

“SON”SHINE Newsletter



Special Edition Scholarship Sunday, 2024

**Reformation Lutheran Church
633 S. New York Road,
Galloway, NJ 08205
609-652-8431
(8:30 & 10:00 am Church Service)
(Sunday School 10 am)
Summer Services at 9:00am
Rev. Heidi Link, Pastor
Brian Conover, Music Director
Stacie Krouse, Church Secretary
<https://www.rlc.church>**

Rev. Neil Jaggie’s Message

ON THIS DAY THAT WE CALL THE BLANCHE HARFFEY SCHOLARSHIP SUNDAY MANY OF YOU, AND ESPECIALLY OUR STUDENT RECEIPANTS MAY BE ASKING, “WHO WAS BLANCHE HARFFEY?” OUR BENEVOLENCE ENDURES BUT MEMORY OF HER HAS BEGUN TO FADE. BLANCHE HAS HOW BEEN GONE NOW LONGER THAN MOST ALL OF YOU STUDENTS HAVE BEEN ALIVE.

WHO WAS BLANCHE HARFFEY? I RECALL A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO ONE OF OUR HIGH SCHOOLERS COMING TO CHURCH WITH A FRIEND. THE VISITOR OVERHEARD A CONVERSATION THAT MORNING PROMOTING THE BLANCHE HARFFEY FUND. SHE ASKED HER FRIEND WHO WAS BLANCHE HARFFEY? THE CHURCH GIRL RESPONDED BY SAYING, “OH, BLANCHE HARFFEY WAS SOME WOMAN IN OUR CHURCH WHO GAVE MONEY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS.” AS ONE WHO KNEW BLANCE AS HER PASTOR AND FRIEND FROM MY ARRIVAL AT EPIPHANY IN 1977 UNTIL HER DEATH IN 2005 THAT RESPONSE DIDN’T SIT WELL WITH ME. THE WORDS, “SOME WOMAN,” JUST DIDN’T CAPTURE THE ESSENCE OF THE WOMEAN THAT I HELD IN UTMOST OF ESTEEM.

I PONDERED THE TEENS DESCRIPTION OF BLANCHE FOR SOME TIME. TODAY, I WILL SAY THAT THE TEENAGER WAS ABSOLUTELY CORRECT. I WILL JUST DECLARE WITH GREATER EMPHASIS THAT BLANCHE HARFFEY WAS, “SOME WOMAN. SOME WOMAN INDEED!”

SHE WAS SOME WOMAN, WHO IN HER LATE 80’S DESIRED TO PLANT A SEED OF HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE HEARTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE THAT MIGHT RESULT IN A HARVEST OF GRATITUDE THAT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO LIVE THEIR YEARS AS A LIGHT ON A HILL AS THEY RECALLED THE GENEROSITY BESTOWED UPON THEM.

BLANCHE'S DREAM WAS THAT HER LEGACY WOULD LAST WELL BEYOND HER DEATH. BLANCHE HOPED THAT THOSE WHO NEVER KNEW HER WOULD KNOW THAT THEY WERE ONE OF HER KIDS WHO THOUGH NEVER KNOWING HER, WOULD FEEL HER IN SPIRIT STANDING BEHIND THEM CHEERING, ENCOURAGING, SUPPORTING. BLANCHE'S ONLY DESIRE WAS THAT THE YOUTH OF EVERY GENERATION THAT FOLLOWED HER WOULD HAVE FAITH IN THE GOODNESS OF GOD, HOPE IN THE GRACE OF GOD, AND A BELIEF THAT THEIR PRESENT AND FUTURE WOULD BE INSPIRED BY GOD.

SOME WOMAN, A PLAIN SIMPLE FAITH GROUNDED GIRL FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH HEARTLAND, NAMED BLANCHE HARFFEY, BELIEVED THAT GOD BUT HER ON THIS EARTH FOR A REASON AND THAT REASON WAS AS A POEM BY HELEN STEINER RICE AND A GOSPEL HUMN BY INA OGDEN ASSERTS WAS TO "BRIGHTEN THE CORNER WHERE YOU ARE." NONE OF US ARE ABLE TO SAVE THE WORLD BUT ALL OF US ARE CAPABLE OF SHEDDING SOME LIGHT AND FAITH UPON THE GROUND ON WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES LIVING. BLANCHE DID THAT, SHE DID IT WELL, AND SHE WOULD CHALLENGE ALL OF US AND ESPECIALLY OUR YOUNGER ONES TO STRIVE TO DO THE SAME.

BLANCHE'S LIFE, HER FAITH, HER GRIT, HER GENEROSITY TOUCHED SO MANY LIVES OVER THE YEARS. WHO WAS BLANCHE HARFFEY? MANY WOULD SAY, SOME WOMEN, SOME ANGEL, SOME SAINT, SOME BLESSING!

TODAY WE RECOGNIZE ONE OF BLANCHE'S ACHIEVEMENTS, THE CONCEPTION OF A SCHOLARSHIP FUND, WHICH HAS BLESSED, OVER 32 YEARS, 87 STUDENTS, WITH GIFTS TOTALLING \$904,500.

STUDENTS, YOU HAVE ONE DEBT TO OWE FOR YOUR GIFT AND THAT IS TO GO FORTH AND BE THE BEST PERSON YOU CAN BE IN APPRECIATION FOR THE BLESSINGS UPON YOU. I URGE YOU NOT TO TAKE YOUR MONEY AND RUN BUT TO TAKE YOUR GIFT AND BECOME SOMEBODY WHO BECOMES FOCUSED ON BRIGHTENING THE CORNER OF THE EARTH YOU MIGHT FIND YOURSELF.

