

Blacksburg Presbyterian Church

Loving God with Heart, Soul, and Mind

JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

Adult Spiritual Formation, Winter 2024

What nourishes you?
And how do we nourish others?

What gives you life?
And how can we share that life
with the world?

In the gospel of John, Jesus feeds folks, body and soul, creating community wherever he goes. Beginning on January 7, worship and the 9am adult Sunday school class will focus on this gospel that shows us a Jesus who pours out abundant love for everyone.

In the 9am class we will use Encounters with Jesus: Studies in the Gospel of John, by Frances Taylor Gench as our guide to reflecting on the scripture passage we will hear later that morning in worship. There will be copies available at church for \$15 beginning Jan. 8. As always, if cost is a barrier, please take one as a gift. You do not need to read the book to participate in the class. You're welcome just as you are.

If you're hungry--for meaning, connection, and transformation--join us in conversation and worship this winter and spring.



Blacksburg Presbyterian
7pm Sunday evening
discussion group

Jesus and the Gospels

An Understanding of Jesus
for a Complex World

with lectures by Luke Timothy Johnson
from The Great Courses



Coming Soon!

The 7pm Sunday night discussion group will begin a class on Jesus and the Gospels: An Understanding of Jesus for a Complex World. Each class will feature a Great Courses lecture by Luke Timothy Johnson which will be followed by discussion facilitated by Russell Gregory and Jack Call.

Contact Jack (jcall@radford.edu) or Russell (russellgregor@gmail.com) for details and watch for dates coming soon.

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>

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

- for the people of Guatemala, especially with the presidential inauguration coming up this Sunday, Jan. 14.
- for Linda Waskey as she recovers from knee replacement surgery.
- for family and friends of Sue and Ben Johnson who died in November and December, respectively. A memorial service for them will be held at 1:00 pm on Saturday, January 13, at BPC, with reception to follow.
- for people who are lonely and weary, may they find peace and comfort in God's presence.
- for Sandy Parson as she receives treatment for multiple infections and recovers from a recent knee replacement.
- for peace in Palestine and Israel: Give us hearts open in compassion for all of those suffering in the present violence, for all who have lost loved ones, all who have fled the fighting, all who lie down in fear at night. We hear voices vowing even more violence, and we too want to kick at the darkness, fight the horror it brings, embrace revenge. Yet we know that, in the words of Martin Luther King, "Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction". Forgive us when we respond with violence, and strengthen us to be grace-filled and wise in our work for justice and peace. (*excerpts from a prayer from the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship*)
- as we cry out for the earth and all things suffering from disasters made even more devastating and frequent from climate change. We pray for safety for those most affected, for relief, for hope, for guidance, and for unity of purpose in mitigation and reversal of the alarming trend of climate warming. We are grateful that we live in a time when we have the resources to affect it. Give us, as citizens of earth, the wisdom to know what to do, and the will, hope, and energy to do it.
- for people throughout the world who live in one of the more than 30 countries experiencing war right now. We pray especially for women and children who bear the biggest burdens, for military and political leaders who need to hear the voices of peace, and for church leaders as they speak out against violence and for security and an end to fighting. We are overwhelmed and exhausted by the brokenness of your world. We pray that your longed-for reign of peace will become a present reality for all people.
- for our country, we pray that we find a way out of political turmoil in a way that honors everyone's right to have a voice and to be treated with compassion and justice.
- 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 our partners and friends in CEDEPCA in Guatemala, and for our co-workers, Betsey and Eric Moe and family.
- for Dr. Arie Glas and our partners in Mulanje, Malawi, working to meet ongoing health, educational and food-producing needs.
- for our mission partners, Dessa Quesada-Palm and Cobbie Palm, in the Philippines, and their work with water access, theater ministry, pastoral seminars and peace advocacy.
- 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 our local community and global community to support each other as we oppose racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, bigotry, and oppression.
- for all those struggling to have enough to eat, to live in safety, to feel loved, and to have hope.
- for Mary Jane and Bill Henika, Stan and Janne Mathes, Renee Lahn, Nancy Alexander, Wilmoth O'Dell, Bill Foy, and for those in the military: Luke Phillips, Eden Elizabeth Lawson, and Joel Hunter.

