

HBRC News

Welcome to High Bridge Reformed Church

To all who join us, we rejoice that you are here. May God's Spirit warm our hearts, stir our faith, renew our strength, and refresh our hope.

This newsletter serves an outlet to keep everyone informed of the happenings of HBRC!

We look forward to being in touch!



HBRC is a family of believers whose diverse gifts are woven together in the Holy Spirit to form the Body of Christ.

As we grow in faith, we are called to share God's boundless love for us and to extend that love into our community.

Therefore HBRC welcomes all people of God into our family, without condemnation, regardless of: race, color, ethnicity, or nationality; gender or gender expression; sexual identity; or mental and physical abilities. We accept all without considering: income, family structure, immigration status, education, or military service.

Our desire is for all people to know the hope and unity that we have found in Christ.

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Meet the Team

Pastor- Ed Staats
Assistant- Jessica Luteran
Music Director- Landon Peer

Office
908-638-8978
info@hbreformedchurch.org

Pastor
908-303-0212
pastor@hbreformedchurch.org

Office Hours

Our office is open Wednesdays and Fridays
9:30am-12:30pm.
Other times are available if needed.
Pastoral appointments can also be made at other times.

Worship Schedule

In person- Sundays at 10a

Virtual- livestreamed
<https://www.youtube.com/@highbridgereformedchurch9173>



Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her." John 20:18

Mary Magdalene was one of the witnesses to the crucifixion. She would have witnessed firsthand Jesus' final words and his final breath. We also know that Mary Magdalene was one of the women who went to the tomb early on the morning of the third day. She had gone with the others to do the final preparations on Jesus' body in the tomb. They had brought along with them oils and spices, so we know that they were expecting to find a body.

But Mary carried with her other things besides the oil and the spices. She carried with her the grief of losing Jesus. Anyone who has lost someone understands the

weight of grief. The weight of grief makes it so a person can hardly function. The weight of grief makes a person want to be near to the one they've lost. The weight of grief makes a person want to do something in the face of death. Mary arrives at the tomb that morning weighed down by the grief she carried. A grief that demanded she do something to stay connected to Jesus, even in his death. She is the example of how to keep moving forward in the face of trauma and grief and not give up before we see the miracle.

"I have seen the Lord!"

These words of Mary Magdalene, the apostle to the apostles, the woman chosen by Jesus to be the first to know of his resurrection, are really the first words of Easter.

"I have seen the Lord!"

So often, it seems, we leave this "seeing" to something that happened over two thousand years ago. But the truth of Easter, the joy that is ours, is that it is something happening now. And the question each of us must ask is – where have I encountered Christ?

During Holy Week we will walk together through the anguish of Gethsemane, to the darkness of the shadow of the cross, but we will end our journey rejoicing in the empty tomb. The message of that moment is that Christ is alive – here and now.

Where is he? He is in the marginalized, the homeless, the oppressed. He is in you, and me, and everyone. He is also present with us when we gather around the Communion table.

Easter is a powerful statement – that no darkness or death is more powerful than the light of God. But it is also a call to action for all of us. It is a call to model Christ in the world in the ways he showed us before his death – to love and to serve as he did for us.

We are Easter people!

We are also the body of Christ that is alive in the world then, now and always.

A people ready to proclaim the good news – and then to live into that good news by serving the least of these.

The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Pastor Ed





Join us for the final two Ecumenical Vespers Services for 2025! We will gather for worship on Wednesday evenings during Lent beginning with a simple meal together at 6:00pm and worship at 7:00pm.

April 2	Bethlehem Presbyterian
April 9	High Bridge Reformed

Holy Week

At High Bridge Reformed Church



Palm Sunday: Sunday April 13th at 10:00am at HBRC. Remember Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem with special music and worship.

Maundy Thursday: April 17th at 6:00pm at Bethlehem Presbyterian Church. We will celebrate a traditional Seder meal adding in the Christian elements of hand washing and communion... Bring a dish to share for a potluck dinner afterward.

Good Friday: On Friday April 18th services of music and reflection will be at 2:00pm at Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, where Pastor Ed will be preaching OR 7:00pm at HBRC, where Pastor Linda will be preaching.

Easter Sunday: Sunday April 20th at 10:00am HBRC.

Come celebrate the Resurrection with us! Bring cut flowers as we "flower the cross".

