



The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

JANUARY 2018

As the glittering ball dropped in Times Square, the curtain was raised on a New Year. January is a derivative of the Latin word for “door”, depicted by Janus, the mythological Roman god of beginnings and transitions. After wrestling with the challenges of the past twelve months, it is refreshing to pass through the threshold of a new year. It’s not that life is magically reset and we are freed from what was. It’s more that our focus is reoriented on what can be. It’s not as much about time as it is about attitude. It’s not as much about where we’ve been as it is about where we’re going.

My sister has dozens of those stenciled sayings on the walls of her home. One says, “Don’t let yesterday rob you of today.” While we don’t have control over much of what happens in our lives, we do have power over how we respond to it. How many times have you said, “So and so makes me so angry.” The fact of the matter is that no one can make you angry unless you give them that power over you. All too often, we choose anger as our response to a situation—when in reality we could choose a better response. We allow the discord of our yesterdays to set the tone for today, which in turn echoes into tomorrow. We refuse to let go of those things that weigh us down and cause us pain, things that have no redeeming value or useful purpose. As the prayer of confession declares, “We become prisoners to sin that is too heavy to carry, too real to hide and too deep to undo; sin that our lips tremble to name, that our hearts can no longer bear, that has become for us a consuming fire of judgment.” The prayer then petitions, “Set us free from a past we cannot change, open to us a future in which we can be changed and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world.”

The Jewish calendar celebrates its new year with a ten day period of penitence beginning with Rosh Hashanah and leading into Yom Kippur, the day of atonement. During this time, worshipers examine their relationships with God and with others. They ponder where they have strayed from God, and in turn where they have failed others. They name their sin and lament their wrongs. In Leviticus 16, we read how the chief priest would symbolically lay the sins of the whole nation upon a goat, and then send that goat, called a scapegoat, into the wilderness, removing it and the sin from the midst of the people. With the sin gone, they could start afresh—new, forgiven.

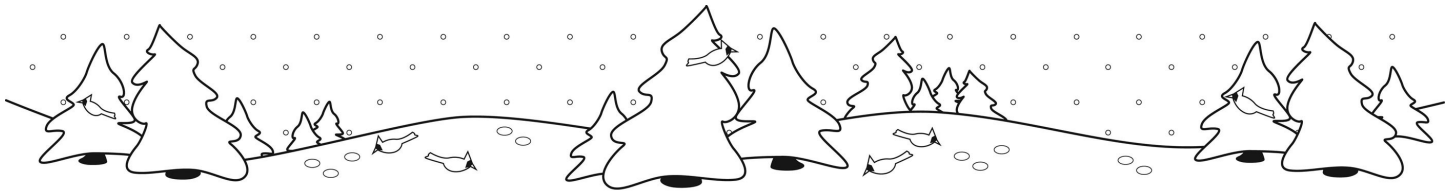
In John 1 we hear John the Baptist’s response as he sees Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” When you get down to it, it is in that declaration we recognize that the new has come and the old is passed away. It is in Christ that we are able to be recreated in the image of our redeemer. It is there that we die to our old self and are reborn, raised as a new creation.

As I said before, the new year is not so much a day on the calendar as it is a celebration of our redemption, our newness in Christ. It comes as we take off our old ways and put on the things of Christ. Paul writes, “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive....” (Colossians 3:12-17) New Year’s Day comes when we recognize that Jesus Christ is stronger than those things that tempt us and taunt us and hold us down. The true celebration comes as we claim the freedom of living in Christ, looking ahead with the hope that is with us, walking with confidence in the paths of righteousness, knowing that the Spirit abides within us and resting assured that there is nothing we need fear because Jesus Christ is Lord.

“Thus says the Lord who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you...Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.....Behold, I am doing a new thing...and I will remember your sins no more.” Yes, Happy New Year indeed....

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 7

Acts 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11

Sunday, January 14

John 1:43-51
I Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20)

Sunday, January 21

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Mark 1:21-28

Saturday, January 28

I Corinthians 8:1-13
Mark 1:21-28

Sunday, February 4

Isaiah 40:21-31
Mark 1:29-39

Unity Sunday

On Sunday, January 14th at 3:00 p.m., the community is invited to gather in our sanctuary for a service of love for Christ and Community. Choirs and worship teams from several of the area churches will be participating. Let's raise a joyous noise to the Lord, together. This service for Christian Unity is sponsored by the Blairsville Ministerium.

