



# The Blawenburg Beacon

**October, 2014**

**A newsletter for the members and friends  
of *The Blawenburg Reformed Church***

**Welcome, Reverend Winckler!**

“So...I hear there’s a new pastor in town.”

“Yeah? Which church?”

“I think it’s the Blawenburg Church...out on 518. Heard it at the Tiger’s Tale.”

“No kidd’n...what’s his name?”

“Guy told me...it’s not a common name. Orvis...Torbus...Regis...somethin like that.”

“Hm. Where’s he from?”

“Travis...that’s it. From Princeton.”

“Princeton! So he’s a local guy.”

“Yeah. Works in the city...at that big church. Marble Collegiate? But he went to the Princeton Seminary. Guess his wife still goes there.”

“Good guy, you think?”

“Dunno...be’n talked about a lot. I think I’m gonna check him out...”

“Yeah...I should go. Haven’t been to church in a while.”

“That’s what I’m think’n, too...maybe I can get Sandy to go with me.”

“Golf this week?”

“Yeah, Thursday. Right after work?”

“Cool. Meet ya there.”

Reverend Travis Winckler, you may not be the subject of random conversation at the Tiger’s Tale yet. But you will be, and that’s a good thing. Meanwhile, we’re excited. We have a new partner in Marble Collegiate; and we have a new pastor to help us launch it. Welcome to Blawenburg Reformed Church! Teach us. Lead us. We’re ready. Let us know how we can help. Amen.



The ministers, elders, and deacons of Marble Collegiate wish Pastor Travis well on Sunday, September 21 at MCC

### **Consistory Highlights for Meeting of September 11, 2014**

- Devotions provided by Catherine Murphy and given by David Cochran based on 9/11 and Matthew 5:44-45 – Faith/Hope/Love
- Announcements – Communion will be on October 5; church Administrator's hours will be M, Th, and F from 8:30—4:30; three more pulpit supplies this month; decisions about attending a Nuts and Bolts Workshop for consistory members will be made after October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Minutes for the August meeting were approved and passed.
- There was no correspondence.
- Update on Partnership and Call – Classis Exec was very helpful in writing the final Call and Covenant to Rev. Travis Winckler.
- Team liaisons gave reports of the work of the Teams.
- Action Items – If still available and if approved, the church's phone number may be changed to 466-1832. This is being investigated.
- As a scout project, Billy Randolph is welcome to search for relics around the church property with a metal detector. If any are found, they remain the property of the church.
- Devotions will be led by Rev. Winckler for the October consistory meeting.
- The meeting was closed with prayer.

## **A Summary of the Covenant of Understanding between Blawenburg Reformed Church and Marble Collegiate Church**

This is a summary of the Covenant approved by BRC and MCC Consistories. A full copy of the Covenant is available in the Church Office.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the partnership is to share ministry and to build unique relationships that bridge the distance between the two congregations.

### **Vision**

- We are called to share the ministry of Jesus Christ.
- The partnership is good stewardship, sharing resources beneficial to both.
- We hope to attract persons into various forms of ministry opportunities and foster a high quality of church life.
- We envision that both congregations will grow in spirit and life. BRC will become a vibrant and growing congregation in the Blawenburg community once again. MCC will learn and prosper from the experience in order to establish partnerships in new places.

### **Understandings**

- Each church is a separate entity.
- The partnership is for three years. There may be an opportunity to extend the partnership beyond that time.
- There will be frequent assessment of the vision and goals.
- In each church, the Consistory and the Minister(s) shall work together to achieve the vision and goals of each congregation with the aim to honor each other's respective roles.
- Rev. Winckler's call to BRC is indefinite and continuous beyond the partnership.
- Intents for the partnership
  - ◊ Enhance the quality, accessibility, and attractiveness of the Sunday morning experience
  - ◊ Identify imaginative and energized lay leadership
  - ◊ Reinvigorate BRC presence in the surrounding community
  - ◊ Articulate a new vision and mission statement for the church
  - ◊ Develop a strategy for church growth to target unchurched people
  - ◊ Establish a minimum of two programmatic or missional ministry initiatives per year of the partnership.
  - ◊ Work toward the goal of BRC being completely self-sufficient and thriving
- The existing worship styles and services will remain distinct. We will strive to develop regular opportunities for joint worship services, small groups, classes, mission endeavors and retreats.
- Communication media (websites, newsletters, Facebook pages, etc.) of both congregations will remain distinct and independent. Each congregation will commit to advertise "activities of mutual interest" in each other's communication media.
- MCC will provide resources for BRC to implement the initiatives in the partnership.

