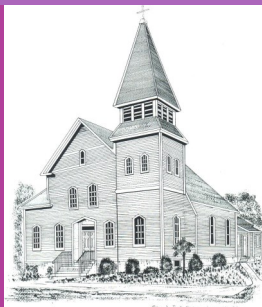


April  
2024



BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

BEREAN BELL

## From the Pastor

Romans 6;3-4 -3

Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4** Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

In the year 1609, an Anglican and Puritan named John Smyth came to the conclusion that biblical support for infant baptism could not be found. Scripture repeatedly showed that those who were baptized were those who could consciously and freely express for themselves repentance and faith in Jesus. Without going into all the details of Smyth's complex faith journey, his decision to leave the Anglican tradition and seek a faith community founded on the baptism of those who could themselves choose to follow Jesus began. While the Baptist tradition in what is now the United States is often traced back to Roger Williams, he himself was influenced by the faith journey of John Smyth and his associate for a time Thomas Helwys. And this is the beginning of the story of believers' baptism, a tradition that Baptists and other free church traditions carry on to this day.

Smyth and Helwys were very focused on the correct way to be baptized. They considered the infant baptism of the Catholic Church to be incorrect. Today at Berean we don't maintain the tradition of believers' baptism because of this belief that infant baptism is incorrect. We instead choose to respect the sincerely held beliefs and intentions of those who practice infant baptism while bringing our beliefs into conversation with them. It is a beautiful and sacred thing when parents, grandparents, and godparents state their intention to raise their children to know from birth how much they are loved by God. It is also a beautiful and sacred thing when those children grow and mature, for them to state their intention to follow Jesus.

## From the Pastor (Continues...)

When Paul talks about baptism in Romans, above, he says that when we are baptized into Christ we are baptized into his death, so that when we are raised (from the water) we walk in new life. Paul is inviting us into a faith that is very challenging because it is a faith that intentionally practices a critical assessment of how the good in life is defined. For instance, what we learn in Paul's letter to the churches in Rome is that these faith communities actively maintain the divisiveness of Roman society. People of various ethnic groups stay separated from one another and feel themselves superior to one another, ideologies perpetuated by Roman rule (and the Romans felt themselves superior to everyone.) When Paul talks about being baptized into Jesus's death, what is being put to death is this spirituality and politics of superiority and segregation.

Baptism wasn't, for Paul, a one-time singular event. Baptism is an ongoing spiritual journey of allowing Jesus to reveal the harmful and sinful beliefs and practices of the world that have shaped us, or perhaps distorted the image of God within us and our faith communities, so that we might leave those behind, and resist them, growing into the people God has created us to be. Whether we were baptized as infants or later as teens or adults isn't the point really. Do our baptism and its memory continue to encourage and inspire us to reflect carefully about living out a faith that reflects the love and justice of Jesus? That is the important question. Baptism reminds us that our faith is one of growth, discovery, development, and yes, change. But this change is a sacred experience because it is another step into newness of life.

This month Jack and Liam Latendresse and Anna Collins will begin preparation for baptism/joining the church on Pentecost Sunday, which is in May. I invite you to join them in this preparation by first holding them in your prayers, but also by reflecting on how your baptism has shaped who you are, and how the ongoing experience of dying and rising with Christ is shaping who you are becoming as a follower of Jesus.

*Pastor Dawn*

## Off the Beaten Track

### “Starry, Starry, Night”

The summer evening began soft, and its warmth enveloped me like an old velvet glove. It's the time of day when I like to visit the garden fence and lean against its wooden rail. All the pink had slipped below the western horizon, and several bats began their wheeling and weaving in the open space above the garden. Occasionally I could detect a feint in their trajectory as they captured one of their night-time prey. Each of these tiny brown bats could easily devour 500 insects each evening. Since most of their meal consists of mosquitoes, I count them as one of man's best friends and am grateful for their presence. Once feared and persecuted by the superstitious, they are today appreciated as highly beneficial.

