

BRADEN RIVER BUZZ—SPRING 2025

PREACHING SERIES MARCH/APRIL

AMAZING LENT HOW SWEET IT IS!



Jesus said: 'When you fast, do not look somber...wash your face and put oil on it!' -Matthew 6:16,17

I am glad we Protestants have finally gotten on the bandwagon about Lent. In the early church, Lent was the 40-day period when the newly converted were given intense instruction in the faith climaxing with a grand celebration of their baptism on Easter Sunday.

Kudos to those branches of the wider Christian Church that seek to utilize fasting, prayer and almsgiving (i.e. above and beyond the tithe) and other spiritual disciplines.

On the other hand, we encounter trivializations of what should be a serious attempt at repentance and spiritual growth. Forgive me for playing the lmp, but I must ask: "C'mon, does God really care whether you give up chocolates or Facebook before Easter?"

In the Reformed tradition we call for a time of FEASTING, NOT FASTING...on the Word of God.

Thus, the forthcoming Lenten preaching series: **AMAZING LENT...HOW SWEET!** Throughout the next six weeks we will examine episodes in Jesus' life and ministry. On the surface they may not TASTE sweet; there nonetheless is a sweetness that GLADDENS the believer's soul.

Our ears will perk up hearing the more joyous strains that Lent echoes from the life of our Lord: Jesus' triumph over temptation, his compassion for sinners over 'righteous people', his being the healing Lord of the Sabbath, as well as his powerful word of love 'outsiders' like the Roman Centurion.

You could say all of the above exude, what Apostle Paul, in describing Jesus' servant life as a "sweet, fragrant sacrifice given to God." (Ephesians 5:2)

Pastor Chuck





A WEEK TO REMEMBER AT BRADEN RIVER CHURCH



Be sure and share in the glory that believers around the world have described as 'Holy Week.' It begins on Palm Sunday (April 13) shouting Hosanna to the Coming King.

Holy Week continues with our traditional **Maundy Thursday** Soup & Salad Meal (April 17) at 5pm followed by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shared around tables.

Be sure and take part in a one hour **GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE** (April 18) at 2pm. We sing the great hymns about the Cross, hear the Word read and preached and come away thankful for all Christ did on this most solemn day.

Of course, Holy Week would not have much meaning without the proclamation of Jesus' Resurrection. Join the celebration on **EASTER SUNDAY** (April 20) at 10am with the joyous, triumphant strains of *Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!*



Pastor's Page



ENRICH YOUR LENTEN EXPERIENCE...

CONCERTS OF PRAYER

What is a **CONCERT OF PRAYER**? Well, first cast off any pre-conceived notions of an 'old fashion prayer meeting. It is a Scripture-based, dynamic experience of encountering God through focused prayer.

A big question most folks have is—I'm not good at praying 'out loud.' An honest response: It's not about *performance* but rather the *earnestness* of what is on your heart. An extra bonus is the deep fellowship you share and enjoy with other believers.

BRPC will be holding four **CONCERTS OF PRAYER** on Tuesdays at 11am through Holy Week. We already held our first one on March 18 with a great turnout. The next three are scheduled for March 25, April 1 and 8. We end promptly at 12Noon.

Further questions? Feel free to reach out to Pastor Chuck (941.800.8428) or Elder Cecy Grabowski (651.472.4472).

Expect Great Things for God...

Attempt Great Things for God...

William Carey, Pioneer Missionary to India



ST. PATRICK'S DAY@ BRPC BOTH SAD & HAPPY...

The Braden River Church Family was all geared up for a celebrative pre-St. Patrick's Day event with a guest preacher and something happened.

Rev. Jonathan Bachman, wife Robynn and family were scheduled to be with us on Sunday, March 16, but alas the entire Bachman clan succumbed to the nasty and contagious FLU hitting this region of the Sunshine state.

Jonathan and Robynn, you will recall, are college ministers who have a Christ-centered presence on all of the colleges and universities in the great Sarasota/Bradenton area.

All was not lost, however: Our Fellowship Committee put on their outstanding St. Patrick's Potluck with large portions of traditional fare like Corned Beef & Cabbage, Shepherd's Pie along with other mouthwatering dishes to chose from. Great job, team!

Pastor Chuck received the sad text from Rev. Bachman late Friday night and "subbed" by giving the story of the REAL St. Patrick the missionary (minus the blarney) who brought the gospel of Jesus Christ to Ireland.

The question was asked: How soon can we have Jonathan and Robynn back? Session will decide but we certainly hope 'sooner rather than later.'

Session Summary

First 100 Days

Your Session has been hard at work meeting monthly and “in between” during this first quarter of 2025. Here is a summary (albeit a condensed version) of what they’ve been up to:



Called for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation to be held on January 25, 2025.



Presented a change to the by-laws to be presented to the congregation establishing ‘a Board of Deacons of no less than three members.’



