

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

JANUARY 2017



UPLIFT Newsletter

Two young boys were sitting on the bedroom floor watching television while downstairs their parents were hosting the neighborhood New Year's Eve party. One asked, "Just what exactly are new year's resolutions?" The other thought for a moment and replied, "I think it's a 'to do' list for the first week of January." Here we are in the first week of the New Year, but somehow all those things that weighed heavy last year are still with us. Someone said, "My goal for 2017 is to accomplish the goals I set for 2016, which I should have done in 2015 because I made them a priority for 2014, having planned them in detail in 2013." To be sure, there are some who have the discipline to begin the New Year as a new person and remain in that newness forever. But most of us remain in the same shadows and self made prisons of our old ways. I suppose there was a time when I made resolutions, but I've come to realize that if its 11:55 PM on December 31 and I'm chowing down a pepperoni pizza with double cheese chances are I'm not going to lose my desire for it at 12:05 AM on January 1.

We all want to be better people—to be in better health, to move with a more positive attitude, to improve the quality of our relationships with those around us, and most important to be more intentional in our relationship with God. Paul writes, "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation—for the old has passed away, behold the new has come. All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." (II Corinthians 5:17-18)

God's desire for us is intentional. It was known to him and felt by him before the foundation of the world was established. God created us to be in relationship with him, to be open to what he would have us know and do, and to know that by the grace of the Holy Spirit, he is always open for us to come to him. That dialogue between us and God is what we call prayer. Sometimes it is expressed in poetic language, sometimes in raw emotion, sometimes in uncontrollable laughter, sometimes in unleashed tears, sometimes in a scream and sometimes in a wordless sigh. But whatever the form, it comes from the depths of our soul to the breadth of God's heart.

While there is power in the whisper of a sigh, there is great power when the prayers of a community are raised in one voice. God delights when his children join their hearts and together make known their praise and gratitude and desire. For many years as I served congregations in the northern part of the county, my name appeared in the Mission Yearbook of Prayer and Study on the day our Presbytery was highlighted. On that day each year, I could feel the power of the prayers being offered by brothers and sisters around the world for my ministry, and such encouragement lifted me.

A surgeon needs good light to see what needs to be done to assist the patient. But those rays of light focused in the form of a laser have an added strength and intention. Focused prayer is pleasing to God in that it tells him that the hearts of his children are reconciled, one, as they come to him with their desires.

Included in your newsletter is a prayer guide that is used by many Christians around the world. For each day of the week, there are four sets of intentions—foci of prayer concern. Two sets can be a guide for your morning prayers and two for your evening. Some may use one set in the morning, one at noon, one in the evening and one before they retire at night. This guide is a tool to remind us of God's blessings and the needs of the world around us. It is a disciplined way of examining our spiritual walk in the light of Christ.

Billy Graham, as part of his devotional life, reads three Psalms and one chapter of Proverbs daily. That means that in the course of each month he reads the entire Books of Psalms and Proverbs. By following this guide, there can be order and focused purpose in our weekly cycle of prayer—a newfound rhythm in our conversation with God. I'm sure he would be glad to hear from you in a little more detail.....

In Christ's love,

Pastor Jim



Scripture Texts for Worship

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

Sunday, January 1

Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

Sunday, January 8

Isaiah 42:1-9
Matthew 3:15-17

Sunday, January 15

Isaiah 49:1-7
John 1:29-42

Saturday, January 22

Isaiah 9:1-4
Matthew 4:12-23

Sunday, January 29

Matthew 5:1-12
I Corinthians 1:18-31

Sunday, February 5

I Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)
Matthew 5:13-20

Christian Unity Worship

On Sunday, January 15th at 3:00 p.m., we will gather in the sanctuary for a Community Service for Christian Unity. We will host this year's service and a light reception immediately following in Fellowship Hall.

February Newsletter

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

Worship Assistants

January 1

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone
Acolyte: Austin Baker
Projector: Jonathan Clayton
Audio: Alex Baker

January 8—Communion

Liturgist: Jean Heberling
Projector: Shakira McKinney
Audio: Jaison McKinney

January 15

Liturgist: Bonni Dunlap
Flowers: Joanne Torrance
Projector: Kayla Moran
Audio: Tyler Moran

January 22

Liturgist: Rick Shoemaker
Flowers: Cindy Borbonus
Projector: Blake Tonkin
Audio: Mitchell Tonkin

January 29

Liturgist: Dennis Gould
Projector: Jonathan Clayton
Audio: Alex Baker

Offering Counters

Pat & Janeen Swope

Middle School Youth Group

Coming in January...Youth Group for 4th, 5th and 6th grade students. Keep watching your Sunday bulletins for more information.

