

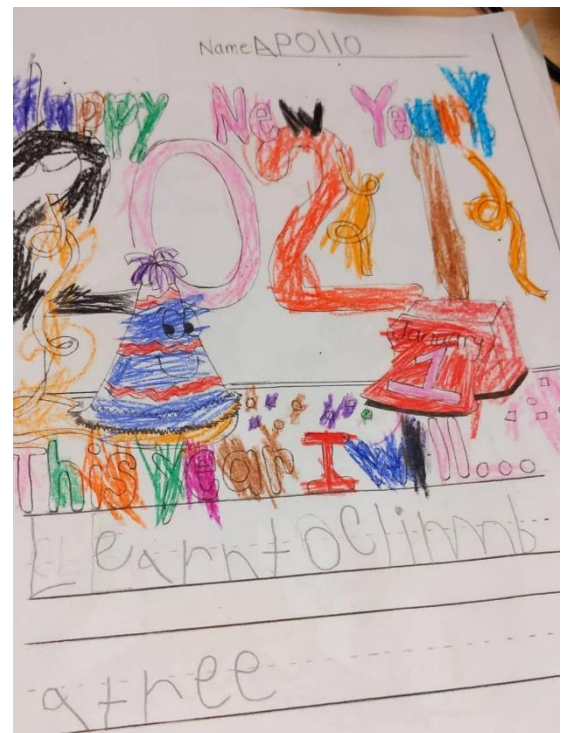
Happy New Year friends!

How are you at making and keeping New Year resolutions? I wish I was better at it. There is always the usual list. I will eat healthier this year. I will read more books. I will do more volunteer work in the community. I will watch less Netflix and take that time to keep in contact with loved ones. I always have high aspirations but I can't say that they always pan out.

This year, Elizabeth and I received a photo of a drawing that our godson Apollo created at his school. He had to fill in the sentence- "My New Year resolution is..." and he completed it with "learn how to climb a tree." There was also a wonderful crayon illustration of him doing just that.

I think this is wonderful. Not only is it creative and realistic. It is not taking something away from his life but it's adding something new. Climbing a tree is also something that will bring him joy.

I invite all of us, in this New Year, to follow his example as we make resolutions about our faith. What if we stopped trying to change those ways in which we might feel like we fall short and instead focus on what brings us and brings God joy. Can we change



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from thinking about things that we will no longer do and claim with excitement our new aspirations?

Let's pray with more gusto. Let's sing hymns as we cook, clean, or walk our dogs. Let's find those stories of scripture that we loved as a child and reread them. Perhaps we could even read them to someone we love. Let's check in with our friends at church, especially those whom we haven't seen for a while, and remind them of our love. Let's go to church, when we are able, not because it is a duty but because it's a gift.

In this New Year, let's not worry about less, but embrace more of Jesus Christ in our lives. Most of us are past the age of climbing trees but we aren't past new chances every day to feel excitement and adventure in our faith.

Blessings be with you this year! Blessings be with our church! Even as the days of 2020 were filled with much worry, I know that the cup of Battery Park Christian Church overfloweth. As we enter the one hundredth year of this beloved community, I look forward to sharing deep gratitude to God on behalf of all these gifts we have received.

Peace and blessings,

Rev. Jonah Smith-Bartlett

Thank you to the 39 members and visitors attending our Christmas eve service





Food Insecurity: The vicious cycle of poverty, food, and health care in our community

Lisa Beckwith

FOOD INSECURITY

“You are what you eat” My grandmother used to say that and follow it up with a tease about

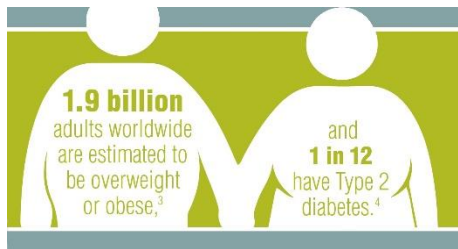
becoming a tomato. As a kid growing up in a middle to lower class family blessed to have an acre of land, fresh, local, natural produce was not a fashion trend. It was how we afforded to keep ourselves fed. Many of you can relate to this as the story of your youth, or even your journey as a parent. In today’s society and especially our urban setting these ways of combatting food insecurity are harder to find.