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>

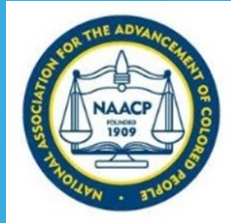


Upcoming Opportunities to Learn about and/or Address: Racial, Environmental, Economic, and International Justice

**"Inspired by the Dream: It Starts with Me,
Building a Beloved Community"**

**NAACP Celebration in Honor of
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Sunday, January 14, 3:00-4:00pm**

Please join the Montgomery County/Radford City/
Floyd County Branch of the NAACP for this com-
munity event to commemorate the life and work
of Dr. King, held at the **Church on Main, Blacks-
burg, VA, on Sun., Jan. 14,
2024, at 3pm.** Our guest
speaker will be Ms. Tameka
Paige, community relations
specialist of the Roanoke City
Sheriff's Office. Refreshments
to follow the program.



Ms. Paige has engaged with various communities
in various positions and she will share the impact
of Dr. King's teachings on her life. The program
will include musical performances, tributes to Dr.
King, and the announcement of the 2024 recipi-
ents of the MRF Branch Community Service
Awards in honor of Dr. King. NAACP Silver Life
Member Awards will also be presented.

Monday, January 15, 2024

“
*Our lives begin to end the day
we become silent about things
that matter.*
- Martin Luther King, Jr.
”

MLK Day 32nd Annual Advocacy Day to Prevent Gun Violence

Join us on the bus from Roanoke to the VA legislature in
Richmond to advocate for policies proven to reduce gun violence
and a vigil to honor victims of gun violence.

- Child Access Prevention Laws
- Funding for Gun Violence Prevention and Gun Industry Accountability
- Permit to Purchase Handgun Laws
- Assault Weapons Ban

Depart Roanoke 9:30am sharp. Return by 9pm.*

2pm Vigil for Virginia victims of gun violence

3pm-5pm Meet with Legislators in New General Assembly Building

*Additional details regarding meals, place of departure/return will be provided upon submission of seat request.

REQUEST YOUR SEAT HERE:
bit.ly/bus2richmond



Children over 10 accompanied by a parent or a designated adult are welcome. This
is an important learning opportunity about the VA state legislature. Guns are the
number one cause of death for American children.

Contact info@groceriesNOguns.org for more information.

Blue Ridge Coalition Against Gun Violence

Groceries Not Guns

Locked Guns Save Kids

Generously sponsored by: The Virginia Center For Public Safety



**virginia
interfaith
center**
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

2024 Advocacy Day

DAY FOR ALL PEOPLE

Wednesday, January 17, 2024

Location: St. Paul's Episcopal Church
815 E Grace St, Richmond, VA 23219

Join people of faith and goodwill from across Virginia to
make your voice heard and meet with your legislators

Event starts at 7:30 a.m. and ends by 3:00 p.m.

Plenary sessions will be available virtually

Event schedule available on the registration site

Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy has
arranged for free bus transportation from Roa-
noke to attend the event. The bus will depart
from Roanoke College (tentative location) at 5:00
a.m. and return at about 5:00 p.m. Details and a
link to sign up for a seat on the bus will be sent
after your completed registration (link below) has
been received. This bus will also stop in Char-
lottesville.

Contact Scott or Melanie Smith
for more information at melscofam@gmail.com.

To discover more about VICPP, [click here](#).

Upcoming Opportunities to Learn about and/or Address:

Racial, Environmental, Economic, and International Justice

Continued from previous page

Dialogue on Race 2024 Winter Summit

Our Theme: Taking Stock and Moving On

The 2024 Winter Summit will be held again at the Christiansburg Middle School in the cafeteria on **January 27, from 10:00-2:00pm**. Small group dialogue sessions at the tables will deepen understanding and insight about combating racial injustice. Come early for a 9:00 am Coffee With Cops in the cafeteria. It's a great opportunity to meet and learn from law enforcement officers from the towns, county, and Virginia Tech. Light lunch will be served at noon, compliments of The Community Group of Montgomery County and the New Mountain Climbers Giving Circle.

Program

- ◆ 8:00am Registration
- ◆ 9:00am Coffee w/Cops
- ◆ 10:00am Winter Summit Program begins
- ◆ 12:00pm A light lunch compliments of The Community Group of Montgomery County and The New Mountain Climbers Giving Circle

The Dialogue on Race Winter Summit is a great occasion for community members to convene, renew acquaintances, build new relationships, and share in doing the work of building a stronger, self-help community that works for us all! Invite friends and neighbors. All are welcome.

