



## The **Red** Brick Church in Stillman Valley

(Evangelical, Independent)

207 W. Roosevelt Road, PO Box 370

Stillman Valley, Illinois 61084-0370

Rev. Dr. Chris Brauns | Associate Pastor David Bogner

**DECEMBER 2023  
NEWSLETTER**

CHURCH PHONE  
645-2526

### Christians Just Want to Have Fun

Are we going to have fun? That's what I am thinking about as your pastor this Christmas season.

The old people (as well as those who listen to oldies) may recall that in 1983 Cyndi Lauper reduced the aspirations of women everywhere to the simple declaration, "Girls just want to have fun." The song struck a chord. Lauper's tune has been covered by over 30 artists and was named one of the top 100 songs of all time.

We might wonder why "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" was such a hit. To be sure, it was not great poetry. No one will compare it to Beethoven's "Ode to Joy." Cyndi Lauper's hairstyle was questionable. And, as a man, I sort of resent the implication that it is only the sisters who want to enjoy life. But in any case, the song climbed the chart.

Parenthesis: I wonder if I am the only pastor/theologian in history to analyze Cyndi Lauper's music. It is possible.

But here's the deal. Maybe the reason the song resonated is that because one of the *needs* of human beings is to have fun, to experience joy, to laugh, to be free of all the demands of life that weigh us down.

Cyndi Lauper was wrong, of course, to say that anyone "*just*" wants to have fun. Life is too full of significance and meaning to be reduced to the simple pursuit of fun. And pursuing fun as an end is itself a sure strategy for not having fun at all. But, again, Lauper was on to something in that we do need fun.

The question then, becomes, how do we legitimately pursue joy and celebration. And how as a pastor do I help our people pursue that vision. All Christians – not just the ladies – want to have fun.

Thinking about how we can celebrate and be joyous and have fun takes me to the book of Nehemiah. You know I often quote Nehemiah 12:43.

*And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.  
Nehemiah 12:43*

That verse gives the vision for our Christmas Gift exchange. But everyone just wants to have fun at Christmas. The question becomes "*how*"? How do we go about pursuing joy this Christmas season?

I think a big part of the answer to how we're going to have fun is found in Nehemiah 8. Throughout December at different points, I will point out some ingredients that combined give a recipe for joy. Maybe you should read Nehemiah 8 in advance and see if you can identify how your family could have a more joyous Christmas. We do, after all, want to have fun. *And the joy of the Lord is our strength* (Nehemiah 8:10).

## CHAIRMAN OF BOARDS/COMMITTEES

Deacon Board – Clayton Midtsem...262-4254  
Deaconess Board – Deb Bonne .....979-0885  
Trustee Board – Brad Baker.....670-0039  
CE Committee – Cara Roberts 217-621-2460  
Mission Com. – Clayton Midtsem ....262-4254  
Music – Lance Mennen .....985-2484

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Through November 30, 2023

**Total Approved 2023 Budget = \$559,800**

Divided by 52 weeks/year = **\$10,765**

Budget Giving through Nov. 30 ..... \$516,738  
Actual Giving through Nov. 30..... \$528,460  
Budget Giving vs. Actual Giving ..... \$11,722  
Actual Expenses through 11/30/23..... \$494,332  
Actual Giving less Actual Expenses ..... \$34,128



Please note that in order to be counted for 2023 tax purposes, all church contributions need to be **RECEIVED** by the church office no later than **DECEMBER 31<sup>st</sup>**. Any contributions received after that date, *regardless of check date or postmark*, will be counted as a 2024 contribution.

If anyone needs an update on what they have given, or has any questions at all, please contact either:

Terri Carby, Church Treasurer  
630-651-9962 | niucpa@hotmail.com

Jana Cox, Church Administrative Assistant  
815-645-2526 | cccoffice1@comcast.net

## SV Community Christmas

Thanks to all who came to Cardinal Community Christmas. A special thanks to all those that helped out Sunday and prior. The deaconess served 300 donuts and handed out 125 treats to children. Many area groups sang beautiful Christmas Carols during the evening. The live nativity was a big hit. The adorable miniature cow and donkey were provided by Hahn's Family Farm. The Peterson's provided the tent to keep our nativity out of the cool December weather. Also, a big thanks to the greeters at the Brick Center and our Nativity scene volunteers.