In the US the average cost of living and eating healthy food looks like \$50 per person per week. In Richmond alone Feedmore identifies over 45,000 food insecure people in our city. “Food Insecure”, means folks who cannot afford to feed themselves healthy nutritious meals while also covering basic living costs, medical care etc. Of those 45,000 only 66% are eligible for SNAP (Food stamps) to help them with ensuring their next meal. SNAP provides only \$29.25 per week for food assistance.



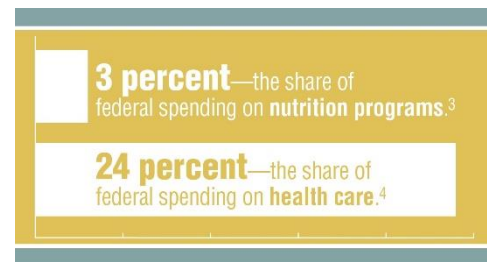
When you are budgeting to live off of \$29.25 per week in groceries your selections are rarely “healthy”. With the costs of meat and fresh foods astronomically more than a box of macaroni and cheese, parents are having to make choices to feed their

families. This leads to kids and adults who are “Fed” but not nutritiously. Surviving off of canned, high sodium, high preservative foods begins a dangerous cycle of health conditions for children growing up in our city. As adults these people are often victims of generational poverty and remain struggling. Adults in food insecure situations are now having to choose food or medicine, rent or doctors appointments.



Data has shown us that children who are born into what we call “Food Deserts” and grow up on processed foods only have a staggering rate of health conditions. Especially heart/high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes (think of all the sodium and processed sugars). The United States spends over \$160 billion in healthcare per year for those who are below the poverty line and in food insecure situations. If you are keeping up with the math... that’s spending 3% Of government funds on food nutrition... and 24% on health care costs that could be eliminated or reduced by supporting food security programs.

As we look at our neighbors we now realize that 29,700 Richmonders are below the poverty line and able to get some assistance from programs like SNAP. For the Richmonders who do make more than \$16,000 per year they are in a unique place.



They make too much to qualify for most assistance programs, but don’t make enough to afford a place to live, the clothes needed to carry out their job and still eat. These families literally “cannot afford to work” because they will go into a place of unrecoverable debt by trying to live a normal life of hard work to care for their family.

The cycle of food insecurity also encompasses mental health. 78 Billion dollars of that medical spending is related to mental health costs associated with living in poverty. People who have to worry about their next meal, their place to sleep and their safety are not only prone to many more medical conditions but are also living through traumatic

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experiences. Helping folks find safety and security in knowing their next meal can be found is a little way to pave a path to better physical and mental health.

So who does this affect? Surely nobody “we” know? Our food ministry is helping “them” the “others”. Well, this is untrue. Not everyone facing food insecurity fits the stereotypes we have come to know. Food insecurity can happen to anyone of any background. Part of ministry is willing be vulnerable and to testify to the power of something as simple... as a can of soup.

If you lost everything you had today, would you need a blessing box? A can of soup? I did. My job here at BPCC came as a provision of God’s timing. Finally freeing myself from a ten-year marriage of mental and verbal abuse that also included the rarely acknowledged financial abuse. This freedom meant that I, a college educated, hardworking, civic minded adult... had nothing. Not a home, a job, a dollar, or a can of soup to feed myself. I survived, from a blessing box at my church until I could get on my feet. Remembering nights where I wasn’t sure if I needed to spend that last \$5 on gas to get to work, or on food. This takes a toll on your physical and mental health. The food choices you have to make aren’t healthy, the life choices you have to make break you.

The women I met here at Christmas trying to feed their children from our blessing box helped remind me that this is a never-ending crisis. Being able to talk to one of them, to relate when she didn’t think I’d ever known a day without a meal. It was real ministry, in the dark, on the sidewalk, Jesus’ love shown by items placed by BPCC members. On my days in office, I make sure we kept the box full of the right choices for her family and others as she worked above the poverty line but below a decent wage.



So how do we help?

We support projects like Charlie's Blessing Box. We stock it with healthy food options as able. Bring those to the office, we have worked out a timing related to when other churches stock theirs so we are helping the community on a schedule

We bring awareness to the community to help us keep this stocked. People love to help, they love to see real examples of what can happen in their own community if they invest. It grows our community, our church and can bring people into our church that have never seen the inside of a sanctuary.

We support local programs. Did you know faith based food groups such as Shalom farms in Richmond offers fresh produce, as close to year round as possible? They are stocking small coolers in downtown gas stations so people without transportation can have access to healthy options. They are offering produce and accepting SNAP (Food stamps) and doing it at 50%. Families now can get double the produce for half the cost. Shalom (pre-pandemic) always needs gardening volunteers to sit and plant seed trays, to harvest potatoes and much more.



