



Blacksburg Presbyterian Church

Loving God with Heart, Soul, and Mind

MARCH 2023 NEWSLETTER

Lenten Calendar of Events

Lenten Sermon Series: Do I have to Believe That?

In worship, we will be wrestling with difficult theological topics that can be a stumbling block for our faith. Specifically, we will be asking "Do I Have to Believe That?" about sin, hell, complete forgiveness, and universal love. Doctrines like these have often been used more for harm than help. Join us as we set down our spiritual baggage and unpack it all, trusting the process to draw us closer to Christ.

Lenten Resources

Lenten materials are available in the Gathering Space for individuals and families. See inside for more details.

Lenten Prayer Walk

March 26, 3:00pm Sunday
(rain date 3:00pm April 2)

We invite you to join with others on a Lenten prayer walk. We will walk through locations around our community, downtown and on campus, stopping to pray intentionally for various people and issues in our midst. This walk is open to anyone able to walk for approximately 2 miles, and includes specific actions for children. Meet at Marcia's Park, at the gazebo outside the former police station. Guides are provided in the gathering space, and we plan to use the first half of the guide for the group walk. You may also walk on your own, and, if you have more time, you may choose to do a longer walk or a second walk or bike ride or car ride to use the 2nd half of the guide. The Walk, Bike or Ride section of the guide may also be used by folks who are unable to do the walk on foot. You are welcome to invite a friend to join you for this!

Maundy Thursday

April 6, 6:00 pm

On Thursday, April 6 at 6pm we'll have a congregational meal and worship experience to observe Maundy Thursday. We'll gather in the Fellowship Hall around tables to break bread, fellowship, and worship. Dinner will be provided, and it will be an experience that is fun and spiritually meaningful for all ages.

Easter Sunday

- ◆ One Great Hour of Sharing Offering
- ◆ 9:00: Breakfast hosted by Men of the Church
- ◆ 9:45: Easter Egg Hunt, playground, for families and children in 5th grade and younger. Bring a basket!
- ◆ 10:15: Easter music begins
- ◆ 10:30: Worship – Bring flowers for flowering of the cross
- ◆ 11:30: Easter Fellowship Gathering with cookies and lemonade. Outside the front of the church.

Newsletter Deadlines: We look forward to your items for the newsletter. Please have all items submitted to Rhonda by the **15th of each month** for the upcoming month's issue. Items may be submitted by email to Rhonda at the following: rhonda@blacksburgpres.org.

Don't forget our newsletter is available on our website: <https://www.blacksburgpres.org/newsletter>

Prayer Concerns

Trusting in God's presence, grace, healing, and care, we pray . . .

- for Sandy Schlaudecker as she recovers after having eyelid surgery for skin cancer.
- with gratefulness for the bright, early spring buds and blossoms.
- for the victims of the devastating earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria - for the families of those who have died; for those suffering from injury and destruction; and for the work of ongoing recovery and rebuilding after so much loss.
- for our congregation as many of us complete a month of seeking to build new habits regarding racial equity. May we find ways to remember and apply and make change with what we have learned.
- for victims of police violence - especially remembering Tyre Nichols and his family in Memphis - and for all of us reckoning with issues of police brutality, racial inequity, and fear and lack of trust in the whole system.
- for political upheavals and challenges in Iran and the Middle East, and people struggling with hope and courage as they seek peace and compassion.
- for Jan McGilliard, Stan and Janne Mathes, Nancy Alexander, Wilmoth O'Dell, Bill and Sally Foy, Raneé Lahn, and for those in the military: Luke Phillips, Eden Elizabeth Lawson, and Joel Hunter.
- for our partners and friends in CEDEPCA in Guatemala, and for our co-workers, Betsey and Eric Moe and their family in Guatemala.
- for the work of our mission co-worker partners in the Philippines, Cobbie Palm and Dessa Quesada Palm, including their travels to the U.S. this month.
- for our partners and friends in Malawi, working to meet health, educational and food-producing needs.
- for equitable, worldwide distribution of COVID vaccines, tests, and treatments, and for continued understanding of how to cope with the persistence of the virus.
- for those suffering from increasingly alarming effects of climate change and for all of us feeling dread about what is to come. Give us the courage and will to labor with hope as we act on opportunities to mitigate and reverse the ongoing climate crisis.
- for all those struggling to have enough to eat, to live in safety, to feel loved, and to have hope.

