

“SON”SHINE **Newsletter**



Special Edition **Scholarship Sunday 2025**

Reformation Lutheran Church
633 S. New York Road,
Galloway, NJ 08205
609-652-8431

<https://www.rlc.church>

Summer Services at 9:30am
(8:30 & 10:00 am Fall & Winter Services)
(Sunday School 10 am)

Rev. Heidi Link, Pastor
Brian Conover, Music Director
Stacie Krouse, Church Secretary
reformationlutheranni@gmail.com

Pastor Neil Jaggie's Message **(Luke 12:13-21)**

Did you listen closely to the parable this morning? The word of the Lord is spoken here as clearly as possible. If you were thinking about your Shop-Rite grocery list moments ago, let me now remind you what we shouldn't forget when the Lord declares, "Fool, this very night your soul may be required of you. And the things that you have prepared, secured, hoarded, whose will they be?" This is a parable that I have pondered often. It is one that stops me in my tracks, and I hope it does you, too. Now I'm going to tell you what I think about, and not someone else. Most of us live as if today is everything! Eating, drinking, relaxation, and pursuing happiness are common pursuits on which we often invest significant time, energy, and talent. Over the years, I have spent many a day traveling to cemeteries with those who took no heed to the warning, "Tonight your soul may be required of you." Into the good earth I have put many who thought that they had made preparations for whatever a rainy day might bring them except for the deluge of the night in which they might be called into account.

When the Lord asks you, “Child, what did you do with the precious life and gifts I offered you?” Will you be brazen enough to declare, “Well, Lord, I built some mighty fine barns to hold all my stuff!” If so, be ready for him to respond, “Barns? Barns? You built what? Did I hear you say barns? I have one word for you, ... “Fool.”

Engraved on tombstones you will find many fine epithets etched in granite. “Forever in our hearts.” “Until we meet again.” “Loved by all.” “Devoted, Faithful, Loyal.” “Gone but not forgotten.” But the epithet I have never seen etched in stone is “Here lies a fool.” This world has been overwhelmed by fools from generation to generation. I often wonder where they are all buried.

Today the Gospel hits us over the head with a wake-up call. However, this morning I want to focus on those who live as the antithesis of foolishness. To do so, I can serve up no better antidote to foolishness than by pointing to the life, example and faith, of Blanche Harffey, who set for us a mighty high bar.

The ultimate question of life is: “What are we living for?” To build barns or to build a legacy? Fools build barns. Saints build lives. I am here to tell you that Blanche Harffey and like-minded people committed and continue to commit themselves not to building barns but to assist in building hearts and minds. That will allow a person to become more faithful, productive, educated, generous, well-rounded members of their families, communities, churches, and the world.

A legacy is what remains of us when we are no longer physically present. A legacy is not about the barns we leave behind but the values, faith, and spiritual impact that continues to live in the hearts we leave behind. Fools just pass through life. The fruitful faithful leave behind footprints that put the generations who follow on the path to a purposeful life.

The legacy of Blanche Harffey was birthed around a kitchen table and sown out of the seeds of her lifetime of faith, her love for the youth around her, and her

blessed spirit of generosity. Blanche has been gone for 20 years. The fund has existed for 33 years. We should be in awe of the legacy that bears the name of Blanche Harffey.

In the first year of the fund, 9 students received \$800, for a total of \$7,200. This year 16 students receive \$5,000 a year totaling \$80,000. In 33 years, 95 students have now received the jaw dropping sum of \$1,021,000. Blanche would be filled with awed amazement. The gifts have eased the burden of our youth to become physicians, nurses, psychologists, therapists, radiology techs, educators, managers, military personnel, clergy, dog groomers, I.T. gurus, house parents, and God knows what else. Blanche's kids are leaving a mark on this world, and this is fulfillment of Blanche's legacy dream.

My dream for you who are now one of Blanche's kids, though you never knew her, would be that you never forget to speak her name with a sense of gratitude and appreciation. In doing so, you play a part in keeping Blanche alive. For it is said that no one is really dead until no one is left to speak your name.

To students, parents, to all gathered, let me say, "The legacy you leave behind is the proof that you lived! Make your life count not just for today but for all eternity."

Students, what will you do with your life? Will you build barns or respond to the words of the prophet Micah who reminds, "You have been told, O mortal, what is good and what the Lord requires of you: to do justice, to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God."

Friends, let us forget the barns and build lives instead that promote justice, love goodness and desire a humble journey with God. This is the path. The only path for leaving all foolishness behind.

May all of us thank Blanche Harffey for being a mentor of faith who showed us the way to doing what the lord requires!