## Announcement

Sat. Oct. 18th, Nuts & Bolts Workshop at Readington Ref. Ch. 8:30AM-12:30PM

"Our Classis will be running a 'Nuts & Bolts Workshop' on Saturday, October 18th at the Readington Reformed Church from 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM. Sessions will be very useful to our operations and administration. Flyers detailing the sessions are posted in the Sanctuary and Cook Hall. The more we know, the more we can be proactive about our operations and not always reactive to emergencies...allowing us all to spend more time doing the various ministries we all love. If we have attendees for each session, we can be done by 10:30 AM! Gracie will be leaving BRC at 8 AM. Please let her know by 10/13 if you can go."

## Worship Team

*We gather as a community to celebrate God's presence among us!*

Our new pastor, Rev. Travis Winckler, is excited about doing ministry with us and has shared some plans with us already. He hopes to be following the lectionary, focusing on the Gospel of Matthew, right up until the first Sunday of Advent. Following are the readings for each Sunday this month so you can read them at home too.

Oct. 5 <sup>th</sup>	-	Matthew 21:33-46	World Communion Sunday
Oct. 12 <sup>th</sup>	-	Matthew 22:1-14	
Oct. 19 <sup>th</sup>	-	Matthew 22:15-22	
Oct. 26 <sup>th</sup>	-	Matthew 22:34-46	Reformation Sunday

We will be meeting as a worship team each month. We are looking for creative input as to how we can best allow God to speak to us through our worship. If you would like to explore the scripture with us and help us to design ways we can hear God's word for each of us, we would love to have you join us each month or share your comments with us when so moved. Our first meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>, at 4:30 PM. *Rev. Winckler, Katie Connolly, Gracie Johnson, Barb Antoniewicz*

## PASSING OF THE PEACE

Some of you may have noticed we changed the placement of the 'Passing of the Peace' from the end of the service of worship to the middle, following the Words of Assurance and the Gloria and before the middle hymn. Please let our worship team know your reactions to this placement. We also asked the congregation last month to try to move as much 'front and center' as they could. Doing this helps us to feel the unity of our church 'body'; it helps us to sing better together; and it allows us to turn to our neighbors for the Passing of the Peace without having to get out of our pews and travel all over the church!

(Continued on page 5.)

In researching Reformed traditions of this practice to share with you, this article by the minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Geneva, NY appeared to be particularly relevant:

APRIL 06, 2013

## PASTOR DEB'S REFLECTIONS ON PASSING THE PEACE

Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with You." John 20: 19

"Peace be with you. And, also with you." It has become a formula cliché in our Christian worship. Passing the peace has become a ritual of friendship and community as we gather Sunday mornings. But, there's always the question where should we do this welcoming. Some complain it disrupts the reverence of worship. Others consider it the highlight of the hour. My approach is both theological and practical. ...Three placements of Peace are relevant.

At the Gathering: "As the people gather, they may informally greet another as members of the household of faith".(page 34) Throughout Hebrew and Christian history "Peace" or Shalom has been the greeting of the faith community. Shalom is more than saying "Hi", how are you?"

Angels appeared to rather startled humans with the assurance of peace, "Be not afraid, peace be with you". Jesus greeted his disciples with the blessing of peace first on his lips. After the crucifixion, the disciples anxiously hid behind locked doors considering their next move when Christ appears mysteriously, "Peace be with you." The greeting is another way of saying, "you are safe among friends".

In the Middle: ...offers a unique and thought provoking positioning of "The Peace". After confession of sin and assurance of Pardon, the peace is exchanged after the worship leader explains this reasoning; "*Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.*" Thus, the Passing of the Peace" becomes an act of reconciliation as well as a welcoming gesture. Another "middle" possibility is after the prayers of the people. There the purpose is uniting and consoling.