You can send prayer requests for Prayers of the People in Sunday worship and/or to be added to the website prayer list to Rhonda (rhonda@blacksburgpres.org).





Engaging Our Gifts in Community

During the month of March, we will be holding our annual focus on how we engage our gifts of talent and time in community.

During worship, we will hear each week from a person who engages their gifts in the BPC community, and how it gives them joy.

We invite you to complete our Engagement Questionnaire, which has been updated for 2023. It will likely take 10 minutes or less to complete.

Just because you express an interest in the questionnaire does NOT mean you are expected to say yes to everything. It is an assessment of where your interests and abilities lie.

Look for the online questionnaire on the BPC website starting March 6, or complete a paper copy, which can be mailed to you or picked up in the Gathering Space window on Sunday, March 5.

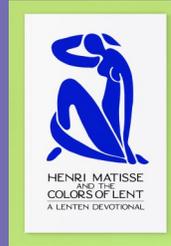
Are you hesitant to complete a questionnaire? Do you see yourself in the list below?

1. You wonder why you should do this survey because you feel you cannot take on anything more, though you are willing to keep the commitments you already have. We ask you to complete a questionnaire as a way of acknowledging your offering as a part of the community, just as you fill out a financial pledge every year, even if it doesn't change very much.
2. You fill one out every year, but it seems repetitive, so why keep doing it? Ministry leaders organize activities and programs every year, and it is so much easier to ask someone to repeat a task if you know they enjoy doing it!
3. You have been a part of BPC for years, but have never filled out a Questionnaire or Time and Talent pledge. Can you be certain that the rest of us know your interests and abilities and what volunteer work brings you joy? If not, tell us!
4. You are a new member who is trying to determine how you fit in. Ministry leaders looking for volunteers are so grateful to bring folks on board that are much more than just fresh faces. Let us know what your niches of interest are!

We encourage your participation in discovering and engaging your gifts!

Resources for Households During Lent

The Lenten season has begun. On the tables in Gathering Space and the narthex for the next few weeks, you will find some resources to help you observe the 40 days of Lent in your household. Feel free to take any that members of your household would like to use!



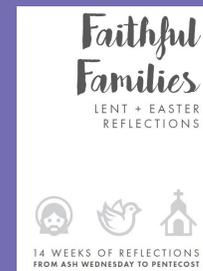
Henri Matisse and the Colors of Lent: A Lenten Devotional

Into the Wild: A Family-Friendly Devotional on Henri Matisse and the Season of Lent



Video:
Check out *Lent: Into the Wild* about the two above items from The SALT Project on Vimeo. The video is available at <https://vimeo.com/789884504>.

One Great Hour of Sharing Gratitude Calendar and OGHS Fish Boxes for Coin Collection



Faithful Families for Households with Younger Children



Lenten Walk Prayer Guide

Blacksburg Presbyterian Church
Lenten Prayer Walk
Blacksburg, Virginia
Lent and Easter 2023

Trex Plastic Film Recycling Update: Six-Month Challenge!

Our Trex plastic film collection has become an important neighborhood and community project! Since we began serving as a collection center in 2017, we have collected more than 4000 pounds of plastic film that would otherwise have been sent to the landfill, or might have blown away and contaminated a waterway. We have earned seven benches now placed in the locations below:

- ◆ in the Creation Care garden by the parking lot
- ◆ 3 in the younger children's/Head Start/PMO playground and the older children's playground
- ◆ at the office entrance of BPC
- ◆ on our property on Church Street next to the Little Free Library built by an Eagle Scout
- ◆ next to the mailboxes at the Habitat townhouses on Church Street

Our 8th bench will be ordered as soon as we have decided where we will donate it, since our property is now at capacity!