Flowering the Cross

Throughout Lent, the bear wooden cross has been moved forward on the altar to become our focus for Lent. The cross is our focus because that is where our Messiah suffered and died in our place. It is here that Jesus shed his blood and purchased our freedom from sin.

But the cross also symbolizes God's love for us. So how do we transform the cross from an object of torture and death to a thing of love and life? In the spirit of Christian celebration, on Easter morning we will observe the centuries old custom of the "flowering of the cross." You will be invited to come forward to the cross during the prelude, with cut flowers you bring from home or flowers that will be provided, and place your flowers on the cross. In this way we will dramatically symbolize Christ's triumph over death, his resurrection, and his gift of everlasting life.

After worship, the cross will be moved outside, to the top of the steps, so that we can share this great news with all who pass our church.



April Spotlight

Bird Houses

Last year was such a fun success that we are doing it again! We have joined up with High Bridge Environmental committee again this year and will be making bird houses to spread throughout the HB community. We will gather together on April 27, 2025 for coffee hour and bird house making. Please bring a hammer if you have one!

Coffee hour is open to the community inviting everyone to join in our time of Fellowship and goodwill.

Upcoming Mission Activities

Date	Mission
5/18	Family Promise
6/15	Life Camp
7/20	Cookies for Soldiers
8/17	Family Promise
9/21	Meals on Wheels
10/19	Veterans Haven North
11/16	Family Promise
12/21	Blankets

Ongoing Missions

Food Collection

HBRC makes weekly deliveries of goods collected to the Open Cupboard Food Pantry and North Hunterdon Food Pantry.

Pull Tabs

HBRC collects aluminum tabs for "Pull For The House". The tabs collected are donated to Ronald McDonald House. The program provides revenue provides donations to Ronald McDonald House families in need.

<https://www.rmhsnj.org/pull-for-the-house>

Pill Bottles

HBRC collects pills bottles throughout the year for Matthew 25 Ministries. These pill bottles are sent with medical supplies to 3rd world countries to help provide medicine in a clean and safe manner.

<https://m25m.org/pillbottles/>

All donations may be dropped off in the back of the Sanctuary Sunday mornings, weekdays during office hours or in the blue bin outside by the backdoor (anytime).

April Is Autism Awareness Month

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition characterized by differences in social communication, sensory processing, and patterns of behavior. With an estimated prevalence of 1 in 54 children in the United States, autism touches the lives of countless families and individuals within religious communities. As awareness grows, so does the recognition that faith communities play a crucial role in supporting individuals with autism and their families.

High Bridge Reformed Church seeks to be a welcoming environment for all, regardless of neurological differences, we try to embody the principles of love, acceptance, and community that are at the heart of our tradition. Autism does not define a person's spiritual worth. We affirm the fundamental value and dignity of all individuals, recognizing that each person, regardless of neurological differences, has a unique spiritual journey and relationship with the divine.

It is my hope that by embracing neurodiversity and fostering a culture of acceptance and support, we create inclusive spaces where all people can find spiritual nourishment and community. As we journey towards inclusivity we not only enhance the lives of autistic individuals and their families but also deepen the faith and perspective of the entire congregation, creating a more vibrant and compassionate religious community for all.



Let's do Lunch

All are welcome to our **monthly Fellowship Lunch!**
Happening on April 27th at 11:30am, this month at Frank's Pizza, Walmart Plaza-Upper Level, Clinton, NJ
Please RSVP to Susan Jacqmein at seajacqmein@embarqmail.com so that we can give the restaurant a headcount!

Upcoming dates:
May 22 at Sky Manor Café
June 26 at Cracker Barrel



Replacing our furnace took a big hit to our financial reserves so in order to help “replenish the coffer” Consistory has approved the establishment of a **FUNDRAISING TEAM**. Chaired by Christy Benoit & Wil Staats this group will identify and help implement new ideas for revenue. Please, come be a part of this effort! Let Pastor Ed know if you are willing to serve.

