



UPLIFT Newsletter

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

SEPTEMBER 2016

The waves of the storm had stirred the ocean floor and filled the beach with starfish. As far as the eye could see, the shoreline was covered with the helpless creatures. Knowing that the morning sun would mean their certain demise, a young boy began bending down, picking them up and tossing them back into the water. An older man making his morning constitutional watched the youngster's efforts. "This beach goes on for miles and there are millions of starfish, how can your effort make any difference?" The young fellow looked at the starfish in his hand then threw it to the safety of the sea. "It makes a difference to that one," he replied.

The needs of the world can overwhelm us: flooding in Bangladesh, Louisiana and Connellsville, war torn streets in Syria and Pittsburgh, helpless bodies in neonatal units and nursing homes, homeless families in New York City and Pine Ridge Park. The violent storms of life fling their victims on every shore and as hard as we may try to ignore them, they are there—waiting for someone to do something. Growing up I was taught, "if you can't do it right, don't do it at all." At first I thought those words meant, if you can't do it completely, don't even start it. With that mindset I would be nothing more than a naysayer who never accomplished anything. But as I grew I came to understand that its not about doing everything, its about doing all I can do at the moment.

On the day I was ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, I imagined that the laying on of the elders' hands would give me the power to right all the wrongs of the world. After all, that's what a good Christian is supposed to do, save the world, right? By the end of that week, my theological vision was corrected. It is Jesus who was sent to save the world, my job was to help the world discover his saving grace. Even though I'm a good Calvinist, I'll admit that John Wesley's rule of faith is right on target. "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." Even if we can't do it completely, that doesn't mean that we shouldn't do anything.

Where there was brokenness in the world, Jesus stepped in to work for healing. Where there was loneliness in the world, Jesus walked along side. Where there are shorelines covered with victims of lifes' storms, we are called to make a difference for the ones we can. At least once a year in this newsletter you receive a multi-colored packet of information about where to turn for help, health care services and support in Indiana County. It may be that you have a need to be addressed, or it may be that you know of someone seeking help. There are literally hundreds of programs and organizations whose reason for being is to help. In addition to these pages, information is available by calling 211. This is a statewide hotline dedicated to helping people connect. While I certainly don't have all the answers, I am more than happy to direct you to those who do. Please keep this information in your phone book or in your kitchen drawer where it is handy. Also use it as a focus of your prayers, lifting the hundreds of professionals and volunteers who dedicate their energies to healing. And should there be resources you know of that are not listed, please let us know so we can share them with others.

You have been placed where you are for a purpose, and in your daily encounters God seeks to use you in ways you may not realize you're being used. No, you can't save the world—but you can make a difference in someone's life.....

In Christ's love,



Scripture Texts for Worship

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

Sunday, September 4

Jeremiah 18:1-11

Luke 14:25-33

Sunday, September 11

I Timothy 1:12-17

Luke 15:1-10

Sunday, September 18

I Timothy 2:1-7

Luke 16:1-13

Sunday, September 25

I Timothy 6:6-19

Luke 16:19-31

Sunday, October 2

II Timothy 1:1-14

Lamentations 3:19-26

Thank You

Dear Congregation Members of the Blairsville Presbyterian Church: The Board and staff at Family Promise would like to thank you for your continued involvement with Family Promise. Both your financial support and the volunteers that you provide have been essential to our being able to care for homeless families here in Indiana County. With the generous support of people like you, we will be able to help many of these families not only to meet essential daily needs, but to work toward a brighter future with programs in job training, financial literacy, counseling, and temporary housing. May God bless each of you who are so willing to serve.



Worship Assistants

September 4—10:00 am

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone

Flowers: Patrick & Janeen Swope

Projector: Blake Tonkin

Audio: Mitchell Tonkin

September 11—11:00 am

Liturgist: Bonni Dunlap

Flowers: Joanne Torrance

Projector: Jonathan Clayton

Audio: Alex Baker

Worship Schedule

The last Sunday of the Summer Schedule is September 4th—worship is held at 10:00 a.m.

Our Regular Schedule begins the Sunday after Labor Day, September 11th.

The worship hour begins at 11:00 a.m.