Appointed Elder MaryAlice McDonald to chair the Congregational Nominating Committee whose at-large members will include Sally Peth and Ruth Rumsey.



Adopted the 2025 Budget totaling \$138,000 to be presented to the Congregation at the annual meeting.



Invited our local missionaries Rev. Jonathan & Mrs. Robynn Bachman to come on March 16 to bring the Word and share news of their ministry at area colleges and universities.



Invited Mrs. Charmaine Pongratz, a ruling elder in our presbytery, to consult with us regarding options in our administration of finances, including the possibility of acquiring new staff.



In the Works: Replacing the two church signs lost during the last year’s hurricane; replacing the Worship service computer; repair/replace the front doors, roof areas, sidewalk separations; and giving special attention to inside walls and flooring.



There was serious discussion about livestreaming our Sunday worship services via YouTube and also using graphics for the liturgical components such as prayers, Scripture and hymns. I



CONSIDER IT DONE! Repaired and painted the Lentz building ramp and stairs and resealed the parking lot.



Braden River Church Presents

15

A
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Luncheon

12:30pm

Tuesday



All
Welcome

*Bring a
Friend*

Location: McGrath's Kitchen & Cocktails

8110 Lakewood Main Street, Bradenton

Food, Music, Drink!!



SIGN UP ON BULLETIN BOARD



JOIN US!!- Thursday, March 27th

**Ferry leaves Bradenton at 10am
(meet at church at 9am to carpool)**

Return at 12:30pm from Bridge Street

Cost:

Under 60: \$10.70

Age 60-80: \$6.42

Over 80: Free

Lunch at Oyster Bar at Bridge Street

CONTACT MARYALICE MCDONALD

WITH QUESTIONS

Sign up on the Bulletin Board

A CAST OF THOUSANDS? NO, JUST ONE 'UNSUNG HERO'



Remember Old Hollywood? Think Ben Hur or Cleopatra—when the cinema tycoons would brag about movie starring Charlton Heston or Elizabeth Taylor *and a cast of thousands*.

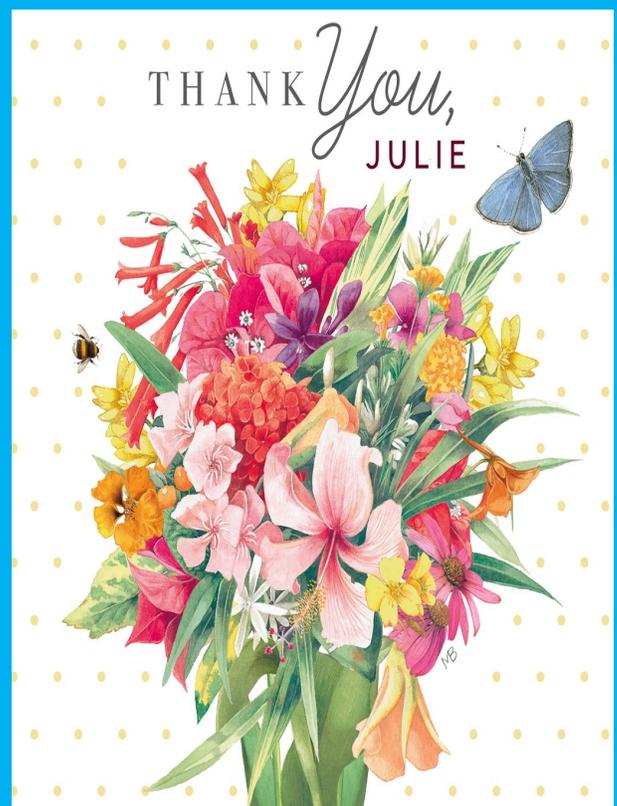
Braden River Church does not have Charlton or Elizabeth but we do have someone better: Julie McMahon. And who needs a *cast of thousands* when you have someone like this true servant of the Lord?

Julie has quietly and effectively overseen much of Braden River Church's finances for the last 2 years as the Church Treasurer. Actually, it is a responsibility that entailed the work of three or four people but landed squarely on her shoulders.

Julie has thought it best to step aside during this time of transition. Thus, began the search for additional staff to handle the workload. In case you are not aware, she has taken care of all financial accounts, giving, reimbursements, in addition to shaping up our yearly church budget.

In reluctantly accepting Julie's decision, without skipping a beat Pastor Chuck was heard to remark: "Don't relax too long...I've already got something planned to keep you busy."

Thank you, Julie, for the superb job of doing the Lord's work here at BRPC.



History in the Making—Election of Deacons

Would you like to witness history in the making?

A special meeting of the Congregation has been called for Sunday, March 30, 2025 immediately following the worship service, for the sole purpose of electing a Board of Deacons.

You will recall that at the annual meeting of the Congregation and Corporation in January, BRPC's bylaws were amended to authorize the election of a Board of Deacons of no fewer than three members.