At the End: Traditionally, the blessing of peace in the benediction invokes God's spirit to travel with individuals. For those who do not join in the social time, passing the peace gives everyone an opportunity to greet and meet. "Shalom"- Peace is a joyful blessing of wellness of body, mind and spirit. Jesus healed people and sent them on their way saying, your faith has made you whole.

In the next few months, note how "The Peace" is moving around as God's Spirit often does. Consider how the Spirit of Peace is moving, intervening, and blessing you and this church..

*Peace be with you.*

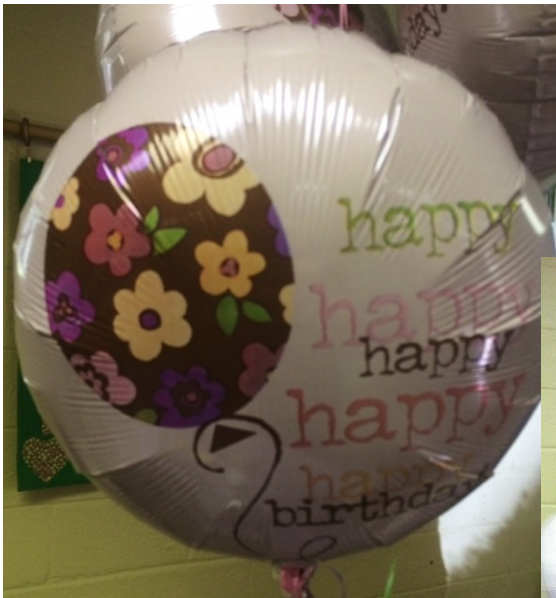
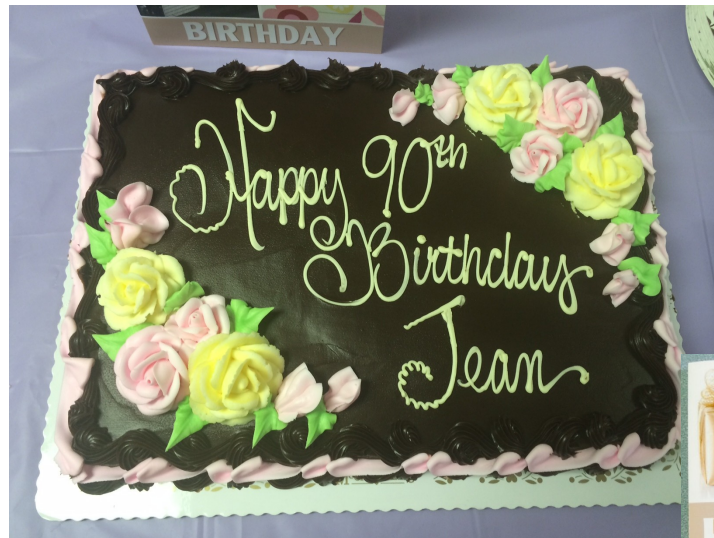
Pastor Deb

*[Editorial Note: See related comments on the Passing of the Peace in the November, 2013 issue of the Beacon. Go to [www.blawenburgchurch.org](http://www.blawenburgchurch.org) or [www.blawenburg.rcachurches.org](http://www.blawenburg.rcachurches.org) for our church's website and click on November, 2013 in the left-hand column.]*



## Hospitality Team

*“... care for those in our congregation and the greater church community...”*



## A Note from a Former Pastor

Many know Jean has been part of Blawenburg church for more years than we can count. Many also know, and are eternally grateful for Jean's many dedicated years serving as Blawenburg Church Secretary, with her "office" a room in her home on Mountain View Road.

Below is a wonderful tribute from Ken Bradsell, former Blawenburg Minister, to Jean which we are so happy to share (and will include in Jean's card)!