[Register now!](#)



FIRST FRIDAYS PEACE VIGIL

**Friday, February 2-5:00-6:00pm
& following First Fridays
(monthly on the first Friday)**

Our human dignity requires freedom from violence and deprivation. Join us for the monthly First Friday Vigil outside the downtown post office (Main St., Blacksburg) at 5pm, to stand with faith community members and individuals seeking peace worldwide, and remembering those involved in wars right now. Bring your own sign or just join with others. Contact Melanie Smith for more information at melscofam@gmail.com.

UNVEILING THE PAST, SHAPING THE FUTURE:

THE CRUCIAL SIGNIFICANCE
OF PRESERVING AND
SHARING BLACK HISTORY

**Thursday, February 15th
@The Lyric Theater, Blacksburg, VA |
7PM-9PM ET | Doors Open at 6:30PM**

HOSTED BY CHRISTIANSBURG INSTITUTE AND THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY
COMMUNITY REVIEW COUNCIL (MCCRC) | FEATURED SPEAKER | JORDAN BELL

At this in-person gathering, we will explore the rich and diverse heritage of Black history, delving into the stories, struggles, and triumphs that have shaped our society. Through an engaging presentation by featured speaker Jordan Bell, followed by a facilitated panel discussion, we aim to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of Black history. Jordan Bell is an esteemed community historian, professional educator, and dedicated cultural organizer. **Admission info:** Early Bird: \$3 (01/01-01/31/24) ; General Admission: \$5 (02/01-02/15/24); Student Admission: Free: *must have student ID. **[Get tickets here.](#)**

Save the Date!

BPC is participating with To Our House this year, beginning this Saturday, January 13 to January 27.

To Our House (TOH) provides winter shelter for unhoused adults in the NRV and connects them with resources that lead to employment, housing, and long-term economic sustainability. Many of the guests who have found shelter through TOH have previously lived in the woods, caves, storm culverts, a friend's pickup truck, or a card-board box. BPC is grateful for the ability to host TOH in our building for a week or two each year. Contact Joan Dickinson at jidickins@radford.edu for more information.



To Our House

**Winter Overnight Shelter
for homeless adults in the NRV**

Dates and Ways to Volunteer

Saturday - Friday, January 13-19: BPC will be hosting clients overnight in Fellowship Hall while other churches are providing food, doing laundry, etc.

Saturday - Friday, January 20-27: BPC will host clients overnight in Fellowship Hall and provide food and other assistance this week. To volunteer, please see the TOH volunteer sign-up boards in the Gathering Space or you can sign up here: blacksburgpres.org/local. Volunteer opportunities include bringing food, doing laundry, staying overnight, and setting up. For more information, visit newrivercommunityaction.org/to-our-house/.

This is the 14th housing season of TOH, and is a service sponsored by **United Way and New River Community Action** with assistance from local churches and many volunteers.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

All Women are Invited

to celebrate another year of service
with Presbyterian Women at their
Annual Meeting, on January 28, 2024, at 3 p.m.

Pastor Sarah Wiles will lead the Bible study entitled "A Person with a Physical Disability Encounters Jesus."

A remembrance of those women who passed away in 2023 will be observed.

A short business meeting will include the election and installation of new leaders and budget information.

Please join us!

SHOWING UP

A Letter from Betsey and Eric Moe, serving in Guatemala, Winter 2023

Dear friends,

We hope this letter finds you well, as fall turns into winter in the north! Here in Guatemala, the rainy season should be coming to an end by the close of November, which, for us, means that there will be fewer times we have to run up to the roof to frantically gather our drying clothes. The changes in seasons, whether I like them or not, are a good reminder for me of the inevitable cycles of life and that God is in the midst of it all bringing hope through change.

In our last letter, we mentioned the presidential elections that happened in Guatemala in August. Since that writing, the attorney general ordered the seizing of ballot records, interrupting the process for a peaceful transfer of power to President-Elect Bernardo Arévalo. This action set off a mass movement of peaceful protests throughout the country. Human roadblocks gathered at city entrances and highway intersections, and there was a large standing protest in front of the Office of Public Ministry in Guatemala City. This “national strike” lasted for almost three weeks.

