



Blacksburg Presbyterian Church

Loving God with Heart, Soul, and Mind

JUNE 2023 NEWSLETTER

A Welcome and a Thank You

Welcoming Alice Brooks Sanders, our new Director of Music and Organist

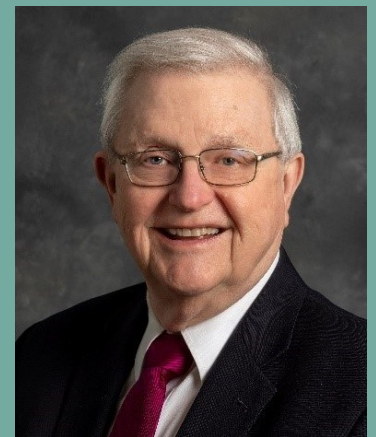


Beginning June 12, Alice Brooks Sanders will be joining us as our new Director of Music and Organist. We are excited to welcome her to the BPC team. Alice was drawn to BPC because of our strong music program, as well as our theological

commitments to justice, generosity, and inclusion. She has a long history of leading church music in PC(USA) congregations in Oklahoma and Tennessee. Alice has a Bachelor of Music in piano with a minor in organ from Baylor University, as well as a Master of Music in piano from the University of Oklahoma. In addition to her church work, Alice has performed in numerous collaborative recitals, maintained a private piano studio, taught pre-school music classes, taught applied and classical piano at the college level, and worked as a staff accompanist at several universities. When not involved in musical pursuits, Alice is probably in the garden. She enjoys growing vegetables and has a particular interest in native plants and butterflies. She and her husband Glenn have four children and six grandchildren, with a seventh on the way.

Thank you to Larry and Amanda!

We are so grateful for Amanda Raymond's time as Organist/ Pianist, and Larry Wyatt's tenure with us as Director of Music. June 11 will be Amanda's final Sunday in worship. Larry will continue through the end of July. The two of them began



during the middle of the pandemic and did an excellent job adapting to those difficult days and then rebuilding a

strong in-person music program as we began to worship together.

Amanda will be moving at the end of July to Ann Arbor, MI to pursue doctoral studies.

We will miss her!

Thankfully, Larry will continue to be a part of our congregation.



We will have a celebration of their work on July 23, following worship. I hope you can join us in thanking them for their ministry among us over the last two and a half years.

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 Steve Drumheller, and his wife Suzanne Sanford and family, as he is hospitalized in Richmond with health challenges.
- for Susan Wyatt as she grieves the death of her sister, Betsy Mays.
- for Jon Hutchins, Marilyn's son, as he recuperates from injuries sustained in a fall while hiking in early May. He will be recuperating for 6 to 12 weeks.
- for our partners and friends in CEDEPCA in Guatemala, and for our co-workers, Betsey and Eric Moe and their family in Guatemala. We are grateful that they will be visiting BPC in the month of June.
- for Dr. Arie Glas and our partners in Mulanje, Malawi, working to meet ongoing health, educational and food-producing needs, while recovering from the extreme devastation wrought by recent Cyclone Freddy.
- for those friends and members of BPC, and in our community who are struggling with physical and mental health challenges. May they and their loved ones feel comforted and supported.
- for the people of Sudan, particularly the women and children who often bear the biggest burden during times of violence, and for church leaders, that they may be a voice of the people to the leaders of the country and Sudan's military and political leaders, that they will hear the cries of their people, stop the fighting, and restore genuine peace and security to all of Sudan.
- as we struggle with gun violence again and again, and know that our prayers alone are not enough, though we cannot seem to find a helpful way forward. We pray for justice, peace, and societal wisdom.
- 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 our community and globally to support each other as we oppose racism, antisemitism, bigotry, and oppression.
- for victims of police violence and for all of us reckoning with issues of police brutality, racial inequity, and a system which engenders fear and lack of trust in many people.
- 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 Stan and Janne Mathes, Renee Lahn, Jan McGilliard, Nancy Alexander, Wilmoth O'Dell, Bill Foy, and for those in the military: Luke Phillips, Eden Elizabeth Lawson, and Joel Hunter.
- for our mission partners, Dessa Quesada-Palm and Cobbie Palm, in the Philippines.
- for equitable, worldwide distribution of COVID vaccines, tests, and treatments, and for continued understanding of and ability to appreciate how to cope with the continued persistence of the virus. We pray that what we have learned will have a positive effect on our church and society.
- 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 to Rhonda (rhonda@blacksburgpres.org) to be shared in three ways listed below:

- ◆ Prayers of the People in Sunday worship
- ◆ In the MidWeek Update
- ◆ Our prayer ministry page: <https://www.blacksburgpres.org/prayer>



Looking Ahead . . .

