

Good Tidings

The Newsletter of Brick Presbyterian Church

March 2024

111 Drum Point Road, Brick, NJ 08723

Office: 732-477-0676

Website: www.BrickPresby.com

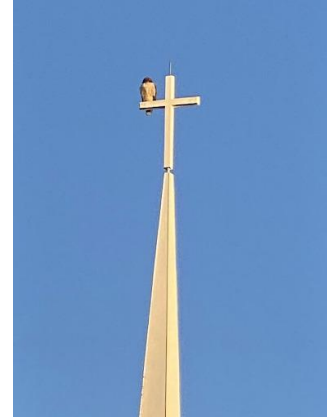
Email: Brick.Presbyterian@Verizon.net

Rev. Kristie Miles, Pastor



Q: Why did the hawk sit on the church steeple?

A: Because it is a bird of pray! (Ba dum dum!)



One December morning I was walking to work (you know, my long commute) and I noticed two vultures sitting on the church steeple. I told them to go away – *shoo! Go on now!* – but they only looked at me with disdain (or so I thought). They were gone when I came back outside hours later, but their presence made me wonder what they saw from atop their lofty perch.

Then, early one January morning, I was exercising with our resident fitness guru Geoff Blake when I noticed a hawk sitting on the church steeple.

I wondered if there has ever been any meaning to vulture or hawk sightings, and indeed the internet has a lot to say about it.

According to hymnsandverses.com, vultures “are often associated with death and decay, their appearance can be quite unsettling. However, the Bible offers a different perspective on the significance of vultures.

“Vultures are mentioned several times throughout the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. These birds of prey are known for their unique feeding habits, as they consume the remains of dead animals. The Bible offers a few insights into the role that vultures play in God’s plan.

“In **Leviticus 11:13-14**, God outlines the dietary restrictions for the Israelites, instructing them to avoid certain birds, including the vulture. The vulture is considered unclean, likely due to its feeding habits. This passage emphasizes **the importance of adhering to divine guidelines and maintaining spiritual purity**.

“In **Proverbs 30:17**, vultures are portrayed as instruments of divine retribution. Disrespecting one’s parents is a serious offense, and the verse illustrates the consequences of such behavior. The imagery of vultures feasting on the remains serves as a **powerful reminder of the importance of honoring our parents and respecting authority**.

And in **Matthew 24:28**, “Jesus speaks these words in the context of discussing the end times. The appearance of vultures gathering around a carcass serves as a **metaphor for the inevitability of judgment and the presence of God’s justice**. When the time comes, there will be no escaping the consequences of one’s actions.”

A quick dive into my Bible concordance discovers that “hawks are mentioned in various places throughout the Bible as well, often in relation to their keen vision, swift flight, and powerful hunting abilities. These qualities make the hawk a symbol of divine guidance, insight, and power.”

For instance, in **Job 39:26-27**, “God is speaking to Job and challenging his understanding of the natural world. By using the hawk as an example, God emphasizes the magnificence of His creation and reminds Job that it is beyond human comprehension. The hawk taking flight is **a metaphor for divine wisdom and guidance**, illustrating that **it is God who directs and empowers His creatures**.

In **Proverbs 30:19**, “the wisdom writer Agur lists four mysterious and wonderful things, one of which is the flight of an eagle or a hawk. The soaring of these birds is **a symbol of God’s unseen hand guiding and directing our lives**. This passage encourages us to **trust in divine guidance**, even when we can’t fully comprehend it.

And in a return to **Leviticus 11, verse 16** continues the avian references in which “hawks are listed among the birds that are considered ‘unclean’ for the Israelites to eat. While this might seem like a negative portrayal, it’s important to remember that the cultural context of the time played a role in these dietary laws.

“The prohibition against eating hawks may have served to **protect these birds and preserve their populations**, as they played an essential role in the ecosystem by controlling rodent and insect populations.