February Newsletter

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

Worship Assistants

January 7—Communion

Flowers: John & Mary Hileman
Ushers: Bob & Charlotte Cosharek
Rick & Willa Shoemaker

Projector: Alex Kirkland

Audio: Andrew Baker

January 14

Flowers: Joy Fairbanks
Ushers: Terry & Barb Brown
Jim & Mary Piper

Projector: Kayla Moran

Audio: Tyler Moran

January 21

Flowers: Cindy Borbonus
Ushers: Gene & Chery Artman
Steve & Joan Moran

Projector: Blake Tonkin

Audio: Elizabeth Bruner

January 28

Ushers: Ron & Kim McKinney
John & Mary Hileman

Projector: Shakira McKinney

Audio: Jaison McKinney

Offering Counters

Tom & Janet Smith

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.

Year End Information

A **Congregational Meeting** has been scheduled for Sunday, January 28, 2018 immediately following worship. We will look at the year 2017 in review and look forward to the 2018 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 21st. If you have any questions or need information from the office, contact Jill during office hours at 724-459-7991 or email at upchurch@r-church.com.

Year End Giving Statements

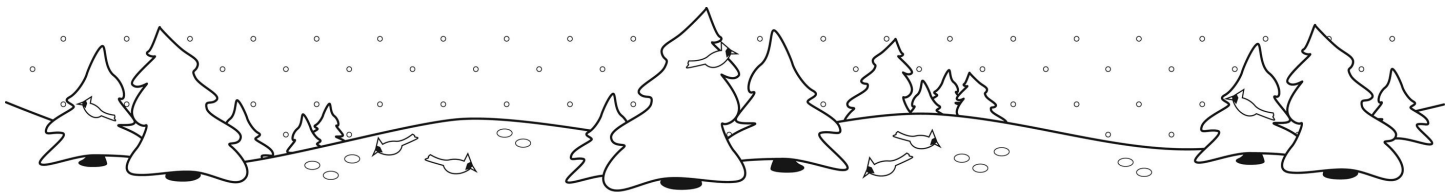
Financial statements of your giving will be mailed to each household mid to late January. If you would like your statement earlier, contact the church office.

Offering Envelopes

2018 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.

2018 Flower Chart

The Flower Chart has been posted in the hallway outside the church 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.



2018 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 2018, that amount is \$31.30 per member on the active roll. That breaks down to: General Assembly—\$7.73, Synod—\$2.30, and Presbytery—21.27. 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. This newsletter includes a letter explaining your options with regards to your per capita. If you have questions, please contact the church office or see Pastor Monroe. We want to honor your intentions for your gifts to the work of the church.

2018 Communion Dates

- January 7—Baptism of Our Lord
- *February 14—Ash Wednesday
- February 25—Lent
- *March 29—Maundy Thursday
- May 20—Pentecost
- August 12
- September 9
- October 7—World Wide Communion
- November 25—Christ the King Sunday
- *December 24—Christmas Eve
(* evening services)

Coupon Collection

The Coupons for Veterans Program is going great! We are over the \$100,000 mark sending coupons to the Veterans Overseas. A BIG thank you to everyone who is participating. There is an important change, because of time constraints, we are now accepting only cut coupons. We ask that you please have them cut apart before dropping them off in the box. Thank you!

Cookie Walk Update

The annual Cookie Walk was held Saturday, December 16th from 9:00—11:00 a.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 \$500 for the Pathway Homeless Shelter in Black Lick. Thank you to all who organized, set-up, baked, worked and cleaned-up for the event.

Family Promise News

In 2018 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 14-21, April 22-29, August 12-19 and October 21-28. 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.

Souper Bowl of Caring 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 4th during morning worship. One hundred percent of these gifts will be sent to ICCAP in support of the Food Bank.

To the Session and Congregation,

Thank you for your many kindness at Christmas and throughout the year. It is a blessing for us to be able to minister in the church in our various ways. We look forward to a blessed and happy New Year in 2018!

Cindy, Marilyn, Sandy, Peg, and Jill

*We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion Sunday, January 7th during the 11:00 a.m. worship service.
Please take time to prepare to receive and share the sacrament.*

Our Elders and Deacons

We thank Gene Artman, Becky Bence and Nancy Hartmann for their faithful service on the Session. They have been instrumental in helping to set a vision as we move forward.

We welcome Dennis Gould to his second term on Session and appreciate his willingness to serve.