Celebrating Pride Month

BPC strives to be a community that is fully welcoming and affirming of all of God's children. We celebrate that God's creation includes a vibrant diversity of genders and sexualities. June is Pride Month and that provides an excellent impetus to learn more about a progressive Christian theology of welcome.

The recent classes on Gender and the Bible were very well-attended. If you're interested in the slides that Pastor Sarah used, you can email her directly: pastorsarah@blacksburgpres.org. In addition, a small group is forming to read the book [Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians](#), by Austen Hartke. The group will probably begin in the fall. If you'd like to hear more about that possibility, fill out the short form [here](#) or contact Pastor Sarah.

If you'd like to learn more about progressive Christian perspectives on gender and sexuality, these resources are a great place to start:

- ♦ [Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality, Revised and Expanded Edition: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church](#), by Jack Rogers (several copies of this book are available free from the church office and a copy may be checked out from the church library)
- ♦ [Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians](#), by Austen Hartke
- ♦ [Beyond a Binary God: A Theology for Trans* Allies](#), by Tara K. Soughers
- ♦ [queertheology](#)
- ♦ [queergrace.com](#)



Most of all remember that YOU are a child of God, fearfully and wonderfully made.

Dinner with the Moes Sunday, June 18, 5:30



Join our mission coworkers from Guatemala, Betsey and Eric Moe, to hear how their first few years in Guatemala have gone and their plans for the future!

We will have a dinner of various types of pupusas, salads, and tres leches cake. It is thought that pupusas are from El Salvador but are a popular dish now throughout Central America and now in the U.S. (To learn more, go to <https://elmeson-santafe.com/the-origins-of-the-pupusa-a-traditional-salvadoran-dish/>)

There will be musical entertainment by Eric Moe who is a jazz trumpeter.

To find out more about Betsey and Eric Moe go to <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/betsey-and-eric-moe/>.



HERO HOTLINE!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2023

June 11 - 14, 5:30-8pm

Sunday, June 4
is the last day to register for
Vacation Bible School.

Kids age 3 through rising 6th graders are invited to participate in dinner and opening assembly, then rotating to Bible storytelling, games, and craft centers. Help is still needed with meals and decorating.

Contact Susan Hunter at
susanh@blacksburgpres.org
for information.



Congratulations Natalie!



Congratulations to Natalie Green, a BPC youth and sophomore at Blacksburg High School, whose t-shirt design was chosen for this year's Steppin' Out. From the organizers of the festival, "The festival committee . . . chose a creative, yet timeless interpretation of Blacksburg's favorite summer festival. We are excited to reveal the

2023 design and to introduce you to the artist, Natalie Green."



Steppin' Out is a yearly event which will be held Friday and Saturday, August 4-5 in downtown Blacksburg. The t-shirt will be available for purchase in early-June from Fringe Benefit, New River Art & Fiber, Atlantic Union Bank North Main Location, and Blacksburg Hardware, and at the festival information booth in August. (Portions of this article and photos courtesy of [News Messenger](#))

Congratulations High School Seniors!

Elise Bailey
 Kyle Knobl
 Rylan Pospichal
 McKenna Slocum
 Ginsey Thompson
 Sam Woolsey

Wyatt Eschenmann
 Jackson Lawrence
 Lily Rascher
 Brandon Spencer
 Griffin Warren

BPC's Youth Group continued the tradition of making fleece prayer blankets to wrap our high school seniors with the love and warmth of God and the congregation as they move on to the next phase of their lives.



(top photo of graduates in prayer blankets, photo at right of youth who tied the blankets for the seniors)

UKirk News from Rev. Kathy Carpenter

One of my favorite quotes from Winnie-the-Pooh is "How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard!" That is how I feel as I leave the position of Campus Minister at UKirk. I love these students so much and I am so blessed to have been their pastor these past 5 and a half years. They have challenged me and helped me grow and they have loved me often more than I deserved.



I look forward to serving in a new position as Outreach Minister with campus ministry. I will be doing all kinds of development as well as building up our alumni network. So, I will be in touch. You can reach me here:

outreachminister@pcusa-vt.org.

I give thanks to God and to all of you for the privilege of serving as campus minister. And, I am grateful to Terry McClellan because I could not have done this without her. I know that UKirk is in good hands with Rev. Emily Rhodes Hunter. She will lead this ministry with much energy, imagination and love.