In this most recent 8th cycle, we achieved something we had not achieved before - we collected 500 pounds in less than 6 months! Crow's Nest Greenhouses has been a regular supporter of our program donating 60 - 80 pounds every few months of clean plastic film that they remove from pallets and other projects and supplies. We are so grateful for this conscientious generosity and expect it to continue, so we would now like to challenge BPC, going forward, to **reach each 500 pound mark within six months!**

So, please continue to tell your friends, and bring in your plastic film regularly. Be sure however, that you and all the people you know who participate are clear exactly what kind of plastic to bring and that it is always clean and dry (see chart, top right). Please read the directions near each box, and please don't "wish-cycle," since no sorting is done after it leaves our premises. We will keep you posted as to our progress on this challenge.

Finally, a big thank-you to the current recycling team:

Robin Andrews, Suzanne Ducker,
Dan Bowling, Sandy Power,
Elizabeth Day, and Sarah Windes



Recycle your household bags & wrap into Trex's Earth-friendly composite decking and railing!



FROM THE STORE

- ✓ Produce bags
- ✓ Store bags
- ✓ Ice bags



FROM YOUR PANTRY

- ✓ Ziploc® & other reclosable bags
- ✓ Cereal box liners
- ✓ Case overwrap
- ✓ Bread bags



FROM YOUR FRONT DOOR

- ✓ Newspaper sleeves
- ✓ Dry cleaning bags
- ✓ Bubble wrap
- ✓ Plastic e-commerce mailers



Notes on the February Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge

Thank you so much to those who joined with others in the community to build better racial equity habits! We invite you to go to BPC's Facebook page to make comments about your experience or to read the comments of others.

Special events:

- If you would like to read the four BPC racial equity history chapters that were shared in worship during February, go to the [Anti-Racism page](#) of BPC's website under "Who We Are" or contact the office for an emailed or paper copy.
- If you would like to watch the talk given by Dr. Dan Thorp at BPC about the history of slavery in Montgomery County, please contact the church office to get the link.
- Around 40 youth and adults joined to participate in a Racial Wealth Gap Learning Simulation on February 26. The youth group has also participated in other ways in the Habit Building Challenge in February.
- The Montgomery County Black History Driving Tour by Christiansburg Institute is still in development, but we will let you know when it is ready to go.

Be sure and talk with others about what you have learned, to help your new habits stick!



One prong of the Matthew 25 initiative is alleviation of poverty. People in poverty need to decide how much of their limited resources goes to the basic needs of food, health care, housing, heating. One in ten people around the world goes to bed hungry at night. One in four children under age five is severely malnourished.

Writing letters to our legislators is a way in which we can help fight hunger and poverty. The Farm Bill, which needs reauthorization this year, enables one in eight Americans to put food on the table through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and provides international food assistance. Federal nutrition programs provide roughly 10 times as much food assistance as private churches and charities combined.

You can join other Christians in winning improvements to the Farm Bill by encouraging your members of Congress to support our nation's hunger-fighting efforts through Bread for the World's Offering of Letters on **March 19 after worship**. Hunger is not a partisan issue.

Bread for the World has been a collective Christian voice to end hunger for almost 50 years:

- BFW is non-partisan
- Studies hunger and attempted solutions
- Proposes legislation that is efficacious and cost-effective



Transformation at the Heart of CEDEPCA's Ministry



"I am here by mercy of God," she said as she proudly stood. "I was told that as a woman I was worthless and should stay in the house. Finally others persuaded me to come to the classes. Now I have learned to value myself as a woman. Now I am speaking in church and working with the youth and with other women. Now I want to help others. I want my children to go to school." Ana was one of more than 20 women who gathered at the center of the Association of Mayan Presbyterian Women to express their great thanks to Carolina Gonzalez, CEDEPCA's instructor who teaches the Bible to women from several different language groups in Guatemala. Most have not been to school. None have the resources for classes.

