enroll in higher education.

THE CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING SUPPORTS THESE INSTITUTIONS:

- *Menaul School Albuquerque, NM - menaulschool.com*
- Most diverse private high school in the Albuquerque area. Students from 15 - 20 countries are represented each year and the majority of students self-report identifying with minority ethnicities.
- Ranked best Christian High School and 5th best private school in New Mexico by Niche (niche.com)

- *Presbyterian Pan American School, Kingsville, TX - ppas.org*
- 100% of graduates are accepted into colleges and universities in their home countries or in the United States
- Welcomes a diverse international student body, with 26 countries represented in the last 25 years

➤ *Stillman College Tuscaloosa, AL - stillman.edu*

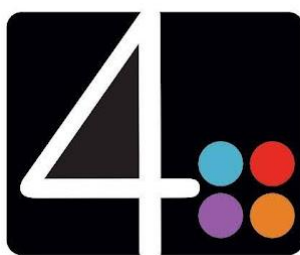
- Stillman has been selected a College of Distinction for 2019-20 and 2020-21 and 2021-22 for Christian Education, Teacher Education, Support of the Military and Veteran Students, Preparing Business Leaders, and Equity and Inclusion (collegesofdistinction.com/school/stillman-college).
- Stillman's student population is 87% first generation in college.

The Christmas Joy Offering also honors the faithfulness of current and retired church workers and their families in need. Thanks in part to support from this Offering, church workers can receive critical financial assistance to support them through life's challenging circumstances. \$1.1 million of gifts from the 2022 Offering are being used to provide critical financial support and grants for current and retired Presbyterian church workers in their times of need. Income supplements from the Board of Pensions helped nearly 272 individual recipients, assisting retired church workers and surviving spouses with the means to provide for themselves. Housing supplements from the BOP helped more than 223 individual recipients remain in their homes, afford assisted living, or long-term care. Emergency Assistance Grants from the BOP helped more than 621 individual recipients facing times of great financial need or uncertainty due to unforeseen circumstances.

For those supported through the Christmas Joy Offering, this help is truly a gift from above. May our gifts, and the leaders who receive them, point us always to the truth of the one whose birth we celebrate, Jesus Christ — the truly perfect gift.

Please give generously to the Christmas Joy Offering which will be taken on December 17th.

WE GO FOUR FOR FOUR!



**WE GO
FOUR
FOR
FOUR**

By receiving all four of the Special Offerings mandated by the General Assembly,

[One Great Hour of Sharing](#), [Pentecost](#), [Peace & Global Witness](#), & [Christmas Joy](#),

we declare our connection with the ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and join in the efforts of Presbyterians around the corner and around the world to share God's grace and endless love.

Thank you for your support of these Special Offerings!

MISSION & EVANGELISM NEWS



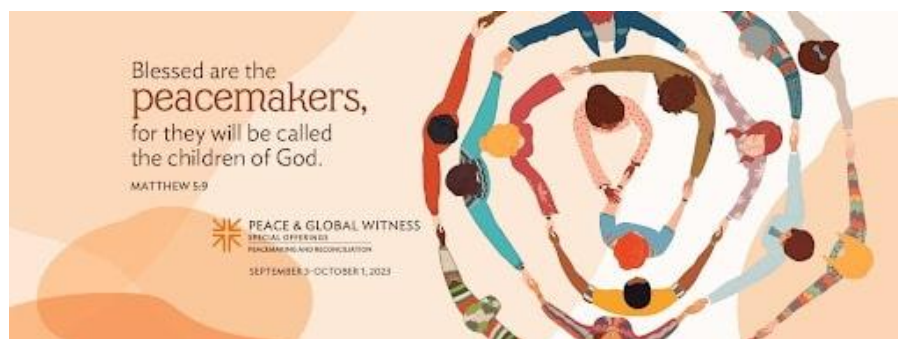
On November 2nd, BPC participated in "A Walk in Their Shoes" in the Family Life Center to coincide with National Homeless Youth Awareness Month and to raise money for Ocean's Harbor House. Our youth walked two miles and visited stations set up in the Family Life Center which educated them on the challenges of being homeless.

