

## 8 Sinterklaas, A Dutch Tradition in Blawenburg



*Sinterklaas appears before crowds in the Netherlands.*

*Credit: Wikipedia*

In the third century AD, St. Nicholas, a bishop from the ancient city of Myra, Greece, gave all his money to poor children. St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children, is known as Sinterklaas in

the Netherlands. In the 13th century, the Dutch began the Christmas season on December 6 with the feast of Sinterklaas by exchanging gifts in remembrance of St. Nicholas's selfless act.

According to the website, <https://www.teawahou.com/Whats-On/Sinterklaas-Saint-Nicholas>, Sinterklaas and his helpers leave Spain on a steamboat each November, arriving bearing gifts in the Netherlands in time for the feast. Before his arrival, children put wooden shoes by their chimney and leave carrots or hay in them for Sinterklaas's horse. He is said to ride across rooftops on a white horse leaving treats in the shoes.



*Dutch wooden shoes at Blawenburg Church*

*Credit: D. Cochran*

Blawenburg Church, whose roots are in the Dutch Reformed Church, remember this day with their own holiday festival called Sinterklaas. It is

viewed by many as a beginning to the Christmas season. This popular event offers members of the community an opportunity to purchase gifts for loved ones, buy homemade soups and baked goods for the holidays, and give to those in need as Sinterklaas did.

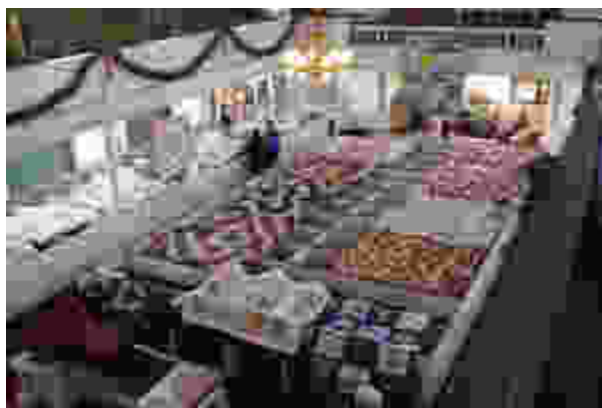


*Homemade soup and baked goods are popular items at Sinterklaas.*

Sinterklaas is perhaps the biggest community event in Blawenburg, attracting people from Montgomery and other communities near and far.

This year Sinterklaas will be held on Saturday, December 8 from 9 am to 2 pm on the church campus at 424 Route 518, Blawenburg. According to the church advertising, gift-seekers will find handsewn items and crafts, including handmade Christmas décor, homemade soups sold frozen, delicious homemade baked goods, and a hearty lunch. The White Elephant booth will feature new and gently used treasures, suitable for gift giving. The popular Silent Auction will feature items and services donated by local retailers and church members. Among the gifts this year are a catered dinner for up to 12 in your home. There will be many more auction items and services offered at various price ranges.

Local Boy Scout Troop 46 will be on site to sell their Christmas wreaths, and the 1832 sanctuary will feature a display of historic and modern quilts. This display will be open throughout the event.



*A quilt display will take place in the church sanctuary at Sinterklaas.*

In the spirit of St. Nicholas, there will be an opportunity to contribute to Heifer International, a mission that teaches the hungry to feed themselves. In recognition of the early

purpose of Sinterklaas, a portion of the proceeds will go to local and global missions as well as to the preservation and restoration of the historic church.

While the church is no longer a “Dutch” Reformed Church, it is still a part of the Reformed Church of America, the nation’s oldest denomination. In addition to the gifts and food, Sinterklaas is a great social event where neighbors meet neighbors in a festive atmosphere. Directions to the church can be found on the church website: [www.blawenburgchurch.org](http://www.blawenburgchurch.org).

**Blawenburg Fact:**

Sinterklaas is the second Dutch festival that has taken place over the years at Blawenburg Church. Beginning on the November 15, 1980, the church held an annual event called Tontoonstelling, which is a Dutch word for a fair. This took place each November around Thanksgiving until it was replaced about a decade ago with Sinterklaas.

**Looking Ahead:** Blog - The Iconic Windmill of Blawenburg

**Sources:**

Wikipedia

<https://www.teawahou.com/Whats-On/Sinterklaas-Saint-Nicholas>