



# UPLIFT Newsletter

The United  
Presbyterian Church  
of Blairsville, PA

DECEMBER 2015

It was a dark and stormy night, and little Janey laid wide eyed in her bed. As a bolt of lightning illumined the sky and the roll of thunder shook her bed, she took off across the hall to her parent's room. "Mama, Papa, can I sleep in here with you two tonight?" Their first inclination was to settle her in between them, but they knew that at some point she would have to face the storm of life alone. As difficult as it was, Mama said, "No Janey, you'll have to go back to your room. You don't have to be afraid because God will be with you." "I know that" she replied, "but on a night like tonight I could really use a God with skin on."

As we read the scriptures of the Old Testament we are given witness after witness to the great Creator God, robed in majesty and mystery. We sing of him—"Immortal, invisible, God only wise, in light inaccessible hid from our eyes, most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days, almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise." Yet as grand as is our heavenly Father, on those dark and stormy nights we need someone more, someone who will walk with us and talk with us, someone who will tell us we are his own.

John sets the scene for his Gospel account, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God....And the Word became flesh and lived among us....full of grace and truth." We call it the incarnation, God putting on flesh, skin, and dwelling with us. In other religious belief systems there are stories of the gods putting on human costumes and mingling with common folk. But what we believe as Christians is something quite different. As God comes to us in Bethlehem, he is not merely wearing a disguise to look like one of us. As God comes to us in Jesus, he comes in all the vulnerability of our humanity. Describing the incarnation, Paul explains it this way; "Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death." (Philippians 2:6-8)

The miracle of Christmas is that God chose, not only to come to us, but to experience this world the way we do. His coming was not a weekend get-away to experience something different. It was not some social experiment to see how we would react. The incarnation, God becoming flesh, was and is a statement of his love for and devotion to us, his people. The Creator was willing to become the creature. The God who owns everything was willing to put it all aside and face this world with nothing. He was willing to step from his throne in the highest heaven into a manger in Bethlehem. He was willing to set aside his Lordship so that he could become a slave. Knowing that we could never fully understand him, he came to experience our dark and stormy nights so that as we endure them together we can begin to know him.

John writes, "He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God."

Last week a newborn baby with umbilical cord still attached, was found wrapped in a towel, laying in the nativity manger at the Holy Child of Jesus Church in Richmond Hill, Queens, N.Y. What do you do with a newborn baby who just appears? Maybe the real question is—what will that newborn baby do with you?

The Word became flesh and dwells among us still.....

*Pastor Jim*



"Thank you to all who helped make our Thanksgiving dinner a success again this year. Those who stepped up at last minute to help the committee, those who prepared food, set up and cleaned up, those who contributed monetarily, the worship speakers and especially all the kitchen help, it was much appreciated."

## Christmas Schedule

- Dec. 12** .....Kids Day Out at 11:00 am Christmas Eve rehearsal 3:15
- Dec. 19** .... Holiday Cookie Sale 8:00-10:30 am
- Dec. 20** ..... Christmas Cantata 11:00 am
- Dec. 23** .....Kids Christmas Eve rehearsal 10:00 am
- Dec. 24** .....Kids Christmas Program Candlelight & Communion 7:00 pm
- Dec. 24** ..... Candlelight & Communion Worship 11:00 pm

## Worship Assistants

### December 6

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone  
Acolyte: Austin Baker  
Ushers: Nancy Boone, Kim, Ron and Shakira McKinney  
Flowers: Alice Santoro  
Projector: Jonathan Clayton  
Audio: Alex Baker

### December 13

Liturgist: Barb Brown  
Ushers: SS Kids & Erica Ash and Ellen Williams  
Flowers: Poinsettias  
Projector: Shakira McKinney  
Audio: Jaison McKinney

### December 20—Cantata

Liturgist: Dennis Gould  
Acolyte: Brylea Borbonus  
Ushers: Todd & Stacy Faulk and Bob & Charlotte Cosharek  
Flowers: Poinsettias  
Projector: Kayla Moran  
Audio: Tyler Moran