While I think that we should always be cautious about interpreting these sightings as omens or harbingers of things to come, I do believe that we can use them to remind us of their symbolism as they appear in Scripture and the insights that they can lend us. Lent is a time of introspection, reevaluation, and the cycle of Death – Resurrection – Life. This year, I am channeling these symbols in my prayer practice. Specifically, I am asking God to reveal to me:

1. What is now dead and can be pruned from my life?
2. What divine guidelines do I need to reinvest myself in?
3. How can I purify my focus on faith-full living?
4. To whose authority do I bow: God’s or some earthly power?
5. How does God judge me? Do I trust that God will deliver true justice on my behalf? Can I let go of others’ judgments of me that are not of God?
6. What can I do better to protect the people, creatures, and environment around me?
7. How can I rely on God’s strength and power?
8. How can I cultivate spiritual vision, based on God’s bird-eye view and not my own?

I hope that this reflection is helpful to you this Lenten season.

Remember that God loves you and so do !!

Pastor Kristie

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.

Reminder: Radio stations no longer announce weather-related closings, etc.



WORSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS



If you would like to make a donation for Easter flowers In Memory of a Loved One or In Honor of a Loved One, flower card **donation envelopes will be in the pews from March 3 – March 17th.**

The Youth Group, Worship Committee, and Deacons will be making crosses for Palm Sunday. All are welcome to help. The date is **March 17th at 6:00 p.m.**



Palm Sunday, March 24th, 10:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday, March 28th, Agape Meal in the FLC at 6:00 pm

Good Friday, March 29th, 7:00 p.m. - Chancel will be stripped during the service

Easter Service, March 31st, 10:00 a.m.

As usual, all services will be live-streamed as well as in person.

FUNDRAISING NEWS

Old Monmouth Easter Candy Sale



Order forms for our Easter Candy Sale are available at our table in the Narthex or from a Committee member. **Orders will be taken through March 17**, and pick-up dates during the week of March 24 will be announced. Candy bars are not included on the order form but are available from Committee members for \$2.00 each.

Hymnal Dedications and Memorial Bricks

Please remember our ongoing fundraisers – Hymnal Dedications and Memorial Bricks, both of which are available throughout the year. These two memorials are a wonderful way to remember or honor a loved one or to commemorate a special date or event!



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



CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS



CHURCH SCHOOL BULLETIN BOARD

A Holy Week performance by The Church School Students will be held on **March 24** following worship service, in the FLC.



The Easter Egg Hunt will follow worship service on **March 31**, on the front lawn. In case of inclement weather it will be held in the FLC.

Thank you to the Sunday School students and staff for creating Valentine cards for distribution by the Deacons.

ATTENTION ADULTS AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

- The Nursery needs an adult for childcare help the 1st or 2nd Sunday of the month, 10:00-11:00am.



- Church School needs adults and high school students to assist on one Sunday a month or more.

For further information, see Lorrie Haluza or call the church office 732-477-0676.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION AVAILABILITY

ATTENTION high school church members who will graduate June of 2024:

The Scholarship Letter of Application will be available beginning February 4th. The deadline for receipt of scholarship award applications is April 7, 2024. See Lorrie Haluza, or call the church office.



CONFIRMATION CLASS 2024

This year's Confirmation Class is being planned. Details to be posted.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." John 3:16



HANDS ON MISSION GROUP



First off, great job, Ladies, in making the **Prayer Squares** for February for the hospital. **Let's keep making the squares!**

Easter and Spring are right around the corner. Let's use some nice bright colors! Thank you!

Lori Evans, Coordinator

THANK YOU

This card was received in 2023 by Northern Ocean Habitat for Humanity, from one of the recipients of budgeted giving from our church.



To All at the Brick Presbyterian Church,

My daughters and I couldn't be more blessed, not just by receiving your support, but for all the thoughts and prayers I am sure you have all taken the time to say. This home will give me and my daughters a place where they can be as independent as possible with their unique abilities!

