



The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

FEBRUARY 2017

One of the strengths of congregations in our faith tradition is that we are connectional – relational. Paul offers us the image of the church as being like a human body in that all the parts are different, yet work together for the common good. In essence, we need each other to become who God calls us to be. Being in relationship brings with it a level of accountability to each other as a family of faith. Each year, every Presbyterian congregation submits an annual report detailing statistical information about its life in the previous year. While such data excites “bean counters,” it does not give us an accurate picture of who we are as congregations. In 1908, congregations were asked to report on their life together, not merely by recounting a bunch of numbers, but rather by describing their spiritual health in something called “A Narrative on the State of Religion.” The questions answered and the issues addressed are just as relevant today as they were over a century ago.

How many who consider themselves members of the church attend worship on the Lord’s Day?

What proportion of families observe daily worship, prayer, Bible reading in the home?

How do families of the congregation spend their time on the Lord’s Day? How is the Sabbath honored?

How are children taught scripture and trained in the catechisms at home and in Sabbath School?

How faithful are church members in honoring the Lord with their substance?

Has there been any special manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s power in your church, either by conversions or by increased activity in church work?

To what extent does worldly conformity exist in your church?

What evangelistic work is done by your church outside of its bounds?

What efforts are made by your session to secure recruits to the gospel ministry?

These questions call us to assess our faithfulness as a congregation, but so too they call us to account for our personal investment in the life of the church. Throughout society there are many who are content to do only enough to get by. Their vision extends only as far as their needs are met. Sadly I have heard such an attitude expressed in the church. “All I care about is that this church stays open long enough for me to be buried in it, after that I don’t care what happens to it.” Perhaps that is part of the reason some churches are struggling – or even more that is why as a society we are struggling.

I, like you, was raised to do a job as well as I could possibly do it – to leave something better than I found it. As a congregation, we are blessed to build on the spiritual foundation of those who have come before us – to enjoy the fruit of their faithfulness. Having such a rich heritage calls us to be to the coming generations the fullness of who Christ is in us. Are we providing the Spiritual resources the coming generations will need? Will we be to them as those who came before us? Is the Holy Spirit’s power manifested in your life? Is the grace of Christ flowing through you? Are we doing the best we can to further the good news of the gospel? Will those who follow us count our witness as a blessing?

Pray for and encourage me as I pray and seek to encourage you. We have been entrusted with this ministry and together we commit ourselves to God’s Kingdom. May we become a blessing as we have been blessed.....

In Christ’s love,

Pastor Jim



Scripture Texts for Worship

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

Sunday, February 5

I Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)

Matthew 5:13-20

Sunday, February 12

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Matthew 5:21-37

Sunday, February 19

Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18

Matthew 5:38-48

Saturday, February 26

II Peter 1:16-21

Matthew 17:1-9

Ash Wednesday, March 1

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

II Corinthians 5:20-6:10

Sunday, March 5

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

Matthew 4:1-11

Ash Wednesday

We will gather for worship at 7:00 p.m. on Ash Wednesday, March 1st. There will be the imposition of ashes for those who wish to receive them and the Lord's Supper will be celebrated. This service of worship will be your first step into the Lenten season.

March Newsletter

Articles to be published in the March edition of the UPLIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Wednesday, February 15th. Please call the office with any questions or concerns.

Worship Assistants

February 5

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone

Acolyte: Willow Weimer

Ushers: Doug & Andrea Clayton
Brent & Tammy Ritchie

Projector: Shakira McKinney

Audio: Jaison McKinney

February 12—Scout Sunday

Liturgist: Bonni Dunlap

Ushers: Boy Scout Troop 4

Flowers: Nancy Boone

Ushers: Boy Scout Troop 4

Projector: Kayla Moran

Audio: Tyler Moran

February 19

Flowers: Naomi Sigafos

Projector: Blake Tonkin

Audio: Mitchell Tonkin

February 26

Acolyte: John Clark Bruner

Flowers: Sue Harvey & family

Projector: Jonathan Clayton

Audio: Alex Baker

March 1—Ash Wednesday

Projector

& Audio: Mary Anzelone

March 5

Flowers: Joanne Torrance

Projector: Shakira McKinney

Audio: Jaison McKinney

Offering Counters

Tom & Janet Smith



Souper Bowl Offering

Since 1990, young people have been leading the charge and inspiring others to collect dollars and food around the time of the BIG Game. The money and food collected then is given, 100%, to a local charity. More than \$110 million has been collected, changing the nation's largest weekend of football into the largest weekend of caring. We will receive our Souper Bowl of Caring Offering Sunday, February 5th during morning worship. One hundred percent of these gifts will be sent to the ICCAP Food Bank. Please prayerfully consider your gift.