Ocean's Harbor House has provided programming to at-risk youth and families for over 35 years. In 1988, it opened the Emergency Youth Shelter, serving youth in crisis ages 10-19. Seeing an obvious lack of services for "aging out" youth with no support, the agency opened the Transitional Living Program (TLP) for youth ages 16-22 in 2004. Two years later, it began serving Ocean County Youth and Families through the Family Crisis Intervention Unit (FCIU). In 2022, it opened the Healing Harbor Services Program, encompassing FCIU, the Substance Use Referral & Education Program and its work on human trafficking. It responds to critical needs in the community using its unique strengths to make the most impact, both on its own and collectively.

In 2024, it will open Ocean County's first ever Family Shelter, as the community sees more demand from parents searching for a safe place to stay with their kids. Ocean's Harbor House is proud of the work it has done and honored to have touched so many lives in such a positive way.

Thank you to all who participated and all who donated to raise \$590 for Ocean's Harbor House!

PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING



Thank you for your gifts of \$760 to the 2023 Peace & Global Witness Offering!

Help us, O God, to put our faith into action — to not only talk about peace, but to put peace into our daily practice. In Christ, with Christ, we pray. Amen.

HELP NEEDED

Updated for December



Are you looking for another way to share your time and talents in praise of the Glory of God?

The church needs volunteers because as the Bible states, "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." 1 Corinthians 12:26

*This column will list the current needs of various BPC groups and committees, as submitted by the group leaders. **Here are a few of the wonderful opportunities available at BPC –***

Church School - Seeking adult Nursery volunteers for either the 1st Sunday or the 2nd Sunday of each month, from 8:45 to 11:15am. Also seeking volunteers to substitute as Church School assistants when needed. Church School is held 8:45 to 9:45am. For further information, see Lorrie Haluza or call the church office at 732-477-0676 or email bpcsundayschool111@gmail.com.

The Hands On Mission Group/Outreach – Volunteers are wanted to work on some easy, fun, craft and sewing projects, such as teddy bears for Baptisms. Prayer squares (crochet or knit), which will be placed in the Brick Hospital Chapel & Shorrock Nursing Home, are always needed. All projects may be done at home. Contact Coordinator Lori Evans at lmegolfer@gmail.com.

Bell Choir – Bell ringers are needed. Practices are held weekly on Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m., and the Bells play during Worship on the 4th Sunday of each month. If interested in joining this music ministry, please contact Bonnie Luton or the church office at 732-477-0676.

Fundraising Committee – Seeking new members to join our fun, energetic group. Are you interested? If so, contact Linda Kathenes (848-333-5119, JLin52@comcast.net) or Lynn Mizer (732-966-6240, lmizer@comcast.net).

Communications Committee - Deacon Michael Candeloro is looking for assistance with the communications of our live feed from Sunday's Service. Please contact him if you're available at email michael.candeloro55@gmail.com.

Worship Committee - Members are welcome to join in the work of providing meaningful Worship of God at BPC. A wide variety of responsibilities dedicated to Worship are shared among all committee members. Meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month at 5:45 p.m. Contact Tom Fortier at tfortier111@gmail.com or 848-333-2599.



If you are a group leader and need volunteers, simply email your info to bpcnewsletter111@gmail.com before the 15th of the month, to be included here next month.

"The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed." Proverbs 11:25



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Poinsettias, Wreaths, & Grave Blankets pickup - 1st week of Dec., date TBA
- Boscov's Gift Wrapping - Sign-up sheet in Narthex
- Cookie bakers needed - Sign-up sheet in Narthex
- Children's Christmas Pageant - 12/10
- Christmas Cookie Sale - 12/16
- Christmas Flowers donation envelopes available until 12/17
- Christmas Joy Offering - 12/17
- Christmas Card fundraiser - now on sale
- Donation Envelopes for 2024 available mid-December
- Christmas Eve Worship Services - 12/24
- Church Un-decorating - 1/7



See the [Events tab](#) on the BPC web site for further details.



12/21



12/25



The Good Tidings newsletter is sent monthly to the BPC family via Constant Contact email. ***If you know of any members not currently receiving Constant Contact mailers, please have them notify the church office with their email address so they can receive future mailings.***

The Good Tidings is also available in condensed PDF format (with no personal info) on the church website.

We will continue with worship services online as well as live-streaming in the Sanctuary – please join us! These services are also on our website in case you miss one and would like to go back and watch.



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