



UPLIFT Newsletter

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

NOVEMBER 2017

Little Johnny had just been picked up after an afternoon birthday party for his friend Bobby. “Did you have a good time?” his mother asked. “I had a wonderful time, mom. There were games and prizes, candy and balloons. There was even a clown and a magician.” “Did you thank Bobby’s mother for inviting you?” “Well, I was going to, but the little girl ahead of me thanked her and she said, ‘Don’t mention it’, so I didn’t.”

“Thank you.” Two little words that when spoken from the heart can bind a relationship, but when left unsaid can fester into a breeding ground for contempt. We’ve all experienced it, both the positive and the negative, the elation of being appreciated and the feeling of being taken for granted. The acknowledgement of what we mean to another sets the tone for a relationship. If I know how much I mean to you, because you have told me, we will grow closer together as I seek to mean even more to you. Conversely, if I’ve shared myself with you and you don’t acknowledge that initiative, there will always be a guarded distance between us. We have friends, and we have acquaintances and in our hearts we hold them quite differently.

By definition, the word gratitude means the quality of being thankful, a readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness. It first affirms the goodness of the gift we have been given, and then moves on to acknowledge the source of that gift. Gratitude is our response for the blessing we have received. It moves us beyond ourselves to the one who has enhanced our well being making our lives all the fuller. You can trace the line of kindness that has helped to form who you are—those who have given of themselves in sacrifice for your sake, those who have given not because they owe you but simply because they care about you, those who show you the purity of love because that is the essence of their nature. If we were to count our blessings and trace their origins, they would bring us to the same source—God. Each time we sing the doxology we affirm that truth, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”

Two watchwords of our Reformed Tradition are “grace and gratitude.” We love because we’ve been loved, we forgive because we’ve been forgiven, we are merciful because we’ve been shown mercy, we are gracious because we’ve received grace. As Christians, our lives are one continuous response to what God has done for us and with us in Jesus Christ. We can never think about our blessings without considering how we can become a blessing to those around us. We express our gratitude in giving thanks to God, but so too in living out that thanks in our relationships with each other.

The Psalms are the hymnal of God’s people. They are the words of response to God’s activity in their daily lives. I dare say there is a single emotion we feel that are not expressed in them, for God is just as involved in the lives of his people today as he has been throughout the ages. Countless times in my weakest moments, I have taken the Bible and opened it to the Psalms and within a page have found encouragement. The reason for that is that King David, the author, points beyond our circumstance to the greatness of God. And in that light we are called to praise and thanksgiving. In being reminded of God’s faithfulness to us we are moved beyond where we are to that goodness that is held for us. Take some time to savor the Psalms, especially ones like 100-111. Memorize those phrases that speak to your heart. Cling to those words that comfort your soul. Speak those words to those who long to hear a word of hope.

*Know that the Lord is God.
It is he that made us, and we are his.
We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him, bless his name.
For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever,
And his faithfulness to all generations.*

.....In Christ’s love,

Pastor Jim

Scripture Texts for Worship

The scripture texts for November are given for your study in preparation for Worship.

Sunday, November 5

I Thessalonians 2:9-13
Matthew 23:1-12

Sunday, November 12

Philippians 3:4-14
Matthew 21:33-46

Sunday, November 19

Philippians 4:1-9
Matthew 22:1-14

Sunday, November 26

I Thessalonians 1:1-10
Matthew 22:15-22

Sunday, December 3

Deuteronomy 34:1-12
Matthew 22:34-46



Christmas Cantata

Christmas Cantata rehearsals are being held Wednesdays at 7:45 p.m. This year's cantata is entitled, "Invitation to a Miracle." The cantata will be presented in worship Sunday, December 17th at 11:00 a.m. Anyone wishing to participate is welcome. Regular choir practice will continue to be held Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. followed by cantata rehearsal at 7:45 p.m. If you would like more information, please see Cindy Borbonus.

December Newsletter

Articles to be published in the December edition of the UP-LIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Wednesday, November 15th. Please have all information to the church office by this date.

Worship Assistants

November 5

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone
Flowers: Cindy Borbonus
Projector: Shakira McKinney
Audio: Jaison McKinney

November 12

Liturgist: Jean Heberling
Flowers: Gary & Barri Stuchal
Projector: Alex Kirkland
Audio: Andrew Baker

November 19

Liturgist: Brent Ritchie
Flowers: Terry & Barb Brown
Projector: Kayla Moran
Audio: Tyler Moran

November 26—Communion

Flowers: Marilyn Neal
Projector: Blake Tonkin
Audio: Elizabeth Bruner

Offering Counters

Elaine Jellison & Naomi Sigafos

Advent Devotionals

Our devotional this Advent season is entitled, "Oh Holy Night!" by Sarah Reinhard. Advent is a season of preparation, so it's naturally busy, even without the cultural stress of more, more, more. This year, you and your family are invited to embrace Advent as a journey, one that may involve stumbles and tears. Let Advent be your gift to the baby Jesus, a way to get your heart and soul ready to receive him on Christmas Day. The gift that you give Jesus doesn't have to be perfect. Your intentions and efforts count as much to him as any failure or success you may feel. May this devotional serve you and your family well, helping you to prepare for the arrival of our Savior with prayer and action. May your Advent be blessed with Jesus, and may your family be better for it. The Season of Advent begins Sunday, November 26th.

3rd Annual Coats-For-Kids Drive

The Coats-for-Kids drive is now underway. Again this year we are receiving monetary donations for the purchase of specific size coats. Please mark your donation clearly for "Coats". If you know of a family with children who may need a winter coat, please contact Janet Smith.