AS YOU GO FORTH, REMEMBER BLANCHE WHO CHEERS FOR YOU. REMEMBER GOD WHO HOLDS THE FUTURE, REMEMBER AT ALL TIMES AND PLACES, AND CIRCUMSTANES TO GIVE THANKS TO A HIGHER POWER FOR THE GIFT OF YOUR LIFE. GO AND BE NOT JUST SOME MAN OR SOME WOMAN BUT SOMEBODY WHO LIVES FOR OTHERS INSPIRED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF BLANCHE, THE SUPPORT OF YOUR CHURCH, AND THE LOVE OF YOUR FAMILY. GO AND BE SOMEBODY OF WHO PEOPLE WILL SAY SOMEDAY THAT YOU WERE SOME WOMAN, SOME MAN. THIS YOUR COMMISSION IN RESPONSE TO YOUR RECEIPT OF A GIFT INSPIRED BY SOME WOMAN NAMED BLANCHE HARFFEY! AMEN.

Blanche Harffey Higher Education Fund Awards

The 2024 BHHEF awards were presented at a special Sunday service on August 4, 2024. Nine students who were granted scholarships this year gathered with our congregation to worship and to share some insights of their student life. All 9 students this academic year were awarded \$5000 (\$2500 each semester, Fall/Spring.) A time of fellowship and food followed the 9:00a.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. The Scripture readings for the day were: Jeremiah 29:10-15, II Corinthians 9:10-15, and Matthew 5:14-16. During the offering, Brian sang the old revival hymn, "Brighten the Corner Where You Are," – Lyrics by Ina Ogden (1913), music by Charles Hutchinson Gabriel (1915).

Blanche's generosity and foresight now continue 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. All applicants who are faithful Christians and whose families are active members of these congregations may apply. In the past 33 years, this legacy has granted \$904,485.00, disbursed among 87 students! 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>

RLC Kitchen Committee

A huge "Thank You" to our kitchen committee for a wonderful time of fellowship after the service:
Susan Charles, Diane Bianchini, Stacie Krouse, Mary Chamberlain, and Lorie Wilkens.
We also want to thank all the members who contributed sides, salads, and desserts!
It was all so scrumptious!

2024 Scholarship Committee

Rev. Heidi Link, Pastor RLC
Nina Tillett, Council President
Phyllis Phelps, Treasurer *Emerita*
Clare Brick, Grace Lutheran
Vickie Costello, Grace Lutheran
Curtis Hinmon, RLC

The scholarships for Academic Year 2024-2025 were granted as follows:

NEW APPLICANTS

Hannah Yin Lopez, Atlantic Cape Community College, NJ
(Baking and Pastry Arts)
Audrey Seals, The College of New Jersey
(Nursing)

RENEWAL APPLICANTS

Harley Pattison, Atlantic Cape Community College, NJ
(Health Sciences)
Lindsey Pattison, Atlantic Cape Community College, NJ
(Psychology & Veterinary)
Sawyer Widecrantz, Lees-McRae College, NC
(Sports Management)
Lyndsey Millere, Alvernia University, Reading, PA
(Physicians Associate)
Luke Kroon, Penn State, PA
(Computer Engineering)
Kabeh Kermom, (online) Wilmington University, DE
(RN-BSN)
Alexander DeStefano, Rowan University, NJ
(Music Education)

Kay Kemon

Hannah Lopez

Luke Kroon

Lyndsey Millere

Alex DeStefano



Harley Pattison

Lindsey Pattison

Sawyer Widecrantz

Audrey Seals

Blanche Harffey



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 herself 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 youth with their educational costs. Current value of this Fund is \$1,291,523.04.

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 Brief Historical Note...And Blanche's Fund

In October 2021, the congregation of Epiphany Lutheran Church, Pleasantville, NJ, voted to merge with the congregation of Reformation Lutheran Church, Absecon/Galloway, NJ. With guidance from NJ Synod ELCA, the merger was completed in January 2022.

These two congregations have shared a long and fruitful ministry since 1935, when Epiphany's second Pastor, Rev. Russell L. McCullough, initiated an afternoon Sunday School Program at the Sixth Avenue School in Galloway. In the early 1950s the purchase of the Biscayne Avenue Schoolhouse along with a survey from the Home Missions Office determined that a new church be organized in Absecon/Galloway.

In October 1957, Rev. Carl Yaeger began holding worship services there and in November 1958 Reformation Lutheran Church was organized, and 59 communing members and 41 child members transferred from Epiphany to Reformation. Since that time the two churches have celebrated many common worship events and joint services. Now, full circle, we remain One in the Spirit.

In the last three years of merged congregations, Blanche's legacy continues to be a blessing. There have been 87 student recipients since the Fund's inception in 1991. The amount awarded since that time is \$904,485.



Good Morning, God! (Blanche Harffey's Prayer)

“YOU are ushering in another day
Untouched and freshly new
So here I come to ask you, God,
If You'll renew me, too.
Forgive the many errors
That I made yesterday
And let me try again, dear God,
To walk closer in THY WAY.
But, Father, I am well aware
I can't make it on my own
So take my hand and hold it tight
For I can't WALK ALONE!”

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