*"There is a Lutheran hymn that has found its way into our hymnody in recent years, "For All the Saints Who from Their Labors Rest." It is true that in our tradition all of us are "the saints" who someday will find our rest. It is also true that if there is hierarchy of "saintliness" Jean Skillman earned it and is entitled to rest from at least some of the "labors" she endured as a servant of Christ and Christ's church.*

*Jean was the principal and lead professor of "the Blawenburg School of Training for Young Ministers" for many years and through the opening stages of several careers in service to the wider church. I know. I was one. I was not the first. I think I was her 3rd or 4th student. I was young, brash, knew far less than I pretended, caught my fingers in more hinges, and, couldn't for the life of me, ever get the service information done on-time or timely on Jean's calendar.*

*Under her guidance, gracious mentoring, sometimes gentle discipline ("now, Ken!") the "Blawenburg Minister's Alumni Association" is an honor a handful of Reformed Church in America ministers carry with us with at least as much pride as we carry our diplomas from seminary and our certificates of ordination.*

*Jean Skillman was like a master sculptor who hammered, chiseled off, and sanded down some very rough edges. Jean saw in some of us what God had in mind when we were called to ministry but what was not yet very evident to the parishioners suffering our stumbles and foolish ways. Jean is a saint, high in the hierarchy of "saintliness," a wise and loved teacher, and a dear friend. To God be the glory as she celebrates 90 years along the way on life's journey"*

*Ken Bradsell*

## A REAL HOMETOWN LOVE STORY

When Jean Warmke, a farm girl from Hillsborough, was dropped off at church – Harlingen Church on Route 206 – her plan was to attend the youth group meeting there and then go home. But her parents had errands to run. They told young Jean to attend the church dance, scheduled for that evening, and they'd be by to pick her up a little later. Jean was reluctant but she went to the dance, and her life would never be the same.

Harold Skillman, one of the *Skillman boys* whose family lent its name to the town, attended the Blawenburg Church over on Route 518. But he'd heard about the dance at Harlingen and thought he'd go.

Jean Warmke and her family were fixtures at Harlingen. Jean sang in the choir, and was generally more interested in her violin than in a dance. But that Friday evening in 1941 was different. Harold Skillman walked in, saw young Jean, walked over and asked her to dance. They danced, and then danced again. Jean's father came by to pick her up, and Jean asked, "can you come back when the dance is over? I'm not ready to go home."

Jean danced every dance with Harold Skillman. She remembers that night well...and the day soon after when Harold went off to war.

Jean's parents weren't sure they approved of her new love. She was young; and Harold was far from home. But the two kept in touch as best they could, writing letters almost every day – and reading around the wartime sensors' blackout marks.

Harold had literally *worked on the railroad* from an early age, so the army put him in charge of making the trains run on time. At a crucial point in the war, he was charged with managing the huge Antwerp rail yards, and amid fierce attacks by the Luftwaffe, Harold got hundreds of trains carrying thousands of troops and tons of supplies out to the front in time to turn the tide in the Battle of the Bulge, the last great land battle against a crumbling NAZI Germany.

A grateful nation awarded Harold Skillman the Bronze Star, and Jean Warmke's parents agreed she should go to Fort Dix to see her soldier come marching home.

They married soon after, lived in the Blawenburg area and became active in the Blawenburg Church. Harold settled into business, and served on the church's governing board. Jean sang in the choir, and taught Sunday school. Some who attend the church today remember Jean as their teacher. Harold and Jean built a house on Mountain View Road, and raised two sons.

Jean went on to serve as the church's secretary for some twenty years, through the terms of five pastors. One of them, Ken Bradsell, recently wrote in a tribute, "Jean was the principal and lead professor of 'the Blawenburg School of Training for Young Ministers'...Under her guidance, gracious mentoring, sometimes gentle discipline, the 'Blawenburg Minister's Alumni Association' is an honor a handful of Reformed Church in America ministers carry with us with at least as much pride as we carry our diplomas from seminary and our certificates of ordination. Jean Skillman was like a master sculptor who hammered, chiseled off, and sanded down some very rough edges."

Harold Skillman passed away in 2010 at the age of 92. But Jean still makes it to church almost every Sunday. Jean Skillman turned 90 on October 1<sup>st</sup>.



[Another editorial note: This is a reprint from the October Montgomery News.]



