

January
2023



BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

BEREAN BELL

From the Pastor

The Psalm assigned to Sunday, January 1st, Psalm 148, is a Psalm of praise. The first five verses are an insistent command for all of creation to Praise the Lord. Praise him all angels, Praise him sun moon, and stars, Praise him earth and sea monsters and forests and animals. All creation is united, including princes and rulers, in joyfully giving thanks to God for life.

The song from Isaiah focuses on the same theme. 'I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord,' the prophet proclaims, 'the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us.' This song comes late in Isaiah so it is almost certainly sung for Israel's release from captivity in Babylon. The Psalmist and the Prophet are employed on New Year's Day to invite us to start the new calendar year with joyful faith, with hope in the Lord.

Joy can be a bit of a complex practice for us as Christians today. It could be interpreted as a distraction from the suffering and injustices in the world around us. Joy can be a very effective way to ignore the troubles in our society and the sin in our lives. The joy that the prophet inspires does not ignore the hardships or failures of Israel's past. Those remain in view. They are remembered. What brings joy is the work that God does to rescue Israel from injustice and heal her from sin. N.T. Wright has written, 'In the Jewish tradition, joy is something that happens when God finally does something that people have been waiting for.' So we open ourselves to joy when recalling the many ways that God historically has shown up with healing and justice." Notice that the root of joy or the source of joy is the activity of God. We find joy when we remain focused on and faithful to God's work in the world and in our lives.

Then the Psalmist's song encourages us to join the joy of God's healing, forgiving and renewing work. All creations, including the powerful and privileged, are invited to join in the work of joy. Willie James Jennings has written, "I look at joy as an act of resistance against despair and its forces. ... Joy in that regard is a work that can become a state, that can become a way of life." Joy isn't an excuse to be inactive. Joy is the energy that inspires us to be engaged in God's mission of salvation. We don't ignore hard times with joy, we engage, resist, and forge a healthy, wholesome response to hard times, by staying firmly engaged in the joy God gives.

So we start the new year with joy. Joy for all that God has done to see us through difficult times. Joy for the conviction and courage to grow and change. Joy for the beauty that surrounds us and the community of care and compassion that the Spirit has shaped us to be. We start with joy so that joy can be the way of living that sees us through good times and bad. Joy shows us how to remain faithful to God's call for justice and peace. Happy New Year. May it be a joyful one.

Pastor Dan

Shower with Love

As you all know, Lynne and Phyllis lost everything to hurricane Ian.

We are blessed that they have decided to return to Rhode Island to live.

We invite you to join us for lunch, as we lift them up and SHOWER them with love and gifts of KITCHEN GADGETS, and Your Favorite Recipe etc.



Saturday, January 21, 2023

1:00pm

Berean Baptist Church—Fellowship Hall

474 Chapel Street

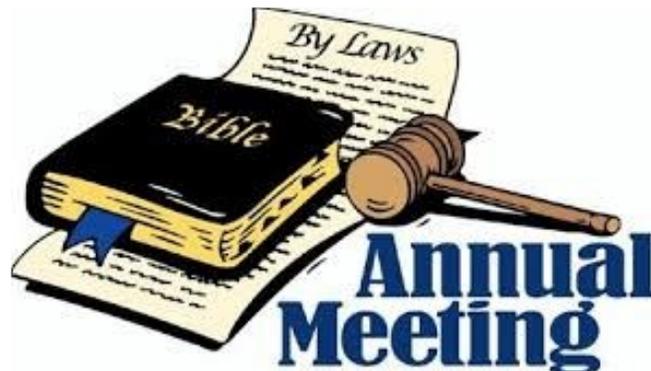
Harrisville, RI 02830



RSVP and/or for more information, text or call Jean Wiberg @ 401-258-4829.

We look forward to seeing you.

Berean's Annual Meeting



Berean's Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 22, 2023
after the 10:00am service with a pot luck.

There will be a sign up sheet in the front of the church.

All committees should have their reports to Cindy Bonn by January 8th.

Thank You.

Off The Beaten Path

"Mouse Wars"



It was war! Without provocation, I was forced into combat. It all happened this way, quite unexpectedly. One morning my wife reached into the cupboard to retrieve her cereal.

This was a normal morning ritual, but this time she yelled out with such a shriek that one would have thought some grievous wound had been perpetrated. There, next to her cereal box lay a neat array of mouse droppings so tiny and inconspicuous that you never would have thought some great calamity had occurred. But indeed it had, and now I was charged with making all's well with the world again for better or for worse till death do us part. I was called upon to resolve this dilemma and make our humble abode safe and secure again. My simple suggestion to just sweep it up and proceed with the business of the day was met with a stony stare and silence. I knew trouble was on the horizon and not wishing to spend the night on the couch, I was forced to prepare a battle plan. Little did I realize that the day was suddenly going to be much more complex and my day marked by ruin. How could a tiny mouse exert such disaster on my plans? Ah! The unexpected complexities which intrude upon life.