2017 Per Capita Update

Per Capita, literally "per head", is the amount requested from each member to cover the administrative expenses of the General Assembly, Synod and Presbytery. For 2017, that amount is \$29.58 per member on the active roll. That breaks down to: General Assembly—\$7.50, Synod—\$2.50, and Presbytery—\$19.78. The Session has taken action to withhold all per capita to General Assembly with the exception of contributions given with specific designation to it. Per Capita sent to support Synod and Presbytery is NOT used to support the General Assembly. For this reason, the session sees that those funds are paid unless you request that your share not be. Your box of offering envelopes included a letter explaining your options with regards to your per capita. If you have questions or need a copy of the letter, please contact the church office or see Pastor Monroe. We want to honor your intentions for your gifts to the work of the church.

Consider Taking Part

The Session Committees for 2017 are looking for interested members to be active participants. Chairs for the committees were determined at the January Session meeting. Please review the committees and responsibilities of the committees and consider serving.

Worship – Worship services, sacraments, music, funerals, weddings—Elaine Jellison, chair

Mission – Benevolences, special offerings, global & local missions and missionaries—Gene Artman, chair

Christian Education – Sunday school programs, curriculum, adult education, youth work, leadership education—Nancy Hartmann and Kim McKinney, co-chairs

Finance – Finances, special funds, and annual budget—Rick Shoemaker, chair

Stewardship – Stewardship education and programs, challenges the congregation in its faithful use of the many different resources entrusted to our care - Rick Shoemaker, chair

Property & Maintenance – Construction, maintenance, repairs, housekeeping, safety, security, yard work, inventory—Bob Cosharek, chair

Congregational Fellowship – Suppers, Dinner Theater, picnics, outings, trips, camping—Nancy Hartmann and Elaine Jellison, co-chairs

Evangelism – New member recruitment and assimilation, outreach, publicity—Gene Artman, chair

Kiskiminetas Presbytery Disaster Response Trip

April 23-29, 2017

Webster Springs, West Virginia

Rebuilding from the 2016 summer flooding

Sponsored by Kiski Presbytery Disaster Response Task Group

- * Travel by vans with folks from other Kiski churches
- * Do whatever we're asked (clean-up, repairs, rebuilding)
- * Jobs for everyone age 18 and up. All skill levels encouraged and welcomed
- * Share volunteer center maintenance & cooking duties
- * Work with homeowners & other volunteers = new friends
- * Disaster Response Trip directed by Gary & Lisa Lyon & PDR Leadership

No experience necessary—we're praying you'll say yes!

Registration forms are available at the back of the sanctuary or contact the church office. For more information, please see a registration brochure or call the church office, 724-459-7991.

Lenten Devotionals

This year's Lent devotional booklet is entitled, "Living the Gospel Life: Lent 2017." We are Christians on a mission, even in the season of Lent! The daily devotions in this booklet highlight the concepts of being sent, demonstrating faith in action, and being mission-minded each day of Lent. Suggested activities are associated with preparing our hearts, souls and minds to reflect on the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ and his mission for us. Devotionals will be available for you to pick up at the back of the sanctuary February 26th.

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

On Sunday, January 29th following worship, we held our Annual Congregational Meeting in Fellowship Hall. A light lunch was enjoyed by all. Thank you to those who prepared and served the food. The work of the church during 2016 was reviewed and the 2017 Nominating Committee was elected. Reports distributed at this meeting are available at the back of the sanctuary for those who were unable to attend.

Highlights from the January Session Meeting

A Stated Meeting of the Session was held January 17, 2017. Election of Officers, Chairs, and Commissioners to Presbytery meetings took place; the following were elected: Clerk of Session - Bonni Dunlap; Assistant Clerk of Session - Rose Lewis; Treasurer - Rick Shoemaker; Assistant Treasurer - Tom Smith; Financial Secretary - Jill Wolford; Nominating Committee Chair - Elaine Jellison; Nominating Committee Elder - Rick Shoemaker; and Auditing Team - Mary Anzelone (Chair), Ed Bence, Dennis Gould, Doug Clayton.