CPR Class

A CPR Class has been scheduled for Friday, January 27th at 12:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Please see Susie Cotti or contact the church office if you plan to attend. An evening class may also be planned at another time.

Year End Information

A congregational meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, January 29, 2017 immediately following worship. We will look at 2016 in review and look forward to the 2017 New Year. Please make plans to attend.

Year End Reports

Committee chairs and treasurers are asked to submit a report to include in the annual report for the Congregational Meeting. Please have your report to the church office by Sunday, January 22nd. If you have any questions or need information from the office, contact Jill during office hours at 724-459-7991 or email at up-church@r-church.com.

Year End Giving Statements

Financial statements of your giving will be mailed to each household mid to late January. If you would like your statement earlier, contact the church office.

Offering Envelopes

2017 Offering Envelopes are available for pick-up in the back of the sanctuary. Please look for your name as some numbers have changed. If you would like a box of envelopes or we missed you, please contact the church office.

2017 Flower Chart

The Flower Chart has been posted in the hallway outside the office. Take time to sign-up for your choice of dates. Flower arrangements are \$20 each and checks can be made payable to the: Board of Deacons.

Worship Assistants Needed

The Worship Committee is always looking for those willing to serve as liturgists on Sunday mornings. Perhaps you or another member of your family is interested in this service. Please see Elaine Jellison or contact the church office.

The Deacons are always looking for those willing to serve as ushers on Sunday mornings. If you would be willing to greet parishioners as they arrive and hand them a bulletin, then pass the plates during the offering, we would love to hear from you. A sign-up sheet is available in the back of the sanctuary.

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.

Family Promise News

In 2017 we will again be a host site for the Family Promise Program of Indiana County. We are scheduled to host families the weeks of: January 8-15, April 23-30, July 30-August 6 and October 22-29. Family Promise works with local churches and is a program that helps homeless families. The program provides a safe place to stay and helps families work on a plan to move forward. If you would like to volunteer to help during our host weeks, please contact Gene Artman or Pastor Monroe.



Cookie Walk Update

The annual Cookie Walk was held Saturday, December 10th from 9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. Many from the congregation donated cookies to be sold to the public for Christmas gift giving and holiday get-togethers. We collected a total of \$525 for the Pathway Homeless Shelter in Black Lick. Thank you to all who organized, set-up, worked and cleaned-up for the event.

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.

2017 Communion Dates

January 8—Baptism of Our Lord
March 1—Ash Wednesday
March 19—Lent
April 13—Seder
June 4—Pentecost
August 6
September 10
October 1—World Wide Communion
November 26—Christ the King Sunday
December 24—Christmas Eve

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.

Coupons Wanted

Please save your coupons. Erica Ash is involved with a project that sends coupons to veterans. Please make sure they are manufacturer coupons and that they have not expired. Please see Erica if you have any questions.

To the Session and Congregation,

Thank you for your kindness at Christmas and throughout the year. It is a blessing for us to be able to minister in our various ways in the church. We look forward to a blessed and happy New Year in 2017!

Cindy, Marilyn, Sandy, Peg, and Jill

Email Addresses

The church office is collecting email addresses of those who would like to receive updates on important information such as member deaths, cancellations due to weather, etc. Please submit your email or update your email address by placing it in the offering plate Sunday or email the office at:

upchurch@r-church.com.

Mission Moment—Madison Presbyterian Church

In 2014, a year before Madison Presbyterian Church's 200th anniversary, Jill Wiest and I volunteered to see what information we could find to enhance the celebration. After looking through many old files, we wondered if we had found everything—after all, there are many nooks and crannies in our 1846 church building. What about that old safe in the small room off the kitchen that had been the pastor's study in the 1800s? It took a while to find the right key, but eventually we did and we opened it. To our satisfaction, it held a treasure trove of documents, letters, and ledgers that told of some of the highs and lows of Madison Presbyterian Church through the years. The leather-bound ledgers contained records of births, deaths, Sunday collections, and disbursements for supplies, among other official registries, but most interesting were the loose papers, many of which were letters. A large number of them were personal letters written to Clerk of Session and Madison businessman David McClure (1775-1836) and his family. It is not known why these letters ended up in the church safe, but they have given us added insight into our early church history and 19th-century life here. One letter was written in 1824 to McClure's daughter Martha by a schoolmate, Eliza Ann Ristine, of Crawfordsville. Her family had recently moved from Madison to that newly established settlement, and she wrote to her friend that there were only seven families living there. And "at this time, no school is here of any description and not much prospect of one for some time." We felt this letter should be in Crawfordsville, so we donated it to the Montgomery County Historical Society. The next eleven have to do with the church itself: Name (Presbyterian Church of Livonia in Washington County); Original Number of Members (13); Names of Previous Pastors; Date of Founding (1816); Year When the Building was Erected (1820); and Description (log house, 20 by 40 feet, then a brick building, 30 by 55 feet, built in 1826). Question 9 asks if the church was divided in the "recent division of the church" and if so, "How many went to each branch of the church?" Answer: "About 100 went with the Old School, three elders and 25 private members adhered to the Constitutional General Assembly." The final question: "Of how many members is your church now composed?" Answer: "50." One of the members was the famous churchman of the Civil War era Henry Ward Beecher, brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. We used much of the information found in the safe for our church's 200th anniversary celebration in 2015. What a great time we have had in discovering our church's hidden past!