Blanche Harffey Higher Education Fund Awards

The 2025 BHHEF awards were presented at a special Sunday service on August 3, 2025. Sixteen students who were granted scholarships this year gathered with our congregation to worship and to share some insights of their student life. The 16 students this academic year were awarded \$2500 each semester (Fall/Spring.) A time of fellowship and food was offered (*as Lutherans love to do!*) following the 9:30a.m. morning service

The Rev. Heidi Link, Pastor at Reformation Lutheran Church, assembled a PowerPoint presentation corresponding with brief speeches at the lectern from each scholarship student as they came forward to receive their award. Special music was offered by Alex DeStefano, one of the scholarship awardees, who played a keyboard selection. The Rev. Neil Jaggie, retired Pastor from Epiphany Lutheran, preached.

Blanche's generosity and foresight continues at RLC (from the merger with Epiphany Lutheran Church of Pleasantville.) Applications for Scholarships are open to candidates from Reformation Lutheran Church in Absecon-Galloway, and Grace Lutheran Church in Somers Point. Students who are faithful Christians and whose families are active members of these congregations may apply. This legacy in the past 34 years has granted 93 students a total of \$1,021,094.00! Applications are accepted January 1 – March 31 each year. The Committee meets in April, and the awards are announced in May. You may find the application form at the RLC website. <https://www.rlc.church>

Blanche's Prayer

“Good morning God, you have ushered in another day,
untouched and freshly new, so here I come to ask you God if
you'll renew me to forgive the many wrongs I made yesterday
and let me again, dear God to walk closer to your ways, but
Father I'm well aware that I cannot do it on my own, so take
my hand, hold it tight, I cannot walk alone. Amen”



2025 Scholarship Committee

Rev. Heidi Link, Pastor RLC
 Erin O'Hanlon, Council President
 Phyllis Phelps, Treasurer *Emerita*
 Clare Brick, Grace Lutheran
 Vickie Costello, Grace Lutheran
 Curtis Hinmon, RLC



COME SHARE THE SPIRIT

The scholarships for Academic Year 2025-2026 were granted as follows:

NEW APPLICANTS

Trevor D'Angelo, Tokyo Central Japanese School
 (Language Certificate)
Olivia Phelps, Atlantic Cape Community College
 (Business)
Dante Trozzo, University of Akron
 (Emergency Management)
Sophia Fineran, Atlantic Cape Community College
 (Health Sciences)
Emily Silipigni, Stockton University
 (Psychology)
Brayden Wright, St. John Fisher University
 (Biology)
Olivia Bartelle, Charleston Southern University
 (Nursing)

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RENEWAL APPLICANTS

Hannah Yin Lopez, Atlantic Cape Community College, NJ
(Baking and Pastry Arts)

Audrey Seals, The College of New Jersey
(Nursing)

Harley Pattison, Atlantic Cape Community College, NJ
(Exercise Science)

Lindsey Pattison, Atlantic Cape Community College, NJ
(Psychology)

Sawyer Widecrantz, Lees-McRae College, NC
(Sports Management)

Lyndsey Millere, Alvernia University, Reading, PA
(Biology, Physicians Associate)

Luke Kroon, Penn State University, PA
(Computer Engineering)

Kabeh Kermion, (online) Wilmington University, DE
(RN-BSN)

Alexander DeStefano, Rowan University, NJ
(Music Education, Instrumental)

Not Pictured: Harley Pattison & Lindsey Patterson





BLANCHE S. HARFFEY (January 15, 1911 – May 19, 2005)

Blanche Shainline was born on January 15, 1911, near Norristown, Pennsylvania of German descent. She became a Registered Nurse serving in the Army Nursing Corps during World War II, retiring as a Captain. She eventually moved to the South Jersey area and became an instructor in the Atlantic City Hospital Nursing School located on Pacific Ave. During this time, while in her forties, she married Charles Harffey, and they eventually made their home in Northfield. Blanche and Charles never had children of their own, but the kids of Epiphany Lutheran Church, the children of her friends, and the kids in the neighborhood became her children. She loved them all, and taught many of them this prayer which she said every morning,

“Good morning God, you have ushered in another day, untouched and freshly new, so here I come to ask you God if you'll renew me to forgive the many wrongs I made yesterday and let me again, dear God to walk closer to your ways, but Father I'm well aware that I cannot do it on my own, so take my hand, hold it tight, I cannot walk alone.”

We believe that one of Blanche's life sorrows was never being a mom, but for that sorrow God compensated her by making her a mother to many. Soldiers buzzed by bombs, blinded by shrapnel, wounded by bullets, or one that died as she held his hand, she called them “her guys.” If you were one of her students in nursing school or mentored in your first year on the ward or floor, you were one of “her girls.” If you were an intern, you were one of “her Docs,” but if you needed a quick lesson in bedside manner, she would take you down a peg or two. Dearest to her heart were the children of Epiphany, her neighborhood children, or grandchildren of friends.

Blanche had no family and in the early 1990s she spoke to Pastor Neil Jaggie about creating a lasting legal legacy. She wanted “her kids” to be alive, to be faithful, to be servants, and to have the opportunities for growth and education easier than she experienced during her youth. She donated a sum of money that would provide the principle for seeing that “her church kids” could better see their dreams and opportunities that she envisioned for them come to fruition. Her desire was to establish a Higher Education Scholarship Fund. Today this fund, which bears her name, through her initiative and the ongoing support of both her and other donors who shared her vision, has become The Blanche Harffey Higher Education Scholarship Fund. It was established on November 19, 1999, with \$48,000. Since that time on a yearly basis, it has helped many Christian youths with their educational costs. The current value (06-30-2025) of the Fund is \$1,400,771.96.

