

UPLIFT Newsletter

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

OCTOBER 2017

I have always been a student of history, interested in what has happened—but even more seeking to understand how God has been at work in the midst of it. This year has marked the thirty-fifth anniversary of my ordination, leading me to muse about my tenure in ministry. This year marks the 300th birthday of the Synod of the Trinity, a mission field and partnership that encompasses the Presbyterian congregations in Pennsylvania, most of West Virginia and the Upper Ohio Valley. The influence of those years of ministry extend to the furthest reaches of the globe. At the end of this month we will mark the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation as we remember Martin Luther, priest and professor, posting his “95 Theses” on the door of All Saints’ Church in Wittenberg, Germany. It was a bold act of protest against what he saw as unbiblical practices in the church, and he called the church to examine itself, repent of its wayward behavior and return to paths of righteousness—thus its name—“Protest”ant “Reform”ation.

For Luther, the issue of contention involved the selling of indulgences, certificates that could be purchased guaranteeing the forgiveness of sins for the bearer or for a loved one in purgatory. The practice was rife for abuse by unscrupulous church leaders and made a mockery of grace and mercy, while cheapening the act of repentance and penance. In Luther’s heart, he felt the need to name the sin he perceived and call the church to repent of its waywardness. To take a stand in the fear of an established institution requires courage because there will be consequences. For Luther it meant confrontation with the upper level of church leadership. As a consequence of his unwillingness to relent, he was excommunicated—ousted from the church he loved. Yet he maintained his conviction. “I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience....Here I stand, I can do no other....God help me. Amen.”

In our faith tradition, standing where God calls us to stand is central to our witness. A watchword for us is the phrase, “ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda” meaning “a church reformed, always being reformed.” The standard from which we have been formed and by which we are reformed is the Holy Spirit’s work of disclosing God’s truth in scripture and giving us the vision of seeing how God is at work in our midst. We call the leaders in the church “ruling elders” because they measure the congregations faithfulness to the standards of God’s word. Where we have drifted from God’s law and become deformed, the Spirit calls us to return to the truth as we are reformed in the image of Christ. Where the church has conformed to the ways of the world, God calls his people to be reformed to the ways of his kingdom. Paul’s caution to young Timothy echoes into our daily walk. “The time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wonder away to myths.” (II Timothy 4:3-4) That was the reality 2,000 years ago in Paul’s day, and it is just as real today. Truth is subjective in peoples’ minds—truth is what people want it to be. Well, you don’t have to look very far to see where that kind of thinking has gotten us.

As the church, our call is to point the world back to God—to be about the work of reformation as the Holy Spirit uses us “to be persistent in proclaiming the message, even when people don’t want to hear God’s truth. Its convincing, rebuking and encouraging with utmost patience” as we model what it means to be a people of faith (II Timothy 4:2). As we are transformed by the presence of the risen Christ living in us, we are then empowered to be about the work of reformation in the world around us. That renewal, that refreshing is a daily activity as we are continually reformed to become again the children God raised us to be.

Martin Luther’s great hymn, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” resounds through the centuries. In the third verse he references Christ as “that word that fells the Prince of Darkness.”

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,

We will not fear, for God hath willed his truth to triumph through us.

The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;

His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure; one little word shall fell him.

Stand in that truth and may it shine through you.....

In Christ’s love,

Pastor Jim

Scripture Texts for Worship

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

Sunday, October 1

Philippians 2:1-13
Matthew 21:23-32

Sunday, October 8

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

Sunday, October 15

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

Sunday, October 22

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

Sunday, October 29

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

Sunday, November 5

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

Family Promise

We will host families in the Family Promise Program the week of October 22-29. Many hands are needed to complete the tasks that go along with being a host church. We need meals prepared each evening, a male and female host that will spend the night sleeping on an air mattress, set-up and clean-up crews, and more. If you would like to become involved with this ministry, please see Gene Artman or Pastor Monroe.

November Newsletter

Articles to be published in the November edition of the UPLIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Sunday, October 15th. Please have all information to the church office by this date.

Worship Assistants

October 1—Communion

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone
Flowers: Kevin & Lori Smith
Projector: Blake Tonkin
Audio: Elizabeth Bruner

October 8

Liturgist: Todd Faulk
Flowers: Ron & Kim McKinney
Projector: Shakira McKinney
Audio: Jaison McKinney

October 15

Liturgist: Rick Shoemaker
Flowers: Naomi Sigafos
Projector: Alex Kirkland
Audio: Andrew Baker

October 22

Liturgist: Bonni Dunlap
Flowers: Cindy Borbonus
Projector: Kayla Moran
Audio: Tyler Moran

October 29

Flowers: Naomi Sigafos
Projector: Blake Tonkin
Audio: Elizabeth Bruner

Offering Counters

Jean Heberling & Gene Artman

The 3rd Annual Coats-For-Kids

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.



We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion Sunday, October 1st during worship. Please take time to prepare to receive and share the sacrament.