At that time our CEDEPCA team wrote: “Because we are an organization that actively works for transformation in our society, and because we believe that God calls us to not remain silent in the face of oppression, we at CEDEPCA applaud, support, and join the efforts of the those who stand together to uphold our democracy and the vote of the people.” *(Photo: CEDEPCA staff with protest signs. From left to right: “We put laws at the service of corruption.” “We demand respect for the will of the people.” On behalf of all those who died from COVID-19 and on behalf of the children without education: Resign!” “We pray but we also denounce.” “My generation is not going to inherit this type of ‘democracy.’”)*



As a result of the dynamic political situation, the Intercultural Encounters program at CEDEPCA had to postpone three visiting groups in October (all, thankfully, have rescheduled for the near future). We also added an event for our North American friends: the virtual “Update on Guatemala” in which several CEDEPCA staff people shared their first-hand perspectives on the protests and how their churches were engaging in the struggle.

I know many of you came to the “Update on Guatemala” event, and I want you to know that it meant the world to CEDEPCA staff that so many attended, saying through their presence, “I may not be able to change your situation, but I’m here for you.”

As we look ahead to the inauguration on January 14, the future still seems uncertain, yet hope is present. People here are looking forward to a new administration that fights corruption and pays attention to the needs of the most vulnerable. Keep praying for peace and justice in Guatemala!

In fact, physical presence was what the protests themselves were all about. Guatemalan people showed up on the highways and streets to make their voices heard together. They showed up in front of the halls of government. Indigenous groups from far-away rural communities bussed and then marched together into Guatemala City, donning banners and flags and flutes and drums. And this is what we keep seeing and learning in Guatemala: people here show up for each other as a sign of genuine love and commitment to their community. They show up because it’s the most valuable gift they can give....Our showing up for each other is how we continue to show God’s love for this world so badly in need of healing.

Thank you for showing up for us by remembering us in prayer, by giving financially, coming to CEDEPCA’s virtual events, seeking out current news about Guatemala, and even, sometimes, coming here with a group! We are truly grateful for all of the ways you show the incarnational, showing-up aspect of God’s love to us and the people of Guatemala. May you also feel accompanied and loved during this holiday season, wherever you find yourselves.

With much love,

Betsey for the Moe Family



Dates to Remember

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

2: Sarah Windes
3: Skip Jubb
4: Sara Hunter
5: Eliza Ruth Hunter
8: Zoë Wiles, Isaac Wiles
10: Mark Hutchins
11: Clara Corl
12: Ellen Oliver
13: Nataleigh Pienkowski
17: Linda Harvey
18: Rachel Parson
19: Pamela Turner
22: Alice Ledford
23: Bill Henika
24: Barbara McKenzie
25: Chris Lawrence, Winnie Myers, Emma Rakes,
Mary Ann Bowling
26: Judith Jones, Brandy Salmon
27: Joseph Childers, Jenny Marin
28: Heather Lawrence
29: Lewis Barnett
30: Lilia Bundren, Julie Burger



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2: Ariana Wyatt
5: Luke Rakes
6: Daniel Stahl
7: Sophia Thompson, Linda King
8: Holly McFall
9: Brynn Stewart
12: Barbara Michelsen
13: Nettie Stewart, Paula Stith, Henry Wyatt
18: Ben Corl
20: Steve Grieco, Ryan Stewart
21: Jen Stewart, Claire White
23: Charles Wyatt
25: Leif Anderson, Marcia Andrews

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**

The building is open during 8:30-4:30. Please hold each other in prayer and continue to look out for one another. Say healthy, safe, and kind.

BPC's Calendar

JANUARY 2024 — Recurring Meetings:

Monday: Staff meeting, 10:30 a.m., HCR
Deacons meeting, second Monday at 12:00 p.m., HCR. Next meeting: February 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, 9:00 am, various rooms
Contact Susan Hunter, Dir. of Children & Youth Ministries at susanh@blacksburgpres.org.
Adult Ed: Contact adulsted@blacksburgpres.org.
Youth Group, Sundays, FH (see below)
Session meeting, third Sunday each month, 7:00 pm. Next meeting: January 21.



Thur., 01/25 pm: Faith Circle meeting, Peg Warren's home
Mon., 02/04, 1:30-3:00 pm: Lydia Circle meeting, FH
Mon., 02/12, 6:00-7:00 pm: Hildegard Circle meeting, Zoom

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

Youth Calendar:

Sun., 01/14, 5:00-7:30 pm: Dinner & bowling, El Rodeo (1540 S. Main St., Bburg)
Sun., 01/21, 11:30-1:30 pm: Eat lunch and make dinner for TOH clients
Sun., 01/28, 5:30-7:30 pm: Dinner & discussion, FH

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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