**One Service Sundays**

We will have only a 9:00 am service on the following Sundays in December:

**December 17th, 24th and 31st**

No SS or 10:30 am service on those dates.  
Mark you calendars.

**Youth Christmas Prelude**  
This Sunday, December 10th | 9:00 & 10:30 am

*\* Songs should be a church Christmas Carol and no longer than one minute in length.*

Youth wishing to participate in the youth prelude should contact the church office.



**RED BRICK CHURCH GIFT EXCHANGE**

Sunday, December 17th, 2023

9:00 am - One Service with Gift Exchange after the service  
10:30 am - All Church Soup Luncheon  
Noon - All are welcome to join us for Christmas Caroling



- Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> - Elise Bonne
- Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> - John Anderson, Zach Poliska
- Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> - Pete Mazanec, Nathan Dray
- Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> - Sally Johnson, Steve Peterson
- Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> - Lana Lamer
- Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> - Karen Hilliard, Abigail Houston
- Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> - Logan Peterson
- Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> - Donna Jacquet, Kari Janoski
- Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> - Kennedy Watson, Carl Kottke
- Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> - Laura Mennen
- Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> - Betts Carby
- Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> - Ryan Roberts, Jim Warner
- Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> - Ray Swanson
- Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup> - Kendra Booker
- Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> - James Daniels, Steve Arnold,  
Meredith Jones
- Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> - MaryBeth Brauns
- Dec. 28<sup>th</sup> - Natalie Haugse
- Dec. 30<sup>th</sup> - Cameron Wissinger
- Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> - Wren Hickey



The Red Brick Church is so very thankful for the time and talent of Jack Scholl, who painted the Red Brick Church back hallway area this past month. You also may have noticed that the exterior doors to the church have been repainted. This much-needed job was also completed by Jack.

Jack donated his time and talents for this project, and we greatly appreciated how it all turned out. When you get a chance, please tell Jack how much you appreciate his service to the Red Brick Church.

## **AWANA**® THEME NIGHTS

### Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>

M & M Night; bring your banks to club.

### Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>

Light of the World night. Wear white to club.

### Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>

Come dressed in Christmas colors and get ready to shop at our AWANA Christmas Store!

### Wednesday, December 27<sup>th</sup> and January 3<sup>rd</sup>

No Club Meetings on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> as we take time to celebrate Christmas and the birth of our King. We meet again on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024 with our first M & M Night of 2024!

**Gift Exchange**

Things to know about Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>!

- \* Get your name tags in back of church when you arrive.
- \* 1st service is from 9:00 to 9:45 am. (NO 10:30 am service!)
- \* Pick-up children from SS/Nursery at 9:45 am.
- \* Gift Exchange and Caroling starts at 10:00 am.
- \* Soup Luncheon at 10:30 am.
- \* All church caroling following the soup luncheon.

*There will be gifts for everyone!*

**Christmas Choir**

**Come hear the Christmas Choir on the 24<sup>th</sup>!**

**The choir will sing at 9:00 am and 4:00 pm on Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>.**

# From Pastor David ...

***Give the gift of a camp experience to your child or grandchild this year!***

For many years, children and youth of the Red Brick Church have heard the gospel proclaimed at Bible camp. Last summer, Storm Hickey gave Camp Forest Springs credit for helping him see the depth of his sin and his need for the Savior. He shared his testimony when he stepped forward in obedience as a disciple of Jesus and was baptized here at church.

Our church offers a \$100 scholarship to each young person who attends Bible camp. This tells you something about what we believe about camp ministry. It can have a life-changing impact.

In recent years, both camps attended by young people from the Red Brick Church have filled very quickly. Camp Forest Springs in Westboro, Wisconsin already has registration open for the summer camps in 2024. Lake Lundgren Bible Camp in Pembine, Wisconsin opens their registration on January 2, 2024.

Find more information and schedules on the websites of the camps.

Camp Forest Springs: <https://forestsprings.us/youth>

Lake Lundgren Bible Camp: <http://www.llbc.org/new/summer-camps/>

**So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17**

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THE RED BRICK CHURCH OF STILLMAN VALLEY  
PO Box 370  
Stillman Valley, IL 61084

**\*\* RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED \*\***