Christmas Cantata

Christmas Cantata rehearsals will begin Wednesday, October 4th at 7:45 p.m. This year's cantata is entitled, "Invitation to a Mircle." 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.

New Leadership

At our September 24th Congregational Meeting, the following were nominated and elected to three year terms: to the office of ruling elder, Class of 2020— Dennis Gould, Joan Moran, Tom Smith and Pat Swope; to the office of deacon, Class of 2020 — Andrea Clayton, Mary Hileman, Steve Moran and Judy Trimble. We look forward to the service and leadership they will offer. We thank the Nominating Committee for their work.

2018 Budget

The Finance Committee asks that all committee chairs look at their budget figures for 2018. If you need financial information for your committee, please contact the church office. We ask that you submit your committee budget to the office by Sunday, October 15th so a preliminary budget can be prepared for the October Session meeting.

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.

PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH

12 Ways to Pray for Your Pastor

1. Pray specific scriptures over him and his family.
2. Pray for his spiritual life to flourish.
3. Pray that he will be strong in the face of opposition.
4. Pray that he will flee temptation.
5. Pray that he will be spiritually "wise" and equipped for battle (Ephesians 6)
6. Pray that he is sensitive to the leading and conviction of the Holy Spirit.
7. Pray that he has wisdom to balance ministry, family and other responsibilities.
8. Pray that he fixes his eyes on the eternal reward and doesn't get discouraged.
9. Pray that he humbles himself continually before God.
10. Pray for him and his wife: that they would be unified, give one another support and understanding and that they would fight for their marriage on their knees and with their time.
11. Pray that God would grant him breakthrough in his ministry: that he would see lives transformed.

WyoTech Luncheons

WyoTech Luncheons have been scheduled for Tuesday, October 17th and Tuesday, November 14th at 11:00 a.m. The luncheons are an outreach ministry of the Mission Committee and friends. Contact Linda George or Naomi Sigafoes if you are interested in helping prepare or serve the lunch.



Change Your Clocks!

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

Greetings from Our Rwanda Partner Church

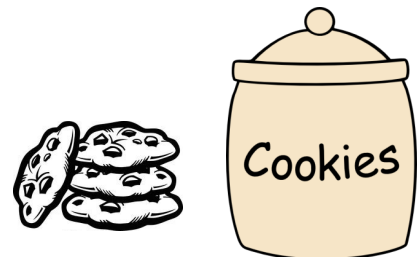
Dear Sisters and Brothers in Jesus Christ from Blairsville Church

Dear Brethren, the congregation of Gitarama Parish would like to greet you all in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. We thank our Almighty God for His protection upon our congregation and you as sister church in our partnership. Gitarama is led by Pastor Rev. NDEREREHE Alphonse. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce our Chapel news which are summarized in the following intercessions' prayer that we want you to join us in the prayer.

1. We pray for our partnership in order to keep it being strong
2. Building of Biti, Gahogo and Kabingo as new chapel.
3. Praying for our students so that they can succeed and get school requirements.
4. Praying for getting better completely of the Gitarama Parish Pastor's sickness.

May the Peace and Love of Almighty God be with you all!
God be with you all!

All the Best,
Rev. NDEREREHE Alphonse
Gitarama Parish



Cookie Bakers

On October 21st, we will be joining in the Fellowship Hall to bake cookies and package them up for College Students, Shut-ins and Military Service Personal. The baking fun will begin at 9:00 a.m. and we hope to finish up around 1:00 p.m. If you have a recipe that you would like to share, please see Nancy Hartmann. Nancy will be collecting the cookie recipes to purchase the ingredients needed. So far we have a sugar cookie recipe. If you enjoy baking, check your cookie recipe collection and let Nancy know what recipe you would like to share.

Also, we need suggested names and addresses to mail packages to. If you have a family college student, a military person or a shut-in that would appreciate receiving a package, let Nancy know. Volunteers are also needed to add the love, help bake and package up the boxes.



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 and 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!

Hurricane Relief

Presbyterian Disaster Relief (PDA) Update

Harvey made landfall as a category 4 hurricane, and though downgraded to tropical storm status, remained dangerous as it continued to churn inland into Texas. Damage in and near Rockport and Port Lavaca, where the storm made landfall, was catastrophic. There are several reported deaths and massive damage reported, and the flood event continued as the storm dumped heavy rains in South Texas. PDA continues to be in touch with presbytery leadership in New Covenant, Mission, and South Louisiana Presbyteries. National Response Teams are deployed into the affected regions when it is safe to do so.

On Wednesday, September 6th, the Category 5 Irma, packing winds of 185 mph, tore through the northern Lesser Antilles and Virgin Islands, as well as Puerto Rico. PDA has been in touch with the leadership of the Synod of Boriquen (Puerto Rico) and the Presbyteries of San Juan, Noroeste (Northwest) and Suroeste (Southwest) to share contact information and grant information. PDA is also in touch with the Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network (FLAPDAN), which is a mutually agreed upon partnership between six presbyteries in Florida. This is a unique platform in which PDA can relate to all six presbyteries at once for disaster situational awareness. PDA is also responding in Cuba and the US Virgin Islands.