## Life-Long Learning Team

*"We commit our gifts to... life-long learning..."*

### NURSERY Returns to the NOAH'S ARK Room with Skilled Caregiver!

In order to accommodate Salta last year, our Children and Worship room moved out of the Noah's Ark room at the east end of Cook Hall down to the west end of the building. Bernice Van Nostrand was able to do her magic once again on another move and create a wonderful learning environment for both our BVS Pre-school and our Sunday School. And now that Salta has gone, our Nursery and the BVS 'Mom's Morning Out' program have moved into the Noah's Ark room again. 'Again' because that beautiful mural was painted about 30 years ago by then member and neighbor Becky Boehmer to decorate our original nursery!

On top of being back in that lovely room, we are proud to brag about our wonderful caregiver! Our own Emma Murphy, a Junior at Montgomery High School will be our regular caregiver in the Nursery. Emma is Red Cross Babysitting certified as well as certified in Red Cross First Aid, CPR and AED. She worked at GSHNJ resident camp, Camp Lou Henry Hoover, as a summer camp counselor as well as an off season supervisor. Emma will be there every Sunday from 9:45 AM until 11:30 AM. On rare Sundays when needed, our own Morgan Van Liew, certified as a lifeguard, will sub for Emma. They look forward to playing with and caring for your children on Sunday mornings!



Feel free to contact Emma about any special nursery needs or questions you may have. Call or email the church office for her contact information.

***Sunday School for pre-K—5<sup>th</sup> Grade*** – Children, pre-K through fifth grade, will be dismissed from the sanctuary after the children's message to participate in our **Children and Worship** program with Mrs. Van Nostrand. They will go to the new C&W space in the west end room of Cook Hall. There they will hear a Bible story and engage in age-appropriate activities related to it. There will be activities for the older kids, too! Mrs. Van Nostrand can use a helper each week and would also love to have observers any time. She also teaches her C&W lesson during the week to our BVS pre-school children. You may observe then, also.

***The Mary and Martha prayer and book group*** will meet on October 20th at 5:45 PM at the home of Bernice Van Nostrand.



# Blawenburg Village School

PO Box 153, Blawenburg, NJ 08504

609-466-6600

[blawenburgvillageschool@yahoo.com](mailto:blawenburgvillageschool@yahoo.com)

Karen Hill, Director

The 2014 - 2015 school year is off to a great start! All classes have settled in nicely and are looking forward to the many upcoming events in October.

BVS is selling Kids Stuff Coupon Books for \$25.00. Included in the book are coupons for many local establishments. Please contact Karen Hill ([khill@blawenburgvillageschool.com](mailto:khill@blawenburgvillageschool.com)) for additional details or to purchase a book.

The Children and Worship program is starting this month. Students in all classes will participate in Bible Story with Mrs. Van Nostrand and Ms. Reid. Our music and movement program will also begin in October. All classes will meet weekly with Jen Lizzi to explore the wonders of music.

On Friday, October 17th, we will be visiting Norz Hill Farm in Hillsborough. Our students will be learning about various farm animals, as well as enjoying a hayride to the pumpkin patch, where they will pick their own pumpkin.

The month will end with our annual Trunk or Treat Halloween festivities on Thursday, October 30<sup>th</sup> and Friday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, at 9:30.

Our Mom's Morning Out program is available Monday - Friday (9:00-12:00) for a cost of \$30.00/morning. This program is open to all children ages 2 - 6, so please help us spread the word to any Mom in the community who may need a morning to herself. Students will be provided with a wide range of activities such as: art exploration, science experiments, cooking projects, dramatics and pretend play, stories, music, snack and outdoor activities.

There are limited openings available in some programs for the 2014-2015 school year. If interested please call the school office at 609-466-6600 or send an email to [info@blawenburgvillageschool.com](mailto:info@blawenburgvillageschool.com).

## Missions Team

*We commit our gifts to. . .serving those in need.*

### August Mission Focus MONTGOMERY FOOD PANTRY

With your generosity, three bags were delivered to the local food pantry with paper products, toiletries, food items, and laundry detergents. Once again, thank you from your Missions Team for caring for people in need in our own community.