With gratitude,
 Kathy

Celebrating the Woodchucks

Members of Blacksburg Presbyterian Church Firewood Ministry (the Woodchucks) and their friends gathered for fellowship on May 18 at the home of Steve Drumheller and Suzanne Sanford. Mike Harvey, coordinator, reported on the deliveries the group has made during the past heating season, and thanked the Woodchucks for their hard work. He also thanked their significant others for their support of the ministry.



The Woodchucks currently delivers about 200 loads of wood each winter mostly to families in need. The group is comprised of BPC members and other community volunteers who spend the warm months procuring firewood and the cold months delivering it.

Session Signs Statement Against Christian Nationalism

The BPC session, our governing body, has signed a statement against Christian Nationalism written by the local organization Justice Advocates. It is scheduled to be published in the *Roanoke Tribune* on June 15 and the *Roanoke Times* on June 18. You can read the statement here:

justiceadvocates.net/our-christian-nationalism-ad-project.

It says, in part, that the cost of silence compels us to speak. The BPC session agrees wholeheartedly. Christian Nationalism is a destructive distortion of the gospel that presents grave threats to both the church and our country. You can read an excellent brief description and ecumenical statement against Christian Nationalism that the PC(USA) Office of Public Witness has endorsed here:

christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org/.

In deciding to sign this statement, the session took time to study Christian Nationalism, as well as the PC(USA) confessions that speak to the relationship of church and state. Specifically, we looked at the Barmen Declaration which was written by German pastors and theologians in response to the rise of Nazism, the Confession of Belhar which was written in the context of apartheid, and the Confession of 1967. The Confession of 1967 speaks particularly directly to the issues at hand in its section on Reconciliation in Society:

9.44 a. God has created the peoples of the earth to be one universal family. In his reconciling love, God overcomes the barriers between sisters and brothers and breaks down every form of discrimination based on racial or ethnic difference, real or imaginary. The church is called to bring all people to receive and uphold one another as persons in all relationships of life: in employment, housing, education, leisure, marriage, family, church, and the exercise of political rights. Therefore, the church labors for the abolition of all racial discrimination and ministers to those injured by it. Congregations, individuals, or groups of Christians who exclude, dominate, or patronize others, however subtly, resist the Spirit of God and bring contempt on the faith which they profess.

9.45 b. God's reconciliation in Jesus Christ is the ground of the peace, justice, and freedom among nations which all powers of government are called to serve and defend. The church, in its own life, is called to practice the forgiveness of enemies and to commend to the nations as practical politics the search for cooperation and peace. This search requires that the nations pursue fresh and responsible relations across every line of conflict, even at risk to national security, to reduce areas of strife and to broaden international understanding. Reconciliation among nations becomes peculiarly urgent as countries develop nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, diverting human power and resources from constructive uses and risking the annihilation of humankind. **Although nations may serve God's purposes in history, the church which identifies the sovereignty of any one nation or any one way of life with the cause of God denies the Lordship of Christ and betrays its calling.** (emphasis added)

You can read the entire Confession of 1967 here: pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/theologyandworship/pdfs/confess67.pdf, and access the full Book of Confessions here: <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/book-confessions/>.

The BPC session is proud to stand in solidarity with our Christian siblings both past and present who are testifying to the power of love that is made manifest in Jesus. If you'd like to learn more or have questions, contact Pastor Sarah: pastorsarah@blacksburgpres.org.



News from CEDEPCA

Return to Guatemala, April 2023! by Beth Mattson

For the first time in three years members of our Presbytery and the Presbytery of the James recently traveled to visit CEDEPCA (Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America) in Guatemala, in order to hear about and see some of the great work they are doing.

At the CEDEPCA offices we learned about the current state of their growing number of programs.

We visited the Women Weavers (right) and learned about their struggles during the conflicts and the pandemic. They had a difficult time, but things are better now and many of the children have gone on to college and careers.



In Santiago Atitlan, we met Amanda Flayer at La Puerta Abierta School. They received a grant from the 2021 Presbyterian Women's Thank offering to teach teachers all over Guatemala to teach reading to young children.

We visited a chocolate maker (left, with Betsey Moe) and a bakery that receives microloans to help sustain their business.

In Guatemala City we visited the "Jesus is the Way" church. The children from the after-school program, supported by CEDEPCA, greeted us with signs and welcomes!



They have just started a baking class that teaches the young adults skills they can use (right).