PDA is remaining in constant contact with PCUSA leadership in Puerto Rico. It is still too early to send in National Response Team members as the resources in Puerto Rico are already stretched too thin. Emergency grants are being issued and when it is safe and secure, and volunteers will not be creating an additional burden on the limited resources, our national response team of bi-lingual volunteers will be deployed to assist. We anticipate there will an opportunity for long-term volunteers to help with the recovery.

Support PDA's emergency response and long-term recovery work in the areas affected. **Gifts can be given to the church designated "Hurricane Relief".** All gifts will then be sent on to PDA.

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 at 724-459-7991 and arrangements can be made for the sacrament to be shared with you.

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!

Local Organ Recital

Valerie Stipcak, a young lady who is acquainted with our church and many of you know, will present an Organ Recital Friday, October 20th at 7:00 p.m. at Holy Family Church in Latrobe, PA. All are invited.

Church Kitchen Information

The church has received from the Department of Agriculture, an Eating and Drinking License for the kitchen. This requires that no wet dish cloths or towels be left in the kitchen to dry. There is a drying rack and a small hamper in the table storage room for this purpose. Also, it is required that the counters and other surfaces be cleaned with a sanitizing solution after every use. The materials to make the sanitizing solution and the directions on how to make it are on the window sill in the kitchen.

Pathway Donations

During the month of October 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.

Church Parking

Those able to walk are asked to please park across the street in the lot so those with difficulty walking can park closer to the building. Please refrain from parking in the Episcopal Church spaces.



CALENDAR PARTY!

October 28, 2017

5:00—8:00 p.m.

- A light meal will be enjoyed
- Followed by birthday cake
- There will be entertainment and games
- Kids can attend in their Halloween costumes

Tables will be set and decorated for each month of the year. Those attending will sit at their birthday month table along with others who were born in that month.

If you are interested in attending, please complete this form and drop it in the offering plate.

For more information, contact Nancy Hartmann or Elaine Jellison.

This party is sponsored by the Congregational Fellowship Committee.

Calendar Party!

Name _____

How many attending in each birth month:

January _____ July _____

February _____ August _____

March _____ September _____

April _____ October _____

May _____ November _____

June _____ December _____

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Mission Moment

Update from Kay Day, Rwanda

Dear Friends and Family,

Greetings from sunny, dry Rwanda. As we await the coming of the rains, many of you are preparing for the beauty of autumn and the change of the seasons. Change is a part of life. Sometimes that change is something to be celebrated. That was the case this month for five of our graduates from the Protestant University of Rwanda (PUR). They were ordained as pastors, a joyful change in their lives.

Each August, the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda (EPR) holds a four-day, church-wide evangelism rally. The end of the celebration is the annual ordination of new pastors. This service is marked by pomp and ceremony. It begins with all the pastors of the church, in robes and stoles, processing in, led by a marching band. This year we marched around the soccer field before taking our seats. Each section of “spectators” greeted us with cheers and whistling and applause. It is the first time, as a pastor, I have felt like a celebrity of a sort. After the march, we took our seats in the stands, and the festivities continued with five choirs singing before the liturgy actually began. Instead of a pulpit, an elevated stage served the purpose, complete with 12-foot speakers suspended from scaffolds on each side of the stage. The volume was loud so that all could hear. Regardless of the rally-like setting, when the time came for the preaching, the sermon was welcomed with reverence and great attention, as was the ordination ceremony that followed. This service is quite different from an ordination in America. Those to be ordained sit among the worshippers, and at the designated time, the presidents of their respective presbyteries “hunt” for them and bring them to the front of the stadium, as the scripture from Luke 10 about the harvest being plentiful but the laborers being few is read. When all those to be ordained are gathered in the front with their spouses, they are asked constitutional questions, and with hands raised before God, they swear their willingness to serve. Their spouses are asked to respond to questions of their willingness to serve as well. Then the ordinands are robed and the rest of the clergy is invited to come down and lay hands on them in prayer, much as we do in the States. Their ordination is the culmination of four years of theological training and at least two years of internship in a parish. They are now ready to fully serve Christ’s church.

One of my blessings is to be a part of the training of these young pastors. This ordination service is in a way a culmination of what I have been sent here to do—to assist EPR in preparing their pastors. You are a part of this with me. I thank you for that. You are a part of this ministry. As we prepare for the next school year that will begin in October, even now the church leadership is selecting the next class of students they will send for training. Please pray for the selection process, which will bring great changes for these new students. My prayers are with you as you move from summer to autumn and into the changes that only God knows the future holds. May the change be filled with God’s blessings.

Yours in Christ’s love,
Kay

**If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office. We would like to include all of our church family on the birthday and anniversary lists.*