### September Mission Focus Baby Care and School Kits—Thank you

Thank you to those who crafted beautiful baby sweaters and blankets for our Baby Care Kits and sturdy bags for our School Kits for our September mission focus of Church World Service. Many thanks, also, to those who contributed the other necessary items to fill the kits—diapers, undershirts, washcloths, sleepers, and pins as well as pencils, rulers, notebooks, erasers and other school supplies. And a big thank you, too, for the generous cash donations. If all the money is not used to complete the kits or to



fund the processing cost, it will be used toward our November mission focus of Operation Christmas Child. The kits were packed on September 29<sup>th</sup> and will be delivered to the drop-off depot in Bloomfield before the end of October.

Thank you to Morgan and Emma for packing the kits



### October Mission Focus South Somerset County CROP Hunger Walk Sunday, October 19th at 1:30 P.M. South Branch Reformed Church 870 River Road, Hillsborough, NJ



Walk for hunger. As we know, hunger is not a game. Please join us as we walk together to fight the root causes of hunger globally and to contribute money and peanut butter to help our food bank locally. Envelopes are in Cook Hall at fellowship for Walkers to use in collecting Sponsors' donations. If you can't walk with us, please sponsor a Walker and contribute peanut butter for us to take to the Walk. Consider donating what you might spend on dinner out for you and/or your family. Twenty-five percent of monies raised will be split between the Somerset County Food Bank Network and SHIP, the Samaritan Homeless Interim Program. We will meet this year at South Branch Reformed Church at 870 River Road, Hillsborough, at 1:30 on Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup>. Gracie and Clare will lead you in this five-mile, circular walk which will commence at 2:00 P.M. (If five miles is too far for you to walk, go as far as you can and return via the van provided which will circulate around the walk route. A phone number will be provided at registration to call for a ride back.)



## November Mission Focus OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

November 17—24 --- Collection Week

**If you are filling a shoe box individually or with your family, please return filled box by November 16.**



**The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to needy children around the world at Christmas and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.** This mission of Rev. Franklin Graham's Samaritan's Purse always comes early! These shoe box gifts reach children ages 2-14 in countries suffering from natural disasters, wars and endemic poverty. The boxes are fun to fill by yourself or with your children. You can find lots of fun and useful things in dollar stores. For ideas of what, and what not, to pack into your shoe box, see items below or go to [www.samaritanspurse.org](http://www.samaritanspurse.org), where you can also print out an insert form that will allow you to track your package to its destination. Flat, scored, decorated boxes are available and do not have to be wrapped this year. All you need to do is fold and fill! Then secure the lid with a rubber band only. Packing ideas and insert forms will be available later this month. We will sort and pack boxes on Sunday, November 16<sup>th</sup> to be delivered the following week.

The Mission Team hopes you can support this outreach effort by packing a shoe box or two or by buying bulk items for several shoe boxes and then by joining us at coffee hour on November 16<sup>th</sup>.

### GIFT IDEAS

**TOYS** - small cars, balls, dolls, stuffed animals, kazoos, harmonicas, yo-yos, jump ropes, small Etch A Sketch®, toys that light up or make noise (with extra batteries), Slinky®, etc.

**SCHOOL SUPPLIES** - pens, pencils and manual sharpener, crayons or markers, rubber stamps and ink pad sets, small writing pads or paper, solar calculators, coloring and picture books, etc. **HYGIENE**

**ITEMS** toothbrush, toothpaste, mild bar soap (in a plastic bag), comb, wash cloth, etc. **OTHER** - Hard candy and lollipops (Please double bag all candy.), mints, gum, T-shirts, socks, ball caps; sunglasses, hair clips, toy jewelry, watches, flashlights (with extra batteries). **A PERSONAL NOTE** - In a separate envelope, you may enclose a note to the child and a photo of yourself or your family. (If you include your name and address, the child may write back.).

**DO NOT INCLUDE:** Used or damaged items; war-related items such as toy guns, knives or military figures; chocolate or food; out-of-date candy; liquids or lotions; medications or vitamins; breakable items such as snow globes or glass containers; aerosol cans.



Last year the youth assembled shoe boxes with donated items.