Fellowship Movie Night

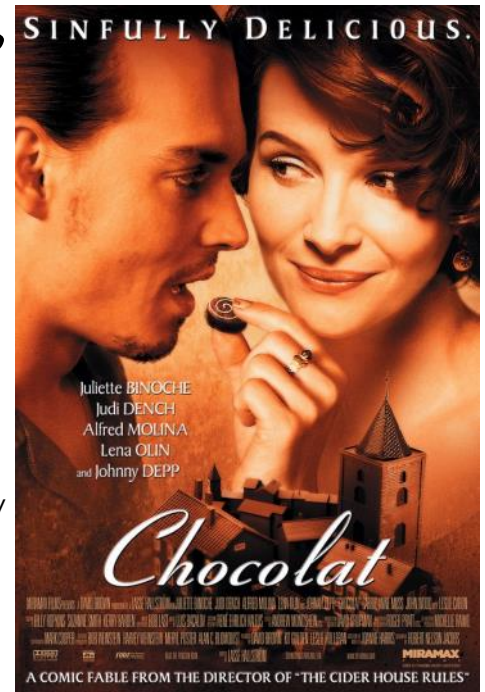


Join us on April 4th at 7:00pm for Church Movie Night where we'll be viewing *Chocolat*....

Based on the 1999 novel by Joanne Harris, directed by Lasse Hallström. *Chocolat* tells the story of Vianne Rocher, played by Juliette Binoche, who arrives in

a fictional French village at the beginning of Lent with her six-year-old daughter. She opens a small chocolaterie. Soon, she and her chocolate influence the lives of the townspeople of this repressed French community in different and interesting ways.

Drinks and snacks will be provided!

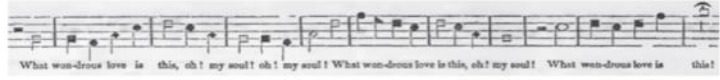


Returning this summer—our North Hunterdon Ecumenical Fellowship Worship in the Park series. On the last Sunday of June, July, & August, instead of gathering for worship in our sanctuary, we will worship in God's original sanctuary—God's beloved creation... We will also encounter transformative love and empowerment through unity in the Spirit as we worship together with our Lutheran and Presbyterian siblings on each of these Sundays. It is our hope that these shared worship experiences help us continue to grow together as the embodiment of Christ's love to become a Beloved Community of followers of Christ, grounded in our Christian tradition.



A note from Landon

SHAPE-NOTE SINGING SCHOOL



SUNDAY, APRIL 13TH 1:00PM
HIGH BRIDGE REFORMED CHURCH
23 CHURCH ST. HIGH BRIDGE, NJ

1PM - WORKSHOP
FOLLOWED BY A BREAK W/ SNACKS
2-3:PM: OPEN SINGING

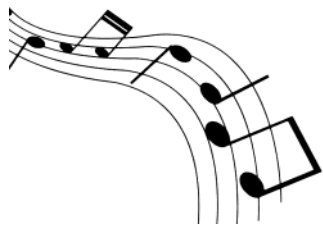


**Shape-note singing is a lively, a cappella singing style
rooted in American sacred folk music.**

**This event is for new & experienced singers alike.
No prior experience needed!**

(In fact, you don't even need to sing - you can just listen & hang out)

visit www.hbrefomedchurch.org for more deets
or email landon@hbrefomedchurch.org



A colorful event poster for "SHEEP AND SHINE Breakfast with The Lambs". The background is light pink. At the top, there are yellow and red triangular bunting flags. Below the flags, there are two bunches of balloons in yellow, red, and orange. The text is centered and reads: "SHEEP AND SHINE Breakfast with The Lambs". Below this, it says "JOIN HIGH BRIDGE REFORMED CHURCH FOR A SPECIAL BREAKFAST FUNDRAISER! ENJOY A GREAT BRAKFAST AND MEET BABY LAMBS! \$10 PER PERSON APRIL 12, 2025, 9 AM - 11 AM 23 CHURCH ST., HIGH BRIDGE, NJ 08829 SCAN QR FOR TICKETS OR EMAIL: WILLIAMSTAATS98@GMAIL.COM RSVP BY APRIL 9 TO CONFIRM YOUR SPOT". At the bottom, there are two cartoon sheep in orange and yellow, standing in green grass with several colorful Easter eggs. A QR code is located in the bottom center, with the text "SCAN ME" next to it.



Please see Wil or Christy
if you would like to help
with the event!



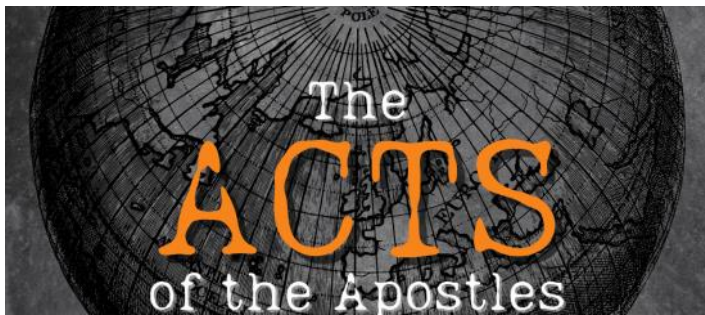
We are in the process of creating a new church directory!
If you would like to be included, please, give your updated information to Jess (Address, Email, Cell Number, birthdays, etc.)