We also heard from the women of the Mayan Presbyterian Society. They fed us a lovely homemade chicken soup.



"Let justice flow like water, and righteousness like an inexhaustible spring."

There were so many wonderful experiences that I can't fit them all in the newsletter.

I want to share one more fun thing that we saw. In the Antigua hotel, one of the rooms was over an archeological site. To preserve the site, they installed a glass floor, complete with lighting (right). You never know what surprises will happen when you go explore the world.



Report from Mulanje, Malawi

from "Storm Freddy - Havoc in Malawi"
by Dr. Arie Glass

The Tropical Cyclone Freddy weather system brought torrential rains in March, with the equivalent of six months of rain falling in just six days, causing devastating floods and mudslides in Southern Malawi. In one area of Mulanje, 600mm (23 1/2") was recorded in just 24 hours. The record-breaking weather system hit Malawi at the end of the rainy season when rivers and water bodies were already at high levels. More than 700 people were killed and over 500,000 people displaced in hundreds of camps, according to Malawi's Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA). Public infrastructure has been damaged across the affected districts, and some 240,000 hectares of land has been flooded, including 75,000 hectares of cropland.



Malawi is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world in terms of risks due to changing weather patterns.

Mulanje District has been affected heavily by Freddy and its aftermath. Mulanje Mission Hospital did an assessment of the damage in its catchment area, through its Primary Health Care department. 959 houses and 2085 toilets collapsed. 75% of maize crops in model villages were damaged, being washed or blown away. Of the trees which have recently been planted in our reforestation programme, 9000 were lost. Internally displaced people (IDP) gathered in camps, [7 of which were affiliated with] Mulanje Mission Hospital. Schools have reopened as of 17th April.

The hospital planned a response in two phases:

Phase 1, emergency aid and relief:

This included provision of food and medical care in the camps: blankets, mosquito nets, emergency repairs to water sources, and chlorine to prevent water-borne disease.

Phase 2, from 15th May:

- Assisting with basic building materials such as plastic sheets
- Assisting households with cement, roof sheets and labour as needed
- Construction of 1000+ pit latrines to prevent spread of cholera, typhoid and other disease
- Provision of materials for reparation of boreholes to water-point committees
- Provision of school materials to 8,000 affected children
- Provision of inputs for farming and livestock to 1600 farmers, with a focus on most needy and households with orphans/disabled persons
- Reestablishment of beehives
- Training of 500 farmers in climate smart agriculture
- Replanting of >20,000 trees through community work.



Phase 2 is now in full swing.

A ray of light has been the steadfast support offered by many; through individual donations, church donations [inc. BPC] and various grants. We thank all who support us doing this.

Dates to Remember

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

2: Riley Pienkowski
3: Mary Lee Hendricks
6: Robin Bosch
7: Scott King
8: Megan Eschenmann
10: Reed Lawrence
11: Robert Laing, Elva Miller
12: Brent Opell
13: Tyler Warren
14: John Hassler
15: Hans Stahl
16: Dave Smith
17: Leanna House, Russell Gregory
18: Sue Johnson
20: Susan Wyatt, Hattie McClure
21: Blake Rascher, Courtney Bosworth
24: Steve Andrews, Ann Mauldon
25: Mary Denson Moore
28: Brian Smith
29: Ethan Eschenmann, Cole Harder
30: Amy Mauldon



JULY BIRTHDAYS

2: Wyatt Eschenmann
3: Andrew Warren
10: Lois Doherty, Laina Stewart
11: McKenna Slocum
12: Nora Green, Roy Jones, Sharon Watkins
14: Diane Wilson
15: Dave Snyder
19: Steve Jones
22: Darrell Bosch
23: Charles Goodsell
24: James Harder
26: Jonathan Anderson
27: Tom Howard, Circe Roberts
28: Connor McFall, Kyle White
29: Natalie Green
31: Susan Miller, Lynn Thye

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**

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

JUNE 2023 — Recurring Meetings:

Monday: Staff meeting, 10:30 a.m., HCR
Deacons meeting, second Monday at 12:00 p.m., HCR. Next meeting on June 12.
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 will resume September 10.
Contact Susan at susanh@blacksburgpres.org.
Adult Ed: Contact adulted@blacksburgpres.org.
Youth Group, 5:30-7:30 pm, FH
Session meeting, third Sunday each month, 7:00 pm. *No meeting for June. Will meet on July 16.*



Please contact your Presbyterian Women Circle leader for information about any summer meetings that may occur.

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

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*

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