Commissioners to Presbytery Meetings are: February 11th in Concord Dayton - Ron Hood; May 9th in East Brady - Nancy Hartmann; September 12th in Clarksburg - Dennis Gould; and November 18th - Gene Artman.

Committee Chairs and Members include (more members are being sought for committees – see the Chairs!)

Christian Education - Nancy Hartmann and Kim McKinney

Members: Bobbi Monroe, Jen Borbonus, Cindy Borbonus, Erica Ash

Congregational Fellowship - Elaine Jellison and Nancy Hartmann

Members: Becky Bence, Erica Ash, Diane and Bob Hanna, Tammy Ritchie

Evangelism - Gene Artman

Members: Bobbi Monroe, Kim McKinney

Finance - Rick Shoemaker

Members: Dick Gibson, Doug Clayton, Dennis Gould, Tom Smith

Stewardship - Rick Shoemaker

Members: Bonni Dunlap, Rose Lewis, Bob Cosharek

Mission - Gene Artman

Members: Bobbi Monroe, Dennis Gould

Personnel - Rick Shoemaker

Members: Bob Cosharek, Elaine Jellison

Property & Maintenance - Bob Cosharek

Members: Pat Swope, Dennis Gould, Bonni Dunlap, Kim McKinney, Ron Hood, Doug Clayton, Tom Smith, Terry Brown, Gene Artman

Worship - Elaine Jellison

Members: Gene Artman, Dennis Gould, Bob Cosharek, Willa Shoemaker

Scout Liaison - Doug Clayton

Other items of interest from the meeting were that Rev. Monroe reported he had one funeral and 37 calls in December; the Seder is being planned for this year on April 13th; roofing issues will be handled when the weather clears; the furnace issue has been resolved; additional security cameras and lights will be added; and the phone problems were fixed.

Community Lenten Mid-week Services

The Blairsville Area Ministerium will offer community Lenten services followed by a light lunch. Beginning Ash Wednesday, March 1st, a service will be held at 12:00 noon followed by a light lunch. The schedule is as follows:

March 1	Cross Roads Community Church	Rev. Cory Braatz
March 8	C&MA Church	Rev. Steve Bugay
March 15	Hebron Lutheran & 1st Baptist Churches	Rev. Joe Baird
March 22	1st United Methodist Church	Rev. Tim Monroe
March 29	Hopewell United Methodist Church	tba
April 5	United Presbyterian Church	Rev. Dawn Krishart
April 12	SS Simon & Jude Church	Rev. George Prior
Good Friday	Abundant Grace Church	Rev. Rusty McClurg
April 14—7:00 p.m.		

Compassion News

Dear Friends,

I love and wish you peace of God. How are you doing? I and family are fine and thank God. It is raining and crops are growing. I did national exam of the end of primary school, and I hope to succeed. To close, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2017. I thank you for sending me a letter. I was happy to read it. I was happy to hear about your dog.

Samuel Mutabazi
From Rwanda

Vaccinations

The Department of Health is offering free or low cost vaccinations for those uninsured or underinsured. Shots are given by appointment only at the Blairsville Community Center. The schedule is: February 15, March 15 and April 19 from 9:45—11:15 AM. Please call the PA Department of Health at 724-357-2995 if you have questions or to schedule an appointment.

Financial Literacy Collaboration

Do you run out of money before you run out of month? The Financial Literacy Collaboration can help. You are invited to attend an interactive and free Financial Literacy Workshop. Topics will include: Wants vs. Needs, Tracking Spending Habits, Preparing a Budget, Living Within Your Needs and Saving Money & Debt Repayment. The schedule is:

February 8.....12:45-3:30 pm..... PA Careerlink Bldg
March 8.....5:45-8:30 pm.....ICCAP
April 12.....12:45-3:30 pm..... PA Careerlink Bldg
May 10.....8:45 am-12:15 pm..... PA Careerlink Bldg
June 14.....5:45-8:30 pm.....ICCAP

Contact Family Promise to register at 724-464-5220.