My first strategy was to proceed post-haste to the local hardware store to procure some device that would quickly resolve the situation and hopefully return life to normalcy. Cages didn't seem to be a near-term solution. They were much too big and clumsy. There were poisons, but those might lead to further trouble. Would I want to sicken the grandkids? I opted for the old-fashioned mousetrap. The cheap price was right. You know the kind, with the spring-loaded snap that attracts by placing some bait on a trigger. That should do the trick! The salesman assured me that this strategy was foolproof. I smugly assumed that that time-tested technology was on my side. So I picked up a couple and hurried home, confident that success was within my grasp.



What could possibly go wrong? This type of trap had been engineered and perfected by centuries of tinkering and scientific know-how. I'll bet even Methuselah had used this contraption with success. Once the trap was baited with cheese and peanut butter that battle should reach its conclusion. Hopefully, this mouse was not on a strict cereal diet, or even worse, a vegetarian critter. Suppose he were trap savvy? Maybe he had been conditioned to eat only from gourmet packaging. I was beginning to envision all sorts of unforeseen complications to the best-laid plans for mice and men that could go awry. Was it possible that I could be outsmarted by a tiny bundle of fur? I dared not think of the potential harm to my fragile psyche.

Sleep was hard to come by that first night. The opening salvo had been fired, and I dreaded a protracted war. Time would not be on my side. The wife would demand immediate tactical victory. "Take no prisoners," she would declare. "I want my home safe!" The morning search revealed nothing had happened. I wondered if even a sniff had occurred. Could I be so fortunate as to believe the mouse had relocated? Perhaps the mere sight of the traps had forced its exodus. Do mice possess some kind of visionary intelligence? Maybe I was about to be goaded into a waiting game. I dreaded another night of restless sleep. But lo and behold! That next night heaven favored me. The trap had sprung, a resounding crack in the stillness of a darkened kitchen. I sensed victory as I jumped to my feet. As I observed the enemy, its helplessness and smallness surprised me. There it was, so tiny and innocuous. Now, what to do with it? Perhaps a quick burial in the garden, and then the whole affair would be dispensed with forever.

As I observed the poor creature, I began to wonder what kind of mouse was it exactly? My knowledge of mouseology was a gargantuan abyss. Could it be a simple house mouse or a field mouse? Perhaps a deer mouse or some other unfamiliar type. Do mice prefer warm, dry houses as more livable compared to their earthen burrowed holes? Quick research revealed that a mother can

Off The Beaten Path (continues...)

bear ten litters of from three to fourteen offspring every year. That's up to one hundred and forty babies for those arithmetically challenged. No wonder history has seen so many ventures into the mouse-trap business. It's catching on. Then other revelations came to light. Mice actually have a high economic value. They are a bedrock of laboratory and scientific research industries because their genetic and organ responses mirror those of humans. They also provide a thriving industry need for feed in zoos and snake ranches. But let's not forget that mice and their larger cousin the rat were the vectors of the Medieval bubonic plague which carried off nearly half of Europe's population. Even today, they stealthily fully consume more than a tenth of Asia's grain harvest. And historically they continue to bear the stigma of harboring multiple disease organisms. So, off with their heads, I say. How could that Disney comic master create a whole Magic Kingdom worth untold millions and manage to attract countless generations of admiring adherents? It boggles the mind that people can be so gullible. O world! Where is your common sense?

So here I stand, the dead creature in my hand, and now what should I do? Had I taken an innocent life, one of God's creations? I wondered if somehow I might be judged, like some of those Eastern mystics who would never dare to even swat a mosquito. I hoped that some after-life penance was not to be my fate. This affair was becoming so complex. Two restless nights were penance enough. I flung the critter aside into the tall grass at the garden's edge. That was that. I was done with the matter. I had to get rid of all these nonsense worries. Let Disney make his millions and children wear their mouse ears all they want. Peace and a good night's sleep were all I wanted. It was that simple. I really should be considered a hero, ridding mankind of a pest who, along with termites, threatened to take over the world. How about a modest memorial in my honor? I'm helping to save the planet. There's no need to feel any guilt about killing Mickey. Besides, mice will always be here. Just like mosquitoes, kill one and a dozen more come to replace him. That must be God's redemptive answer. They will never be extinct. I had won my battle. Peace and tranquility would be restored, and I'd be back in good graces. To quote the Bard, "All's well that ends well." He also declared, "Sleep that knits the raveled sleeve of care." With those sweet words dancing in my tired mind, my day was over. The mouse had failed to best me. My pillow beckoned. Good night, good night to all.