A **Sunday School Kick-Off Breakfast** will be held at 9:45 a.m. Sunday, September 11th. Parents are invited to come with your children, meet the teachers, see the classrooms and enjoy a continental breakfast in Fellowship Hall! Sunday School classes are available for all ages. Adult classes meet each Sunday also. Choose from the Homebuilders Class or the Adult Class. If you don't attend Sunday School but would like to know more about it, this is the perfect opportunity to come and see what it is all about!

Choir News

It's September and you know what that means....the Chancel Choir will resume. Rehearsals begin Wednesday, September 7th at 7:00 p.m. If anyone is interested in joining the choir, you are welcome to come to any rehearsal held Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. If you would like more information, see Cindy Borbonus, Marilyn Neal or one of the choir members.

Bell Choir Notes from Vicky Westley, Director

On behalf of your Bell Choir, I want to thank the congregation for supporting our bell choir program. Many of you generously donated to the initial purchase of the handbells to make this program a reality. We appreciate you so very much and I wanted you all to know that. We work hard to learn the art of ringing, but have so much fun at our rehearsals, too. Beginning in October, as we did last year, we will meet on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. in the 2nd floor classroom located on the right at the end of the hall. We look forward to another year of ringing and participating in the worship and music program of the church. Currently, we have at least one position open in our 3-octave choir and would like to fill it ASAP. One ringer missing is like having two white and two black keys missing from a piano keyboard...not a good thing. If you are not already one of our ringers, prayerfully consider helping to fill in our sound. I ask anyone interested in ringing with us to contact me.

I have heard there is some interest in forming a children or youth bell choir? Why should the adults have all the fun, right? I ask parents with interested children or youth to also contact me. Thank you for the opportunity to instruct, lead and direct this bell choir. It is a true blessing!

September 18—11:00 am

Flowers: Tom & Janet Smith

Projector: Shakira McKinney

Audio: Jaison McKinney

September 25—11:00 am

Liturgist: Rick Shoemaker

Flowers: Ed & Becky Bence

Projector: Kayla Moran

Audio: Tyler Moran

Offering Counters

Jean Heberling and Gene Artman

PDA Deploys National Response Team in the Wake of Gulf Flooding

In the aftermath of catastrophic flooding in the Gulf region, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is providing assistance to the Presbytery of South Louisiana and reached out to the Presbytery of Mississippi. PDA has approved two grants to be used to address community needs. The flooding that took place August 13-14 dumped nearly 22 inches of rain in parts of Louisiana and other Gulf states according to the National Weather Service. Some communities reported as much as 31 inches of rainfall. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reports as many as 7,000 people were staying in one of 37 shelters across the region. The latest death toll is reported at 13 and state authorities are still searching homes and businesses. The American Red Cross and other agencies say it is the worst natural disaster to strike the U.S. since Superstorm Sandy.

The office of the Presbytery of South Louisiana was among the thousands of buildings damaged by flooding. By tape measure, there were 14 inches of water inside the building. The damage was worse for the Faith Presbyterian Church, located next door to the presbytery. Twenty-seven inches of water were measured in the sanctuary. Pews and hymnals are gone, the water didn't get to the piano but did reach the base of the organ. Their education building had 3.5 feet of water so nothing there survived. The church office and all the equipment were destroyed. Everything throughout the building will need replaced. "There were entire subdivisions with water up to the rooftops and many of the homes can't be gutted," said Tom Tucker, treasurer of South Louisiana Presbytery. "I'm fearful entire subdivisions will end up getting bulldozed and have to be rebuilt. Some 20,000 people are without homes sitting in shelters with nowhere to go."

Financial support allows PDA to respond to disasters as they unfold and continue the recovery long after many organizations have left. Gifts can be given through the offering plate. Please mark your envelope or check memo line "Flooding" and we will send them on to the PDA. Please keep all those affected by the flooding and the volunteers in your prayers.



Creative Volunteers Needed

We are in need of some volunteers who would be willing to create bulletin boards. If you enjoy being creative and would like to consider taking over a bulletin board or two, we would love to hear from you. We will provide the supplies you will need such as paper, stencils, etc. If you are interested, please contact the church office at 724-459-7991 or see Pastor Tim.