Pam Newhouse, special to Presbyterian News Service

Our Elders and Deacons

We thank Tom Smith and Pat Swope for their faithful service on the Session these past six years. They have been instrumental in helping to set a vision as we move forward.

We welcome Elaine Jellison to her second term on Session and deeply appreciate her willingness to serve.

We rejoice as Ron Hood is ordained and installed with Bonni Dunlap, Elaine Jellison and Rick Shoemaker to the Sessional Class of 2019.

We rejoice as Jen Borbonus is ordained and installed with Ken Doak, Tom Holby, Beverly Lindsey and Bobbi Monroe to the Diaconal Class of 2019. We thank Ruie Gressley, Lori Smith and Judy Trimble for the ways they have enhanced and broadened the ministry of the deacons during their terms of service.

Nominating Committee

The work of the Nominating Committee is some of the most important in the life of the church. Those serving have the responsibility to bring before the congregation the names of those who will potentially serve as elders and deacons. Members of this committee should have:

- * An understanding of the nature, ministry and mission of the church
- * An awareness of the spiritual nature of the offices of elder and deacon
- * A knowledge of the impending challenges before the church
- * A familiarity with the members of the congregation and the potential gifts and abilities they bring to service
- * A spirit of prayer as they approach this work

If you, or someone you know would do well at the discernment of nominations, and would like to be considered for service on this committee, please write the name and place it in the offering plate or drop it off to the church office by January 22nd.

Please encourage the leaders of our church through your thoughts and prayers in the New Year.

The Session

Class of 2017

Gene Artman
Becky Bence
Dennis Gould
Nancy Hartmann

Class of 2018

Doug Clayton
Bob Cosharek
Rose Lewis
Kim McKinney

Class of 2019

Bonni Dunlap
Ron Hood
Elaine Jellison
Rick Shoemaker

Board of Deacons

Class of 2017

Mary Anzelone
Andrea Clayton
Joan Moran
Naomi Sigafoes
Paul Soltesz

Class of 2018

Erica Ash
Susie Cotti
Jean Heberling
Marilyn Neal

Class of 2019

Jen Borbonus
Ken Doak
Tom Holby
Beverly Lindsey
Bobbi Monroe

Consider Taking Part

The Session Committees for 2017 are looking for interested members to be active participants. Chairs for the committees will be 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

Mission – Benevolences, special offerings, global & local missions and missionaries

Christian Education – Sunday school programs, curriculum, adult education, youth work, leadership education

Finance – Finances, special funds, and annual budget

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

Property & Maintenance – Construction, maintenance, repairs, housekeeping, safety, security, yard work, inventory

Congregational Fellowship – Suppers, Dinner Theater, picnics, outings, trips, camping

Evangelism – New member recruitment and assimilation, outreach, publicity

*We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion
Sunday, January 8th at 11:00 a.m.
Please take time to prepare to receive and share the sacrament.*

Medical Equipment Available

Through generous donations from our congregation and friends, the deacons have a variety of medical equipment available to borrow. The equipment is available not only to members of our congregation but for our friends in the community. If you know of someone's need for medical equipment, contact the church office. Also, we are happy to accept donations of gently used and clean items.

Home Communion

If you are not able to come to Sunday morning worship and would like to receive communion in your home, please call the church office and arrangements can be made for the sacrament to be shared with you.



The Chancel Choir resumes rehearsals Wednesday, January 4th at 7:00 p.m. Anyone wishing to sing in the choir is invited to attend. There's always room for another voice. For more information, contact Cindy Borbonus.

Our Bell Choir also resumes rehearsals Wednesday, January 4th at 6:00 p.m. Anyone wishing to become a ringer is invited to contact Vicky Westley for more information.

Thank You

We thank all those who offered the beautiful cantata to God's praise in December. The words set the tone for the Christmas season and the music stirred our souls.

We appreciate the ministries of all those who have helped to make this Christmas season joyous, the music, the special activities, the decorations inside and outside. Thank you for your extra efforts.

Pastor Monroe and Bobbi would like to thank the congregation for their warm Christmas greetings and their many acts of kindness. Your friendship and support is deeply appreciated.

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.