CEDEPCA provides these life-changing classes at no charge. In these classes, women find their voice and develop a new self-confidence as they discover that even they--as women--are children of God, loved by God, and empowered by God to bring change to their families and communities. As Carolina listened to testimony after testimony, she could not hold back the tears. These were new women of hope and courage who wanted to learn more from the Bible and become leaders in their church.

With a growing demand for CEDEPCA's classes, it is finally possible for Carolina to teach full time because churches and individuals have increased their giving to CEDEPCA. Thank you Blacksburg Presbyterian Church! You are making a difference!



Adult Spiritual Formation Opportunity

9:00 am, Sundays, March - May
Westminster

We'll be studying Richard Foster's book *Streams of Living Water* with Pastor Sarah and Jonathan Anderson.

Through an exploration of many different Christian approaches, this class will be a chance to consider where you came from spiritually and what speaks to you now. If you struggle with Christian baggage, this class will offer many avenues to reconstructing a spiritual practice that resonates with where you are now.

It's not necessary to purchase the book, but if you would like a copy, they are available in the church office with a donation of \$12.00.



Presbyterian Women Spring Retreat: Finding Grace in Transition and Turbulence

Mark your calendars!
March 25, 2023

3 p.m. – 7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

Top five reasons why you want to attend this spring all-women retreat

- ◆ Interactive Bible study
- ◆ Creative activity
- ◆ Intergenerational group fellowship
- ◆ A light dinner you do not have to prepare
- ◆ You bring nothing but yourself, leaving your worries behind

Dates to Remember

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 1: Matthew Ducker
- 2: Thomas Ducker
- 4: Travis Eschenmann, David Harder, Bill Neely
- 7: Phyllis Albritton
- 6: Sarah Wiles
- 8: Anne Campbell
- 9: Airlie Harder, Kyle Knobl
- 13: Tom Booth
- 14: Ken Schor
- 15: Mary Jane Henika
- 16: Susan Hunter
- 17: Ben Harder, Griffin Warren
- 18: Madeleine Evans, Linda Pospichal
- 19: Sam Dickinson
- 20: Susan Bailey
- 21: Jordan Boffen
- 22: Lisa Smith
- 24: Garrett Knobl
- 25: Mary Fain
- 28: Cynthia Wimberley
- 30: Judy Reemsnyder



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 1: Suzanne Ducker, John Phillips
- 2: Jackson Lawrence, Luke Phillips
- 7: Angela Anderson
- 11: Søren Anderson, Stuart Hunter, Courtney Roberts
- 12: Gretchen Thorsett, Geoff Knobl
- 16: Rylan Pospichal
- 19: Joann Boles, Carolyn Drumheller
- 20: Jan McGilliard
- 22: Jama Green
- 24: Ginsey Thompson
- 25: Allison Kruckow
- 27: Todd Rakes
- 28: Kara Espinoza
- 29: Linda Waskey



The building is open during 8:30-4:30. Signing in is still required of everyone. Masks are optional. Meetings are in person and virtual. Please hold each other in prayer and continue to look out for one another. Say healthy, safe, and kind.

BPC's Calendar

MARCH 2023 — Recurring Meetings:

- Monday:** Staff meeting, 10:30 a.m., HCR
Deacons meeting, second Monday at 12:00 p.m., HCR
Knitwits, fourth Monday at 1:00 p.m., WM
- Tuesday:** Worship Planning Team, 10:30 a.m., HCR
BPC Quilters, 9:30 p.m., FH
- Wednesday:** Helping Neighbors by phone
- Sunday:** Sunday School for youth and children, 9:00. Contact Susan at susanh@blacksburgpres.org.
Adult Ed: Contact adulted@blacksburgpres.org.
Youth Group, 5:30-7:30 pm, FH
Session meeting — March 19, 7:00 pm, HCR

Presbyterian Women Circles — upcoming meetings:

- Lydia Circle: 03/06, 1:30-3:00 pm, FH
- Hildegard Circle: 03/13, 7:00 pm, Paula Stith's home
- Faith Circle: 03/23, 7:30-9:00 pm, TBA
- PW Retreat: *Finding Grace in Transition & Turbulence*, 03/25, 3:00-7:00 pm, FH. Led by Pastor Sarah Wiles and Church Life Coordinator Sarah Windes. Light dinner provided.