Finally, we can love. We can learn about poverty, about food insecurity. We can learn to love and understand folks from where they are today. To love them unjudgementally and support them with physical needs as they try to overcome obstacles.

Stamp World Tour

With USPS handling mail, a surplus of packages from online ordering, mail in ballots and the Christmas rush, we've seen delays and lost mail across the news. Our own little box of stamps took themselves on a small tour of the continent in November and December. I often order fun holiday stamps and have them dropped in our PO Box for the Evangel. However, this delivery accidentally missed our box and visited many sunny

places! Our stamps were ordered in mid-November to accommodate for the 5-business day processing time, and arrived on Christmas eve! Check out some of the cool places our stamps went on their world tour!



December 13, 2020
In Transit to Next Facility

December 9, 2020, 6:49 pm
Arrived at USPS Regional Facility
HONOLULU HI DISTRIBUTION CENTER

December 8, 2020, 3:14 am
Departed USPS Regional Facility
BARRIGADA GU DISTRIBUTION CENTER

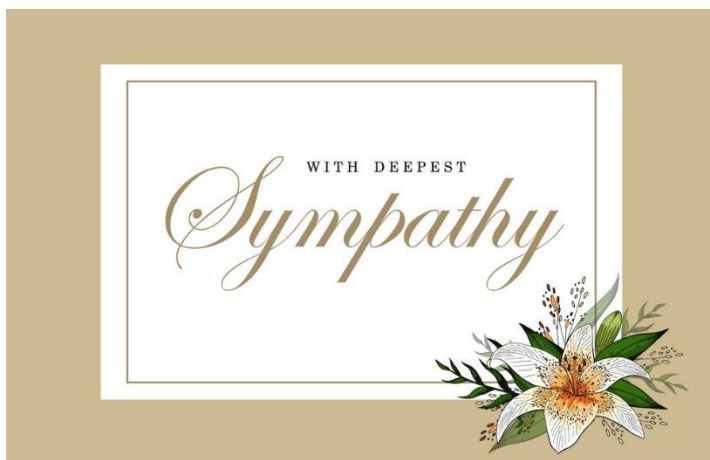
December 7, 2020, 9:36 pm
Arrived at USPS Regional Facility
BARRIGADA GU DISTRIBUTION CENTER

December 2, 2020, 1:41 pm
Arrived at USPS Regional Facility
RICHMOND VA DISTRIBUTION CENTER

December 2, 2020, 9:31 am
Departed USPS Facility
HYATTSVILLE, MD 20785

December 2, 2020, 3:30 am
Arrived at USPS Facility
HYATTSVILLE, MD 20785

December 1, 2020, 5:49 am
Departed USPS Regional Facility
KANSAS CITY MO DISTRIBUTION CENTER



Battery Park Christian Church extends its deepest sympathies on the passing of William Mixon, Brother of Francis Lucas

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The church office is open physically twice per week and virtually anytime!

Church Office: Monday & Thursday 8am – 1pm

-Emails, Voicemails, Paper mail, and in house admin (bills, facility maintenance etc)

Virtually: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday

- Emails, Website, Tech Support, Prepping bi- weekly mailings and other duties as needed.

Worship and Study Alternative Options

If you are not able to access our worship services online and would like a copy of Rev. Jonah's sermon mailed to your home please request these to Jonah or Lisa.

Also we still have a few copies of "Our Daily Bread" Devotional available for members who would like this mailed out.



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January Birthdays

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Lucy Baughn | 1/1 |
| Jonah Smith-Bartlett | 1/3 |
| Danny Broaddus | 1/5 |
| GT Nuckols | 1/5 |
| Nancy Gale | 1/9 |
| Barbara Lucord | 1/11 |
| Piper Carr | 1/11 |
| William Blake | 1/13 |
| Patsy Stockdon | 1/14 |
| David Wagner | 1/15 |
| Linda Hundley | 1/15 |
| Troy Williams | 1/15 |
| Chris Daniel | 1/17 |
| Meghan Ramos | 1/18 |
| Nancy Phillips | 1/22 |
| Diana Heller | 1/23 |
| Winnie Bobbio | 1/24 |
| Laura Isley | 1/25 |
| Suzie Bodenheimer | 1/29 |
| George Nuckolls Jr | 1/24 |