## Proclaiming Team

*... and proclaiming the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.*

### Sampler Links to Blawenburg's Past

By David Cochran



Needlework sampler by Annie Voorhees Reid, 1846

I thought that our church friends might be interested in a story of the sampler pictured here, a story that began in 1846 and came to our attention this summer. On July 30, Nancy Curtis received an email from Dan and Marty Campanelli inquiring about the history of the sampler they had just purchased. They had done research about it and thought that the church might add to their knowledge of its history.

Dan and Marty are artists and historians from Quakertown, NJ. They are very interested in old samplers and are guest curators for the upcoming exhibit of schoolgirl needlework at Morven Museum in Princeton, which opens on October 3 and runs until March 2015. Unfortunately, the sampler in this story will not be in the exhibit.

On the front of the sampler, it says Annie E. Voorhees, Blawenburg, 1846. It is clear that Annie was from Blawenburgh (old spelling of our village name). Dan and Marty discovered that she was 12 when she did the sampler, and she lived with her parents in a house not too far from the church. Her father was Cyrenius T. Voorhees.

Nancy forwarded the email to me wondering if I knew where the house was. Well, yes I did, because I live in the house! Annie's father was one of the people who helped raise our church from September 23-25, 1830. His name appears on page 6 of our church history as Thompson Voorhees. (Marty figured out that he often used his middle name.)

Annie extended her needlework skills as a seamstress, and she married for the first time when she was 66. She had inherited our house and married a neighbor, Joseph Reid. He is the carpenter who did the elaborate Victorian church ceiling that we had to replace in 2007. Annie lived until 1922 and then the house was sold from her estate to Stanley Dorey, Ken (Dot) Dorey's father and local postmaster. In another church twist to this story, Don Terhune grew up in our house when his mother served as housekeeper for Stanley Dorey after his wife passed away.

We invited the Campanellis to visit Annie's house in early August. Before they arrived, Evelyn said, "That artist's name sounds familiar." She looked closely at the beautiful print of an old mill we had purchased at the Rummage Sale, and sure enough, it was done by Dan Campanelli. He immediately noticed his work on our wall when he visited and signed the back and the glass front of the print as a memento of our meeting.

While he was visiting, Dan also gave us some great information about the age of our house based on the milling of the floorboards, the hand-hewn beams, and other architectural information. Marty suggested that this could have been where the first pastor of our church, Rev. Henry Heermance, lived while the parsonage was being built. That would be great to know, but we have no evidence of it.

It's amazing the strange way our lives intersect in the past and the present. We now know a lot more about the history of our house and its connection to our church. We also had the good fortune to meet two terrific artists and historians. Now we look around our house wondering where Annie sat as she did her needlework almost 170 years ago.



**Save the Date**

**Church Work Day**

**Saturday, October 25, 9:00 - Noon**

**Rain or shine**

**We need your help.**

### **Sinterklaas...Save the date!**

We will be hosting 'Sinterklaas' on **December 6th**. This is just a reminder to put up those preserves while harvest time is here, and also to begin making soups. Remember to label containers (due to allergies) with all ingredients and put labels on the top of the containers. Also think of other 'crafty' projects to tackle! If you are making items like knitted hats or Christmas decorations etc., please let Evelyn or Bernice know. This will help in organizing appropriate display space in their craft booth. Please think, too, about where you would like to volunteer. Your help will be appreciated. Mark your calendars and anticipate a fun day to initiate the holidays. More information to follow in November's *Beacon* and church bulletins. Gracie Johnson will chair this event.



In December, former Blawenburg pastor Ken Bradsell, who's been working as the RCA's CEO for several years, will formally retire. But he's not sitting on his laurels. Ken has recently accepted the position of senior minister of the National Protestant Church of Oman (one of the Persian Gulf states, adjacent to Dubai). He and his wife, Marcia, are there now, getting a lay of the land. The RCA has had an active presence in Oman for decades, having established a well-regarded hospital in the capital city of Muscat. Ken recently sent an update to his brother Bob (he calls him 'Rob'). Here's an excerpt:

Rob and Barbara,

Oman is one very beautiful country. It's also very hot. Temps have been consistently in the high 90s and up to 110 during the day with high humidity off the Gulf of Oman. It begins cooling down in another month and remains in the 70s-80s up through April. The Muscat area (coastal city with mountains behind us) gets rain now and then (maybe up to six days/year and sometimes none in a year).