The tree line is now a mere contour, and what dominates the overhead is the great dome of the starry heavens. With no urban lighting to compromise the night, the stars stand out in all their majestic brilliance. As the biblical records describe them to Abram, the stars are as numerous as the grains of sand in the sea. These myriad points of light are a bewildering consternation to decipher. The key in the northern hemisphere is to locate the constellation most familiar to observers, Ursa Major, commonly known as the Big Dipper. These seven stars are easily discernible as the shape of an old fashioned water cup. The two end stars from where water would be poured are the pointers. If you follow a straight line about seven times from the distance between them, the eye arrives at the handle end of another dipper which appears to pour into the Big Dipper. The two dippers are opposite and inverted, each pouring into the other. This end star is Polaris, the famous North Star. Now you have the beginnings of a star map.

Polaris is neither a large nor particularly bright star, but its fame is because its position in the heavens is fixed. It is always in the exact same place at any time of the year. All the other stars and constellations revolve around it like a giant pinwheel. It sits above the Earth's North Pole, hence its moniker, the Pole Star. In the age of sail, mariners were able to determine their latitude by the angle Polaris made with the horizon. The greater the angle, the farther north they were. If they were to be directly under Polaris at a 90 degree angle with earth's surface, they would be at the North Pole. Twisting like a sinuous snake between the dippers is a faint line of stars: the constellation Draco, the dragon. Continuing on past the pointers and Polaris brings one to an inverted letter “w” which is the end star in the constellation Cassiopeia, the flamboyant mythological Queen. Cassiopeia is one of the most easily-recognized constellations. All these groupings of

## Off the Beaten Track (Continues...)

stars are visible year round in the northern hemisphere. Others come and go as the seasons change.

Somehow, beyond my comprehension, the ancients envisioned patterns which they identified with a host of mythological figures and which are with us even today as depicted in star atlases. Without television or other electronic devices to distract them or artificial lighting to obscure the night sky, their imaginations must have run wild. I can imagine the biblical shepherds watching their flocks during the long nights with little to do but gaze upwards in wonder. What were these strange objects that behaved according to incomprehensible laws? So enthralled with the mysteries of the night sky were the ancients that they created a whole cosmology, a then science of astrology. Entrenched beliefs held that the fortunes of armies as well as individuals were predicated on what occurred among the heavenly bodies. Fate could be read in the stars. Strange meteorological events were certain signs of God's hand directing the affairs of men.

Fortunately most of us no longer need to depend on astrology to guide our futures. But it's fascinating to learn that science has discovered that many birds possess a unique capability to be guided by the stars in their migration patterns. Whether they can read and interpret the changing seasons from star patterns is unknown, but we do know that many birds use the stars to navigate during their migrations. Numerous birds migrate at night, particularly songbirds whose tremendous energy expenditures are so great that they require a daytime refueling to regain energy and maintain health. Their orientation is to the North Star and the constellations that revolve around it as their flight patterns occur in the spring and fall. The bats in my garden don't migrate, but they navigate by a completely different system, echo producing sonar. But do they use the stars? They're active on clear, cloudless nights and absent on overcast ones, suggesting that somehow the stars may play some key role in their feeding sallies. But then again, they are so busy with their aerial acrobatics that they don't need a map of the heavens.

Don Waterman

## Outreach News



Helping Hands Food Pantry - A grant application (Basic Human Needs) was submitted to the Rhode Island Foundation on Monday, March 25<sup>th</sup>. Outreach requested \$5,000.00 and a determination from RIF will be made in the coming weeks. We serviced a single working Mom and her two children this past Sunday as they had an emergency need for food. We will be open on April 6<sup>th</sup> and April 20<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 am to 11:00 am.



Family Clothing Resource – We continue to prepare for the Spring/Summer season and have been busy. We are hoping to assist a family from Syria in the near future with clothing needs. A date and time is being worked out that will best work for them. It is a family of 8, the father, mother, and 6 children. Walmart gift cards are appreciated if anyone is able to donate. We will be open the same date/times as the food pantry.

There are a few men who visit us on the Saturdays when we are open and they have volunteered to help with the church's Spring clean-up.



Harvest Community Church- Pastor Bacon advises that he is keeping the Men's Sanctuary open throughout April so our last meal prep for them will be due either on Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at Berean or, on Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup> at Berean for 10:30 am. We are so grateful for the many hands that cooked delicious meals or donated to this important ministry.

Christian Ed collected \$168.00 through their "Pennies for Pasta" and shared the news with the congregation on Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup>.