Don Waterman

Outreach News



Helping Hands Food Pantry- Total families serviced were 34 and 30 children received a pajama gift. The generosity of the congregation made the Christmas Season brighter for these families. Each family received a \$40.00 Price Rite Gift card, and a few Walmart Gift Card. Special treats of homemade cookies along with candy canes from Deb Tillinghast were included in the baskets. We were also fortunate to receive monetary donations from anonymous donors to help with purchases of food items for both the regular food pantry and Christmas food baskets along with gift card purchases. Thank you to Ann Harwood and Jean Wiberg for all their food shopping assistance.

A special thanks to Jean Wiberg, Amanda Rawson, and Nancy Arnold for all their help with the assembly, PJ gift tags and organization of everything including the distribution of the baskets and gifts.

Family Clothing Resource- Winter's arrival started quite nippy and then mild, but temperatures are going to plummet again and we are grateful that we have been able to assist families with clothing, especially coats, during this time. The feedback has been wonderful and as the community visits some are offering to help with their time if needed. We continue to receive donations as well and the support is greatly appreciated.



Harvest Community Church- Men's Sanctuary. A delivery of meals was made on Monday, December 12th by Jim and Cindy. Next delivery is scheduled for Monday, January 9th. We appreciate the hands who have prepared meals, Glennis Esterbrook, Linda Morgenstern, Mary Beth Martin, Carol Donnelly, Walter Dandrow, Rose Doughty, Deb Tillinghast, Sharon Ponce.

Grant applications are being worked on (RI ARPA) and Rhode Island Foundation (RIF) and hopefully will be submitted within the first week of January.

Outreach hopes to have a meeting on Sunday, January 29th after service to discuss plans for 2023. Wishing everyone a wonderful New Year filled with peace, love, and joy.

Respectfully submitted,
The Outreach Team

Worship and Fellowship

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

The Christmas Eve service was wonderful. The music was amazing, thanks to Emma and Bill and Ashley for all they did to make the service memorable.

The choir sang this month and they did a remarkable job. It was great to hear them after a long absence. They will be singing periodically throughout the year.

The annual meeting is scheduled for January 22 and there will be a pot luck after the meeting. There will be a sign up sheet in the front of the church.

If you purchased a poinsettia please plan to take it after the service.



January Birthday's

Jan. 2—Marge Fenley

Jan. 3—John Bonoyer

Jan. 9—Jared Morin

Jan 11—Jack Collins

Jan. 12—Julia Breault

Jan 22—Robert Davies

Jan. 25—Jen Breault

Jan 31—Andrew Capron



Outreach News (continues...)

We mourn the loss of our beloved Nancy Binns, who was always present with us in whatever ministry we were doing. Her faith, talent, time, generosity, and wisdom, was such a huge part of what we do and she was steady as a rock, ready to listen or to lean on.

We mourn the loss of David Sidla, his faith, his talent with music, guitar and singing, he was Berean's rock star, his knowledge of the Bible and his thoughts that he shared during Bible Study were profound, and oh, that smile, always that smile.

All of these beautiful people represented what Outreach is, love, compassion, and caring.

Wishing everyone a Season of Advent filled with peace and joy in your heart for all that our Lord has bestowed upon us.

Peace,

The Outreach Team.

Anne Harwood- Co-Chair

Julie Markey

Mary Beth Martin

Sharon Ponce – Co-Chair

Kristine Sullivan

Glennis Esterbrooks

Carolyn Ross -Secretary

Aaron Coutu

Marge Fenley

Linda Morgenstern

Jeffrey Jones

Donna Landry (Member at Large)

Finance Committee

Finance Committee - Important Changes to the Preschool Lease

Finance wants to make everyone aware of a significant change to our income this year. Due to a serious health concern in the family, the Tuckers have had to reduce the number of days that the preschool operates. They requested a reduction in rent because of this unexpected change which would mean that Berean will lose approximately \$10,000 in income. While finance did not feel comfortable accepting this as a long-term or ongoing arrangement, we also didn't have any other options to replace that income. So the lease for this school year has been adjusted to reflect this change.

We are grateful for the many ways that you give to the life and ministry of Berean Baptist Church. If you are able, an extra financial gift this year would be appreciated to help mitigate this decrease of income.

January 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:00am worship	2	3	4	5	6	7 8:30-11:00am Family Clothing Resource & Helping Hand Food pantry
8 10:00am Worship 11:30 Worship & Fellowship Mtg. Annual Reports due to Cindy B	9 Meals to be delivered to Harvest Community Church-Men's Sanctuary	10	11	12 7:00pm Bible Study In the Conference Room and on Zoom	13	14
15 10:00am Worship 11:30am Deaconate Mtg.	16	17	18	19 7:00pm Bible Study In the Conference Room and on Zoom	20	21 8:30-11:00am Family Clothing Resource & Helping Hand Food pantry
22 10:00am Worship Annual Meeting	23	24	25	26 7:00pm Bible Study In the Conference Room and on Zoom	27	28
29 10:00am Worship 11:30am Outreach Mtg.	30	31				