*May God bless you always,
Ain, Addie & Diana*

ALL HANDS ON DECK!



Brick Presbyterian Church will be hosting the next Presbyterian Women's Gathering on Saturday, April 20! We need as many volunteers (**women and men**) as possible to provide stellar hospitality to our sisters from across the Presbytery of the Coastlands.

Some of the volunteer tasks include: welcome and direct attendees; staff check-in table; provide dessert; serve food; set up/clean up; run the dishwasher; facilitate the A/V equipment.

Please see Elaine Salto to volunteer on April 20 or if you are **interested in resurrecting** a Presbyterian Women (PW) Circle here at BPC. Email Elaine at sewinglady.salto145@gmail.com or phone: 732-477-6332.



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING



In Isaiah 58, the prophet exclaims, “Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in” (Isaiah 58:12). As the people of Israel returned from the cloud of exile and struggled to rebuild their lives, Isaiah questioned their efforts. [Are you not called] “to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them?” (Isaiah 58:7).

Then in Matthew 25, we hear Jesus calling to us, “For I was hungry and you gave me food ... I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing. ... As you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:35–40).

Isaiah and Jesus are making an important theological point: faithfulness to God causes us to find solutions that will mend broken things— broken lives, broken spirits, broken hearts, broken relationships—things that happen to all of us throughout our lives.

When we give to the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering on Palm Sunday, we are combining our efforts with those across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to repair peoples’ lives — people who are hurting, broken, oppressed, lost or on the margins of society - the exact people about whom Isaiah and Jesus are speaking. The people we are called to connect with every day, but especially in the light of the Good News of the resurrection.

We invite you to visit the OGHS website (pcusa.org/oghs) to find information on how your gift helps people all over the world and offer prayers for those who will receive monetary support through this offering. Small changes, when added together here and around the globe, make huge differences in the lives of our siblings in need.

It also happens that **this year is the 75th anniversary of One Great Hour of Sharing—this is the perfect opportunity for our congregation to recommit to our participation** in this important opportunity to do our part to participate in God’s ongoing repair of the world God so loves.

We challenge each of you to increase your gift to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering to benefit Presbyterian ministries to combat hunger, provide assistance after disaster strikes, and to work with sustainable community development. It is our hunch that you will see how giving opens your heart to God’s work in your own life.

Please join us on Sunday, March 24th (Palm Sunday) as we collect this offering and tangibly witness to the repairing love of God in Jesus Christ through One Great Hour of Sharing.



HELP NEEDED

Updated for March

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 –***

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.

Church School - Looking for adult volunteers for the Nursery, one Sunday a month, 8:45-9:45 or 9:45-10:45 am. Also, Church School needs assistants one Sunday a month or more. For further information, see Lorrie Haluza or call the church office 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).

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 Mondays 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, see Bonnie Luton or call the church office at 732-477-0676.

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.



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

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING



For those who supported the Christmas Joy Offering, your help is truly a gift.
Thank you for your donations of \$523 to provide assistance to PCUSA retired church workers and leadership development for communities of color.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Boxes of Donation Envelopes for 2024 - available now
- Donation envelopes for Easter Flowers available - 3/3-3/17
- Annual Chili Cook Off - 3/10
- Palm crosses to be made - 3/17
- Easter Candy Sale orders due - 3/17
- Church School Holy Week performance - 3/24
- OGHS Offering received - 3/24
- Maundy Thursday Agape Meal - 3/28
- Good Friday service - 3/29
- Holy Saturday Silent Campfire Vigil - 3/30
- Easter Egg Hunt - 3/31
- Scholarship Applications deadline - 4/7
- Presbyterian Women's Gathering - 4/20



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

SPECIAL DAYS IN MARCH



3/10

Turn ahead 1 hour



3/17



3/19



3/31



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.

Follow BPC on facebook, Instagram & YouTube

get^CONNECTED