Youth Calendar for January:

- 03/05, 5:30-7:30 pm: Youth Group Challenge — Cooking on a Budget, FH
- 03/12, 5:30-7:30 pm: Dinner and discussion, FH
- 03/19: 5:30-7:00 pm: Youth Sunday Bible Study, FH
- 03/26: 5:30-7:00 pm: Youth Sunday prep



Please remember to contact the church office in advance to schedule room use and avoid conflicts.

Meeting Room Key: HCR—Hatcher Conference Room, FH—Fellowship Hall, WM—Westminster Hall, SNC—Sanctuary, GS—Gathering Space

Easter Lily Order or One Great Hour of Sharing Donation Form

If you wish to place a lily in the sanctuary for Easter or to make a donation to One Great Hour of Sharing in honor/memory of someone, please fill in the form below and place it in the offering box or return it to the church office. You can also pay online at our website (click Give and choose either OGHS or Easter lily from the dropdown menu) www.blacksburgpres.org/give. *The price of a lily is \$25.00 each.* If you pay via the website, please email Rhonda at rhonda@blacksburgpres.org to let her know how you would like the information printed in the bulletin.

The lilies will be displayed in the sanctuary for Easter Sunday, and you can take them home after the service.

Each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing supports efforts to relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promotes development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and assists in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

Deadline for placing orders is Sunday, March 12.

Given by: _____ Email: _____



I want to sponsor a lily.

_____ Number of lilies ordered

Amount paid: _____ **Circle one:** Check, Cash or Online



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

I want to donate to One Great Hour of Sharing.

Amount donated: _____ **Circle one:** Check, Cash or Online

All lily purchases and/or OGHS donations in memory or honor of someone will be printed as an insert in the bulletin for Easter Sunday, April 9, 2023 (please indicate below):

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

BLACKSBURG PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
701 CHURCH ST SE
BLACKSBURG, VA 24060-5213

*change service requested

BPC offers both in-person and livestream worship services with both beginning at 10:30. You can access the livestream via BPC's [YouTube channel](#).

Bookmark the page for easy access. The video will be available after Sunday worship if you missed the live service.

Subscribe to BPC emails today!

To join the email list, click [here](#) or contact Rhonda at rhonda@blacksburgpres.org.

Check out our website, www.blacksburgpres.org, for more information about BPC and church activities.

BLACKSBURG PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
*A Vibrant Congregation of
Welcome, Worship, and Outreach*

701 CHURCH ST SE, Blacksburg, VA 24060-5213
540-552-2504 FAX 540-961-5691
Email: bpc@blacksburgpres.org
Website: www.blacksburgpres.org

Rev. Sarah Wiles, Pastor: pastorsarah@blacksburgpres.org

Dr. Larry Wyatt, Director of Music: larry@blacksburgpres.org

Amanda Raymond, Pianist/Organist:
amanda@blacksburgpres.org

Sarah Windes, Coordinator of Church Life:
sarah@blacksburgpres.org

Susan Hunter, Director of Children and Youth Ministries:
susanh@blacksburgpres.org

Rhonda Waller, Office Manager: rhonda@blacksburgpres.org

Rev. Emily Rhodes Hunter, Parish Associate:
emily@blacksburgpres.org

Rev. Kathy Carpenter, UKirk, Presbyterian Campus Ministry:
campusminister@pcusa-vt.org