The country is also spotlessly clean thanks to all the Indian and Pakistani nationals they hire to maintain the place. The brand new highways are landscaped with underground sprinkling to keep the grass, flowers, and trees healthy. The other morning there were guys out with hedge clippers! Imagine finding that on the NJ Tpk. Oil money spends well here. Bottled water costs more than gasoline. I fill the tank for 6 Omani Rials (about \$15 US).

The church, the Protestant Church of Oman, is the only licensed and authorized Christian church in the country. We are responsible for approving other churches and signing visas for their ministers. We have 45 congregations worshipping at one of our campuses (a place called Ghala which is suburban fringe of this sprawling city) and another 30-40 at our campus (Ruwi) more toward the old city. The PCO itself worships with close to 1000 in five services every weekend. We do an Arabic service on Thursday evening, three services in English (all ex-pat community) on Friday (Friday is Sabbath day in this Muslim land) and one on Sunday evening.

We are gradually finding our way around. Friends who arrived here a year before us lent us a GPS pre-programmed for "home." So, we wander about then hit "home" if we are totally disoriented. Americans get an Omani driver's license with no questions asked. We can't get them issued until we return in January because we are here on 30 day visas.

Send an update when you get a chance. I'm wondering about your (Rob) health issues and what the plan is. ...also wondering how BRC is doing with its new plan, partnership with Marble, and new pastor.

That's it for now.

Ken

[Bob asked Ken about the issues with ISIS.]

*No issues here. Oman is an extremely peaceful place with a political and religious leadership committed to working at cooperation within the Muslim faith and across faith groups. The Sultan is an especially forward looking man, now in his mid-70's who has refused to entangle his country in any alliances that would cause Oman to get involved in something that would damage its commitment to cooperation and understanding. Sunni and Shia Muslims worship side-by-side in the same Mosques here alongside Habadi and other smaller Muslim sects considered heretics in other parts of the Middle East. The Sultan also provided considerable financial support to help the Protestant Church build its newest facilities near the old city of Mutrah which is now part of the sprawling metropolis of Muscat.*

Tear out or print this page. Put it on your frig.  
Make someone's day! Wish them a happy birthday/anniversary!



## Anniversaries

31 John & Cheryl Soos

1 Jean Skillman  
15 Max Urbanski  
23 Evelyn Cochran

### Summary of Dates

**See earlier articles for more details.**

Oct. 1	9:00 AM	First day on the job. Welcome, Pastor Travis!
Oct 1,	4:30 PM	Choir in Cook Hall
Oct. 5	10:00 AM	World Communion Sunday with the Rev. Travis Winckler
Oct. 8	7:00 PM	BVS Back-to-School Night
Oct. 9	7:30 AM	Men's Breakfast - Cook Hall
	4:30 PM	Worship Team
	7:30 PM	Consistory
Oct. 17		BVS to Norz Hill Farm
Oct. 18	8:30 AM—12:30 PM	Nuts & Bolts Workshop (See p. 4.)
Oct. 19	1:30 PM	CROP Hunger Walk (See p. 11.)
Oct. 20		<b>Deadline for November Beacon material.</b>
Oct. 25	9 AM—Noon	Church Work Day—rain or shine (See p. 3.)
Oct. 30	} 9:30 AM	BVS Trunk or Treat Halloween Festivities (See p. 10.)
Oct. 31		

Tuesdays 10:00 AM Bible & Brew @ The Thomas Sweet Cafe

### Plan Ahead

November Operation Christmas Child (See p. 12.)  
December 6 Sinterklaas  
Heifer International



## **The Blawenburg Beacon**

P.O. Box 266

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***The Blawenburg Reformed Church is a covenant community of God's people united in Christ through the Holy Spirit. We commit our gifts to worship, hospitality, life-long learning, serving those in need, and proclaiming the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.***