The children's efforts were greatly appreciated. Outreach can purchase a lot of pasta with \$168.00!

Spring Tea & Fashion Show- The date has been set for Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> from 2 to 4 pm. This is an event to share time with others while enjoying tea, desserts, music, and conversation. There will be some families who visit the Family Clothing Exchange modeling their selections. In addition, there will be a raffle table. Entry fee is \$5.00. Please see Mary Beth Martin or Cheryl Lacey for any questions you have regarding this upcoming event.



Next meeting is Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup> after service in the conference room.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Outreach Team

## Worship and Fellowship



Lenten services were held during Holy Week. Don Waterman preached the sunrise service at Round Top. Easter service in the sanctuary was great and the church looked fantastic with all the spring flowers. Thanks to all who participated.

In an effort to update our active membership list letters went out to those who have not attended church or donated in the past year.

We have eliminated the blue song books. Inserts of songs will be included in the Sunday bulletin. All are asked to return the inserted songs to the box in the church foyer.

Darin will be on vacation the week of April 15<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Rev. Dr. Lynne Holden and Rev. Phyllis Hackett will be in the pulpit on April 21<sup>st</sup>. Thanks ladies.

### Anniversary Committee



**SAVE THE DATE:** October 26 2024 5:00pm Anniversary banquet  
Please plan to join us as we will be celebrate our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The committee has reached out to State Senator Jessica De La Cruz and State Rep. David Place for resolutions honoring our anniversary. Both Sen. De La Cruz and Rep. Place have drafted resolutions and they will be read in both the House and the Senate on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Anyone wishing to attend please let Sandy Easterbooks (skeasterbrooks@gmail.com) know, no later than April 8<sup>th</sup> as we have to provide a list of those attending.

The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary booklet is coming along. We have much information to include.

Don and Marge are still reviewing historical paperwork and pictures to put together a presentation at the banquet.

Working to identify 25+ members.

## House Committee News

The House Committee has scheduled an indoor/outdoor

“Spring Cleanup”

on **Sunday, April 21st**  
from 9:00am-12:00pm.



**Rain Date Sunday, April 28th**

## Pastor Darin on Vacation

**NOTE:** Pastor Darin will be on vacation from

**Monday, April 15th** thru **Sunday, April 21st.**

He will return to the office on **Monday, April 22nd.**

# BIRTHDAYS OF THE MONTH

## *April Birthdays*

April 6 - Beth Capron

April 10 - Barbara Morin

April 17- Deb Tillinghast

April 18 - Lindsay Morin

April 18 - Emma Latendresse

April 18 - Angela Albanese

April 21 - Veronica Bessette

April 21 - Jen Collins

April 21 - Andrew Lawrence

**\*\*If I forgot your birthday,  
please let me know so I can add it\*\***



## **REMINDERS**

Flowers help beautify our Sanctuary  
and can be given

“In Honor of” or “In Memory of”  
a special someone or event or “Just Because”.

**Next newsletter:** May 2024

*Committee Chairpersons:*  
Please submit your report to the  
Church Secretary on or before  
**April 24th**



# April 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6 <b>8:30-11:00am</b> Family Clothing Resource & HH Food Pantry
7 <b>10:00am</b> Worship (Communion) <b>11:30am</b> Anniversary Mtg. Outreach Mtg.	8	9	10	11 <b>7:00pm</b> Bible Study	12	13
<b>14</b> <b>10:00am</b> Worship <b>11:30</b> Worship & Fellowship Mtg.	15 Pastor Darin on Vacation	16 Pastor Darin on Vacation	17 Pastor Darin on Vacation	18 Pastor Darin on Vacation	19 Pastor Darin on Vacation	20 <b>8:30-11:00am</b> Family Clothing Resource & HH Food Pantry  Pastor Darin on Vacation
21 Pastor Darin on Vacation <b>10:00am</b> Worship <b>11:30</b> Deaconate Re- ports ONLY Spring Clean-up	22 Pastor Darin Returns from Vacation	23	24 <b>Newsletter Articles Due</b>	25 <b>7:00pm</b> Bible Study	26	27 <b>2:00-4:00pm</b> Spring Tea & Fashion Show
28 <b>10:00am</b> Worship  Rain date for Spring Clean-up	29	30				