HBRC Bible Study Opportunities



Starting on Thursday nights in May at 7:00pm...
Crafters! Bring your current project to work on while we discuss key passages of scripture. Not really that crafty, or need a new project to start, we got you! Start up projects will be available too!



Starting May 8th at 10:00am Join Pastor Ed for a journey through the Book of Acts (aka The Acts of the Apostles) This is the amazing story of the founding and growth of the early church after Christ's ascension. It highlights the missionary journeys of the apostles, particularly Peter and Paul, empowered by the Holy Spirit. Acts documents the spread of the Gospel, the inclusion of Gentiles, and the establishment of Christian communities.

North Hunterdon Ecumenical Fellowship round robin VBS is happening again this summer! Five action packed, fun filled nights on June 30th , July 7, 14, 21, & 28. But we need your help! To volunteer contact Pastor Ed.





Proposal for the Restructuring of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic

As most of you know the RCA is undergoing a significant restructuring to enhance effectiveness, strengthen connections, and streamline its' governance. In response to denomination wide restructuring, it has been proposed to move from a four tiered structure composed of the Consistory, a newly formed Middle Assembly, and the Synod.

A proposal has been drafted to take our current Regional Synod (which consists of five Classis: City, Delaware-Raritan, Greater Palisades, Passaic Valley, and New Brunswick) and form each of these into its own Middle Assembly. With these Middle Assemblies assuming the responsibilities of both the Classis and Regional Synod. These responsibilities include:

ties include:

Ecclesiastical Oversight: Examination and ordination of misters, supervision of churches, and pastoral care for clergy.

Judicial Functions: Establishing and overseeing a judicial body within each Middle Assembly to handle discipline and disputes in accordance with the Book of Church Order.

Congregational Support: Providing guidance on church health, revitalization, and mission strategies.

Administrative Duties: Managing records, overseeing church properties, and facilitating orderly governance.

Representation to the Synod: Ensuring each Middle Assembly maintains a voice in the broader denomination.

In addition, it has been proposed that a new entity known as the Mid-Atlantic Network be established. This network of churches will serve as a hub for joint ventures and ministry resourcing among the five Middle Assemblies creating synergy for innovation in worship, outreach and discipleship, shared mission and ministry development, stewardship resources, technology support, and specialized ministries.

If approved these measures would go into effect beginning in July of 2025 with all legal restructuring and network formation in place by June of 2027. Any asset transfers will be completed by June of 2028.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Pastor Ed.



Thanks to all who donated and helped to prepare Easter baskets for the children of North Hunterdon Food Pantry. 26 baskets were prepared and delivered...



Upcoming Events

✝ April 2 ~ 6pm

Wednesday Vespers

Bethlehem Presbyterian

✝ April 4~ 7p

Movie Night

✝ April 9 ~ 6pm

Wednesday Vespers

HBRC

✝ April 12 ~ 9-11am

Breakfast with Lambs

✝ April 13 ~ 10am

Palm Sunday Service

✝ April 13 ~ 1pm

Shape-Note Singing School

✝ April 16~ 7pm

Consistory Meeting

✝ April 17~ 6pm

Maundy Thursday

Bethlehem Presbyterian

✝ April 18~ Good Friday

2pm @ Bethlehem Presbyterian

7pm @ HBRC

✝ April 20~ 10 am

Flowering the Cross

Easter Sunday Service

✝ April 24 ~ 11:30a

Fellowship Luncheon

Franks Pizza

Announcements

- ✝ Communion is the first Sunday of the month.
- ✝ Coffee Hour and Mission is the 3rd Sunday of the month(Except March and April)
- ✝ If you are interested in being on the prayer chain please reach out to Susan.
- ✝ Sunday School meets every Sunday after Children's Message in the Kid Zone Room.



Join Our Family...

If you have been attending worship with us in person or online and are interested in becoming a member, please contact Pastor Ed or the church office.

We'd love to have you as part of our family!

If you have information you would like to see in the newsletter please reach out to Jess or email info@hbrefomedchurch.org