Care & Share Day

We will again be a collection site for the 29th Annual Care & Share Day Food Drive Saturday, September 24th from 10 am—2 pm. Look for a paper bag in the September 19th edition of the Indiana Gazette. Use this bag or any bag to carry your food donation to the church drop off on September 29th.

Save the Date!

This year's church family Thanksgiving Dinner will be held Sunday, November 20th following worship. Continue to watch your weekly bulletins for updates.

October Newsletter

Articles for the October edition of the UPLIFT newsletter should be to the office by Friday, September 16th.

Apprise Program

Apprise is a free health insurance counseling program designed to help all Pennsylvanians with Medicare. Counselors are specially trained staff and volunteers who can answer your questions about Medicare and provide you with objective, easy-to-understand information about Medicare. If you are interested in more information, contact 1-800-442-8016 or Aging Services, Inc. at 724-349-4500.

Senior Employment Program

Aging Services, Inc.'s Senior Employment Program is seeking persons 55 and older that are interested in working for the elderly performing minor home repairs, yard maintenance & transportation to local & Pittsburgh area doctor appointments. Should your family need to hire someone to care for a loved one, the Senior Employment Program may be able to help fill that need also. For more information or to apply, contact the Senior Employment Coordinator at 724-349-4500 to arrange for the application process and interview.

Elder Abuse Awareness Program

In Pennsylvania Elder Abuse is defined as abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment. The signs of Elder Abuse may not always be easy to read. Call if you know someone needs help, 724-349-6190.

Moment for Mission—by Dr. Leslie Morgan

“You have been a part of it,” he told me. I was speaking with a Church of Bangladesh bishop about the growth of the church in the northwestern part of the country, where 14 new congregations have been planted in the past 20 years. The Presbyterian Church (USA) has worked in partnership with the Church of Bangladesh since 1992, and the sending of Presbyterian mission co-workers to serve under the care of the Church of Bangladesh has been integral to this relationship from the beginning. The bishop’s words were affirming because the way my wife, Cindy and I have engaged in mission has not turned out exactly the way we had envisioned when we first arrived. We had come to Bangladesh with the assumption that our principal task was to help put together community health programs addressing the urgent problems of malnutrition, lack of maternal care, poor sanitation, and other serious public health issues. Although this work has been, and continues to be, an essential part of what we do, the Holy Spirit has also led us into another essential dimension of mission—outwards from conference tables, planning meetings and training sessions, to the very villages and homes of the people the church is called to serve. “Here, at the side of those who suffer,” the Spirit told us, “this is where I want you to proclaim the gospel through your presence, compassion and care.”

This hands-on dimension of our mission service has resonated with the communities we serve. In the Bengal region of the Indian subcontinent where we live compassionate care for those who suffer is a sacred activity.

To minister at the side of those who suffer, however, is neither safe nor easy. First there are the scary risks of traveling on the chaotic roads of Bangladesh and the threat of attack by Muslim extremists. Then when we get to where we are going, we have to deal with the heat where there are no electric fans; bugs where there are no screened windows; and monsoon rains where there are no paved roads. We often must trudge through muddy alleyways of dark, urban slums infested with drugs, prostitution and crime to be able to hold disabled infants whose fathers have abandoned their families. In remote villages, our journey takes us inside the mud huts of some of the poorest people in the world, who plant and harvest rice by hand for less than two dollars a day. There, we minister to the blind, the deaf, the lame and the terminally ill neglected by the country’s health-care system.

The sheer effort required to minister to individuals and families at the bottom level of Bangladeshi society is really more than I was made for. Yet, I find myself empowered to go and to hold a blind and deaf child in a dark slum or to kneel beside a man who once supported his family by laboring in rice fields, but who now lies weak and emaciated from lung cancer.

Moreover, Cindy and I have come to understand that our work is the result of far more than our own calling and personal motivation to care for the sick and needy. For how have we, two American physicians, come to receive the authority and power to proclaim the gospel in Bangladesh in this way? The secret is in the sending. It is through the church that the Holy Spirit has acted to call us and empower us for mission. Just as commissioning by the church sets the spiritual framework for missionary service, those who commission us encourage and help us to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit. Commissioning is a dynamic movement that may lead mission co-workers to places they had not envisioned going, to carry out tasks they had not known were needed.