Nominating Committee Chairperson, Elder MaryAlice McDonald reports that they will be presenting the following slate:

Class of 2025 Dr. Wally Smith
Class of 2026 Mrs. Cheryl Tribe
Class of 2027 Mrs. Linda Stamos-Ojeda

We are grateful to the work of the Nominating Committee and hope you will give them a huge vote of confidence by 'staying a minute afterward' on March 30!



Welcome Doreen Hawkins Our Newest Staff



Jesus said: 'Seek, and ye shall find...knock and the door will be opened.' (Matthew 7:7)

Well that's exactly what happened. Session was seeking a part-time Financial Administrator and the Lord graciously answered. The door swung open in the person of Mrs. Doreen Hawkins whom Session heard at their March meeting. She begins duties on April 1. But we'll let Doreen introduce herself in her own words...

"Bradenton Florida has been my home for most of my life. I have been married for 39 years to my high school sweetheart Emery and we have 4 grown children. For many years I was an at-home, homeschool mom until the last one graduated from high school. Also, during that time I was employed as a Bookkeeper for an electrical company for 24 years. Currently, I serve full time as the Financial Administrator for First Presbyterian Church in downtown Bradenton. My husband and I are members of Grace Community Church in Lakewood Ranch and I also lead the Women's Ministry Mentorship program at my home church."

2025 EASTER OFFERING...

MADAGASCAR...MORE THAN LEMURS

No doubt you have heard of Madagascar. Perhaps you know that they are the one place on earth where those cuddly little creatures called LEMURS are found. And then that there was a cute 2005 animated movie called MADAGASCAR that your grandchildren thoroughly enjoyed.

But Madagascar is much, much more than that. It is a huge, California-size Island off the southeast coast of Africa with a booming population of 32 million souls. Believe it or not, our “Small But Mighty Church” has a stake in that. It’s because two of our mission partners have been there.



Meet Dr. Daniel and Mrs. Elizabeth Turk who have been our Presbyterian missionaries to this exotic land. They have served there for a quarter of a century. Dan is the guy who has a Ph.D. in agronomy and engaged in agricultural missionary work. Elizabeth is a medical mission specialist who engages in health care. They have been supported by Peace River Presbytery for two decades.

For the 2025 Easter Offering the Session has laid out a challenge to the BRPC family: Your leaders would like to lay out a ‘target’ goal of \$3,000 designated to these two servants of the Lord in a land far, far away. Why is this important? Read the article below and you’ll find out why.

Church Global Workers to Be Terminated on March 24, 2025

Not to be dramatic associated with Pearl Harbor or FDR, but in church-speak, March 25, 2025 is a “Day that will live in Infamy” for our beloved Presbyterian Church (USA) On that day, all financial support for our global mission-partners will be terminated. Although given six months’ notice, this still leaves many throughout our denomination stunned. That’s why the BRPC Session stepped up to say: “we don’t want this mission work to die.” More details forthcoming in the days and weeks ahead.





A Big Thank You
From the Bachman's to
BRPC

Jan. 2025
Dear Braden River Church family,
WOW! We were so blessed by
your generous Christmas Joy offering
to our ministry. Our hearts are filled
with gratitude and we are thankful
to serve the Lord alongside you,
partnering in the gospel to reach the
next generation. Your generous
gift will ^{be} used to help us with our
upcoming Valentine's and Easter
outreaches as well as provide
scholarships for students to attend
our Spring Conference called "Refresh."
Because of your support, we can continue
to be a beacon of hope and truth, even
on hostile college campuses, pointing
students to Christ and strengthening their
faith. Sending our love in the Lord to
each of you and your amazing pastor!
God bless! The Bachmans

April Birthdays

Cecy Grabowski	April 1
Sandy Robarge	April 21
Shaun Spangler	April 23
Sandy Monroe	April 28

May Birthdays

Evelyn Sklair	May 12
Pam Tuohey	May 19
John Grabowski	May 21

June Birthdays

Ruth Rumsey	June 12
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April Anniversaries

None

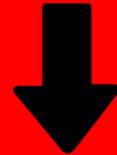
May Anniversaries

John & Cecy Grabowski May 28

June Anniversaries

Jim & Pam Tuohey June 22

Sometimes Session Meetings
go a bit long!!!



Pastor: Rev. Dr. Charles J. Wiggins
Parish Associate: Rev. Luis Ojeda
Music Director: Shaun Spangler
Office Manager: Shaun Spangler
Clerk of Session: Lois McGill
Treasurer: Ed Tribe
Sunday Worship: 10:00 am Blended Worship Service
Tuesday: 7:30 pm CoDA Meeting



OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday through Thursday 8:00am-1pm
Church e-mail: church@bradenriverpc.com
Pastor Chuck's Telephone: (941) 800-8428
Church Cell Phone: (941) 315-0701
Pastor Chuck's Email: cjw049@gmail.com
Facebook: Braden River Church