Torrance Hospital Donations

Through out the year the deacons will be collecting items for either Torrance State Hospital patients or for the Pathway Homeless Shelter in Black Lick. During the months of February and March the Deacons will be collecting the following items for Torrance State Hospital patients: liquid and bar soap, shampoo, new or used music CD's, puzzles and greeting cards. You may leave the items in the box in the back of the sanctuary marked for Torrance State Hospital. Please watch your bulletins and newsletters for updates throughout the year.

Hometown Hero Banner Program

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit #407 is sponsoring a new veterans' appreciation project, the Veteran's Banner Project. Through this endeavor, full-color banners honoring our Hometown Heroes will be erected on utility poles on many of the borough's streets and even extending along Old Route 22 into Burrell Township. Space is available for hundreds of banners, each showcasing an individual's photograph, branch of service, and era of service for a veteran or active duty service member. Each banner will have a sponsor to cover the \$150.00 cost. Most sponsorships are likely to come from individuals or families. A maintenance fund is being established to cover replacement costs. For more information, contact Marge Patz for the auxiliary at 724-459-5679 or David Chaek at 724-459-0292. Banner registration forms are available in the church office.

CPR Class Update

On Friday, January 27th a CPR Class was offered through the deacons. Nineteen attended the class. We would like to thank Janelle Hood for her time and talent in leading the training. We are truly blessed to have so many talents offered through our membership.

The Snow that Never Drifts

By Emily Dickinson

The Snow that never drifts —
The transient, fragrant snow
That comes a single time a Year
Is softly driving now —

So thorough in the Tree
At night beneath the star
That it was February's Foot
Experience would sweat —

Like Winter as a Face
We stern and former knew
Repaired of all but Loneliness
By Nature's Alibit —

Were every storm so spice
The Value could not be —
We buy with contrast — Pang is good
As near as memory —

Mission Moment

Joy! 'I've never received anything like this'

The letters with an individual check of \$50 from Stewartsville Presbyterian Church, made out to every teaching elder in Newton Presbytery, came in the mail in May 2016, near the end of the church calendar year.

Yet six months later, the pastors who received the letters, and those who made the decision to give them, are still talking about them in ways that get at the heart of the gift of giving.

"In the letter we made sure to say that the \$50 was for the pastors to spend on themselves," says the Rev. Stephen Choi. "It was not a pay-it-forward gift. It was intended to bless the person receiving it."

After mailing the letters and checks to 68 pastors and chaplains—the combined total of the gift was \$3,400—Choi says he and the congregation really didn't think about it much and moved on to the next demands of ministry. They knew that some churches and pastors were struggling, but they never anticipated the responses they got.

In the next two to three weeks, notes and cards from those receiving the gifts poured into the church's mailbox: messages expressing gratitude, speaking of how the letter and the check came when they were having a bad week or an anniversary of some sort.

One pastor spoke about how over Memorial Day weekend he was able to splurge. Instead of the usual hot dogs and hamburgers, he bought steaks for the family.

"Receiving those notes and cards was such a joy for me—and for our congregation," says Choi. "I found myself waiting eagerly for the mail to arrive every day, so that I could open up more testimonies of how in some small way the Holy Spirit used us to bless teaching elders, pastors in our presbytery."

One letter in particular made a powerful impression on Choi and the Stewartsville congregation. It came from Rev. Dr. Ed Halldorson at the Presbyterian Church of Chatham Township. He's been in ministry for more than 40 years. "Since 1974," is how he began his three-page, handwritten letter. "I've never received a gift quite like this."

He wrote that he found the gift "truly remarkable" because it wasn't a "church to church" gift but "a church to every single pastor gift in the presbytery." He was deeply touched to have his ministry "affirmed in this way."

Halldorson spent his \$50 on a video program on biblical archeology for a bible class he teaches. He even offered to co-teach it at Stewartsville as an expression of his thanks.

"Certainly this act as a congregation has strengthened our connections with the ministers and teaching elders in Newton Presbytery," says Choi. "It's opened a door for us to care a little bit more, to have a more real relationship with them."

"I'm truly grateful," adds Halldorson. "They reminded me of how happy and blessed I am to be a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church."

*Paul Seebeck, mission communications strategist,
Presbyterian News Service*

Food Bank

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