Change Your Clocks!

Don't forget to set your clocks back...Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, November 5th. Mark your calendar!

Thanksgiving Baskets

Once again the Deacons will assemble Thanksgiving Baskets for families in the community. We ask that you consider donating food items or giving a monetary contribution. Articles of food can include: canned fruit or vegetables, boxed baked goods, pie fillings, Jello, boxes of stuffing mix, cranberry sauce, just to name a few. Boxes will be available at the back of the church for the collection of food donations. Please check expiration dates on items before donating them. If any member of the congregation is aware of a family who may need a Thanksgiving basket please contact Pastor Tim, Mary Anzelone or another deacon. Thank you for your generous help in the past, and we look forward to sharing another happy holiday with those in our community!

Food Bank

Food items are distributed between the hours of 12:00 and 1:00 the first Tuesday of each month. Proof of residence in the Blairsville Borough is needed when signing-up for the first time. The Blairsville food bank is sponsored by ICCAP.



10th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

Sunday, November 19, 2017

Immediately following worship
in Fellowship Hall

Come join our church family for a great
Thanksgiving meal and fellowship!

Please fill out & return the form in the offering
plate –

NAME: _____

How many attending, including yourself? _____

Maybe you would like to share your favorite:

Vegetable _____

Casserole _____

Salad _____

Dessert _____

Would you like to help prepare on Saturday,
November 18 @ 10:00 AM by peeling potatoes and
setting tables?

_____ Yes _____ No

Would you like to help prepare on
Sunday morning during worship?

_____ Yes _____ No

Thank you to all who help to make this dinner
an enjoyable event each year!

Please contact a committee member
for more information.

Happy Thanksgiving to all!

Scholarship Available

Announcing a new annual scholarship opportunity exclusively for Blairsville High School seniors. The scholarship will benefit each a boy and girl student with a \$500 award for costs related to higher education at a 4 year college, community college, trade or technical school. Applications and guidelines available after November 2017 at www.batchfoundation.org/scholarships.

Concert Scheduled

A Veteran's Day Concert will be performed by the Blairsville Community Band Wednesday, November 8th at 7:00 p.m. at the Blairsville High School. The concert is free to the community and is a tribute to our veterans.

Chili/Soup Cook Off

Boy Scout Troop 4 will hold their 2nd Annual Soup and Chili Cook Off Sunday, November 5th from 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Cost is \$10.00 per person. There will be a variety of soups and chili's made by the troop 4 scouts and scout leaders, to see who has the best soup and the best chili. This is a Boy Scout fundraiser to help cover expenses incurred in camping and other activities throughout the year.

Thank You

My husband and I recently attended the Wee Kirk conference at Laurelville. We understand that your church supported this conference and we wish to thank you for your willingness to give. We have never been before but found it enriching and encouraging.

Sincerely,

Rev. Steve & Denise Miller
Emporium Presby. Church

Pathway Donations

During the month of November the Deacons are collecting the following items for the Pathway Homeless Shelter: pillows, tall kitchen and large garbage bags, plastic cups, twin sheets, shampoo, deodorant, hand sanitizer and large freezer bags. You may leave the items in the box in the back of the sanctuary marked for Pathway.

*We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion Sunday, November 26th during worship.
Please take time to prepare to receive and share the sacrament.*

Thank You

Pastor Monroe would like to thank you again for your many kindnesses at the luncheon celebrating his 35+ years of ordination. He is savoring the suitcase full of cranes that contain messages of encouragement. Please know his deep appreciation for your partnership in ministry.

Made in America *(Blairsville, to be exact)*

The Grannies sewing group have several handmade items available for your purchase. Funds raised through the sale of these items help to support our mission of providing blankets, quilts, stuffed bunnies and bears, dignity robes, lap robes, hats, and dining scarves to individuals and organizations in our community. Look for our display in the church parlor coming soon. If you have any questions, please see Janeen Swope or any of the grannies or contact the church office. Thank you for your support so we can continue our ministry to those in our congregation and community.

With Deepest Appreciation

We recently were blessed with the opportunity to tangibly help a family and community who were affected by Hurricane Harvey in Houston, Texas. We filled a camper with water, cleaning supplies and lots of other items. We received this note in response:

Dear Rev. Tim Monroe and congregation,

Words cannot express how grateful we are for your amazing kindness! The RV alone coming to Houston was a huge relief and weight lifted. To see that you all had donated so much to pack it full made us...speechless!

I wish you could have seen our neighbors' faces as they came to get supplies. They, like us, had tears in their eyes when they heard the story of how the RV came all the way from PA and how friends, family and the church family of the Hood's all contributed to make it happen. From the bottom of our hearts we are forever grateful!

We were able to take the remaining items to our church which was a distribution center for our community. They were so thankful to be able to restock their shelves.

It has been an amazing journey and we have seen God's hand through it all and have also felt so blessed through it all. Thank you again for so much love, support and prayers! We appreciate it all!

Much love,

Mike, Julie, Stone, Peyton & Hudson Giles

Compassion News

Dear Parent,

I, your child Hagenimana Vestine greet you in the name of Jesus Christ. Praise be to him. I am pleased with writing to you once again. It is currently a long rainy season here in our country and farmers are planting beans. How is the weather over there in your country? I conclude by wishing you a Happy New Year. Your love, Hagenimana Vestine. Thank you.

Compassion Child from Rwanda