We rejoice as Joan Moran is ordained and installed with Tom Smith and Pat Swope to the Sessional Class of 2020.

We thank Mary Anzelone, Joan Moran, Naomi Sigafos and Paul Soltesz for the ways they have enhanced and broadened the ministry of the deacons during their terms of service. We welcome Andrea Clayton to her second term as a deacon and appreciate her willingness to serve.

We rejoice as Steve Moran and Mary Hileman are ordained and installed with Judy Trimble to the Diaconal Class of 2020.

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 members 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 21st.

After many years of service preparing the projector slides for our worship services, Mary Anzelone is passing on the torch. We extend a BIG Thank You to her for her faithful service behind the scenes for many years. Thanks so much for a job well done!

The Session

Class of 2018

Doug Clayton
Bob Cosharek
Rose Lewis
Kim McKinney

Class of 2019

Bonni Dunlap
Ron Hood
Elaine Jellison
Rick Shoemaker

Class of 2020

Dennis Gould
Joan Moran
Tom Smith
Pat Swope

Board of Deacons

Class of 2018

Erica Ash
Susie Cotti
Jean Heberling
Marilyn Neal

Class of 2019

Jen Borbonus
Ken Doak
Tom Holby
Beverly Lindsey
Bobbi Monroe

Class of 2020

Andrea Clayton
Mary Hileman
Steve Moran
Judy Trimble

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

Consider Taking Part

The Session Committees for 2018 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 mission 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

Many Thanks

We appreciate the work of all those who have made extra efforts through the Advent Season: the choir and the special music that was shared, those who decorated the sanctuary with flowers and ornamentation, those who led in the lighting of the Advent candles, those who helped with making fruit baskets, caroling, our Christmas Eve Services and our Handbell Choir. These and other acts of service have helped us to prepare to greet our new born King.

Welcome Our Newest Member

Our newest members united with the congregation Sunday, December 10th during worship along with Heather Clawson.

Eileen Brown lives in Blairsville and is married to Ken. She has one son and four grandchildren. Eileen was raised in the Roman Catholic Church and went to parochial school for eight years. She comes to this congregation from Abundant Grace Assembly of God Church. Eileen enjoys reading, taking walks and working with craft projects.

Ken Brown also lives in Blairsville and is married to Eileen. He has one son, one daughter and one grandchild. Ken has been very active attending various churches, counseling, and traveling to Guatemala on a mission trip. He enjoys eating out, watching TV and visiting with friends. Ken retired in 1993.

Ash Wednesday

We will gather for worship at 7:00 p.m. on Ash Wednesday, February 14th. 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.

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

The Christian season of Lent is historically marked with fasting, a traditional practice of giving up food and devoting yourself to prayer. But this isn’t the only type of fasting the Bible talks about. Isaiah 58 describes a new kind of fast, not to give up bread but to share it. Isaiah calls us to “loose the bonds of injustice,” to “let the oppressed go free,” to “share bread with the hungry” and to “invite the homeless poor into our homes.” We are called to offer help to those in need and restoration to those who have been broken down. One way we answer this call is through our gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing. Our gifts to OGHS will join congregations all over the country as we seek to answer God’s call and make a difference in the lives of many more people. As we respond through our sharing, Isaiah 58 also provides a promise. As we respond to injustice, feed those who are hungry, and provide places for those without homes, our “light will break forth,” and we shall be called “repairers of the breach, restorers of streets to live in.” We will receive the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering Palm Sunday, March 25th during the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Please prayerfully consider your gift.

Community Lenten Mid-week Services

The Blairsville Area Ministerium will offer community Lenten services followed by a light lunch. Beginning Ash Wednesday, February 14th, a service will be held at 12:00 noon followed by soup and sandwiches. The schedule is as follows:

February 14.....	Black Lick United Methodist Church	Rev. Ryan Kobert
February 21.....	Hebron Lutheran Church.....	Rev. John Buchmann
February 28.....	C&MA Church.....	Rev. Brett Dinger
March 7.....	United Presbyterian Church	Cameron Vogel
March 14.....	First United Methodist Church.....	Rev. Steve Bugay
March 21.....	Hopewell Methodist Church	Rev. Harold Hicks
March 28.....	SS Simon & Jude Church.....	Rev. Tim Monroe
March 30, Good Friday, 7:00 p.m.....	Abundant Grace Church	Rev. Cory Braatz