Upon her death in May 2005, at the age of 94, her estate set up a trust fund that puts interest or dividends into the principal of the fund four times every year. The Blanche Harffey Higher Education Scholarship Fund has grown quite large and has helped many of “her kids.” Applications for the scholarship are available in January each year from Reformation Lutheran Church and must be returned by March 31st of each year. Five church members and the Pastor serve as the Scholarship Committee.

A Timeline of Highlights

Blanche Harffey Higher Education Fund

November 10, 1991 – Epiphany Lutheran Church ratifies The Blanche Harffey Higher Education Fund into the By-laws of the church constitution. The Rev. Neil Jaggie, Pastor; Curtis Hinmon, Council President.

April 1992 – First meeting of the BHHEF Committee. As per By-laws, the five committee members were **Rev. Neil Jaggie, Pastor; John Brick, “permanent” member, as able; Verna Grunow, Church Treasurer; and two appointees, Hans Wasshem and Curtis Hinmon.** Nine applications were received and accepted.

September 1992/December 1992 -- Distribution of the nine Awards for 1992-1993 Academic Year. The income in Year One, \$7200, was equally divided among the applicants. (\$400 Fall '92 and \$400 Spring '93.)

April 1997 – Hans Wasshem stepped down from the committee. **Dorothy Thomas**, Epiphany's former church secretary, was appointed to replace Hans.

April 1999 – Church Treasurer Verna Grunow retired to Virginia, and, in her place, **Phyllis Phelps** accepted the roll of treasurer. Phyllis has continued to serve on this committee (1998-2025.) We acknowledge her long-term dedication as “Treasurer Emerita.”

April 2004 – Dorothy Thomas and her husband retired to Florida. Appointed to the committee in her place was **Vickie Costello**, whose family were members at Epiphany since the 1940s.

May 2005 -- **Blanche Harffey** died, age 94.

January 2007 – Estate Trust Fund established with Comerica, naming **John Dunn and Judie Custer** as Trustees. The substantial funds generated with this second portfolio increased the income available for scholarships.

September 2010 – **The Rev. Neil Jaggie** retires as Pastor of Epiphany. **The Rev. Janet Gasbarro** serves as Interim.

April 2011 – The two original Trustees of the Comerica Trust Fund resign. The new Trustees named are **Kirk Bye and Delores Denton.**

August 2012 – **The Rev. Jennifer Sweitzer** is called as pastor to Epiphany.

2014 – **Pastor Sweitzer** resigns, and **Pastor Gasbarro** returns as Interim.

2015 – **Curtis Hinmon** retires as Organist/Music Director of Epiphany after 34 years, and steps down from the committee.

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2017 – **John Brick** died. He had served every year on the BHHEF since its inception.

2018 – The Rev. Jose Escalera is called to be Epiphany’s twelfth pastor. As it turned out, Pastor Jose would be Epiphany’s last called pastor. The congregation began to consider a merger with Reformation, which had been a mission congregation from Epiphany since the 1930s, before it established itself in 1958. Pastor Escalera resigned, and with guidance from NJ Synod ELCA, Pastor Heidi Link and the Council of Reformation completed the merger process.

2016-2021 – Epiphany committee members would intermittently include **Joe Graumann, Sr., Karl Kroon, Nancy Tranovich, and Rich Hermansen**. The final Epiphany committee (2021) that carried over to Reformation included **Clare Brick, Vickie Costello, and Phyllis Phelps**, with leadership from **Jesse Denton**. At this time the Promissory Note and Notary validation were no longer considered, and a revised Application form was verified.

2021-2022 – During the merger process, **The Rev. Heidi Link**, pastor at Reformation, served to co-ordinate the two congregations, unify the Councils, and confirm the committee membership for BHHEF, which now included six people: **Pastor Heidi Link, Council President Nina Tillett, Phyllis Phelps, Clare Brick, Vickie Costello, and Curtis Hinmon**. After the merger in 2022, Jesse Denton relinquished his seat on the committee and Curtis Hinmon was appointed back to the committee.

2023-2025 – A **milestone** was achieved in 2025, the 34th year of the BHHEF. Award money granted though this time reached **\$1, 021,094.00!** Praise the Lord! It is also interesting to compare awards of the Year One with this Year Thirty-Four:

1992	9 Applicants	\$800 each	\$400 Fall + \$400 Spring
2025	16 Applicants	\$5,000 each	\$2,500 Fall + \$2500 Spring

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A LOOK BACK TEN YEARS AGO

Pictured below is the 2015 Group of Applicants and their Families.
This photo was taken at Epiphany Lutheran Church.