### December 24—Early Service

Ushers: Naomi Sigafoes, Nancy Boone, Paul Soltesz  
Flowers: Alice Santoro  
Projector: Jonathan Clayton  
Audio: Alex Baker

### December 24—11:00 PM Service

Liturgist: Bobbi Monroe  
Ushers: Tom & Julia Holby, Naomi Sigafoes, Nancy Boone  
Flowers: Alice Santoro  
Projector: Jonathan Clayton  
Audio: Alex Baker

### December 27

Guest  
Minister: Randy Stear  
Ushers: Bill & Deb Lint and Rick & Willa Shoemaker  
Flowers: Alice Santoro  
Projector: Jonathan Clayton  
Audio: Alex Baker

### Offering Counters

Emma Riggi and Irving Lindsey

## Scripture Texts for Worship

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

### Sunday, December 6—2<sup>nd</sup> of Advent

Malachi 3:1-4  
Luke 3:1-6

### Sunday, December 13—3<sup>rd</sup> of Advent

Zephaniah 3:14-20  
Luke 3:7-18

### Sunday, December 20—4<sup>th</sup> of Advent

Christmas Cantata

### December 24—7:00 p.m.

*Communion & Candlelight*  
Christmas Program

### December 24—11:00 p.m.

*Communion & Candlelight*  
Isaiah 9:2-7  
Luke 2:1-20

### Sunday, December 27

Worship with Randy Stear

## Family Promise News

In 2016 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 3-10, May 15-22, August 21-28 and October 30-November 6. 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.



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



## **"KIDS DAY OUT"**

**December 12 from 11-3**

It's that time of year when the children, ages 3 and up, can come to the church and spend a few hours and have a great time. We are going to hear the Christmas Story, make a craft or two, play some games. Cookies will be made, we will eat lunch, sing songs. We will have plenty of fun. The children who are in the Christmas Eve service will practice in the Sanctuary at 3:30. Registration form below.

**THERE WILL BE "NO" SUNDAY SCHOOL, DECEMBER 27, 2015**

**EARLY CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE ~~~7:00 p.m.**

**"THE CHRISTMAS STORY, THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD"**

### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Coming in 2016.....

Winter Fun Fest	February 13
Eggstravaganza	March 19
Springthing	April 30

**AND MUCH MORE!!!!**

### **"Nursery news"**

**Our nursery has a real need for great loving people to care for our little ones during services.**

**If you are willing to give one Sunday every 6 weeks to share with them, please contact Deb Lint.**

### **KIDS DAY OUT**

**DECEMBER 12th, 11 AM TO 3 PM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (C)

Parents Name \_\_\_\_\_

ALLERGIES \_\_\_\_\_

Questions, concerns or more information contact Deb Lint, Jen Borbonus or call the office.

Drop in the offering plate on Sunday or mail it to the church.



## Advent Devotionals

Advent Devotional Booklets can be picked up at the back of the sanctuary. This year's devotional is entitled, "The Jesse Tree" by Debra Grant. It includes a daily devotion for personal growth each day of Advent. Please take one and share one with a friend.

## Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the January issue of the UPLIFT Newsletter is Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>. Please have all articles to be published in the January issue to the church office by the due date. Thank you.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Cookie Walk

The church and community is invited to purchase delicious holiday cookies for gift giving, holiday parties, etc. Who has time to bake dozens of different cookies? No need, just make your favorite cookies and shop for the rest! The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Cookie Walk will be held Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Cookies are \$7.00 per pound and all proceeds benefit the Pathway Homeless Shelter. Hope to see you at the Cookie Walk!

## Christmas Eve Services

The children will present a Christmas program at the Early Christmas Eve Candlelight and Communion Service to be held at 7:00 p.m. A traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight and Communion Worship will be held at 11:00 p.m. We hope you will plan to join us as we celebrate the birth of Jesus!



## MADE IN AMERICA

(Blairsville, to be exact)



The Grannies sewing group has several handmade items available for your purchase. Funds raised through the sale of these items help to support our mission of providing a blanket to each person baptized in our church, quilts distributed to fire victims and Habitat for Humanity, stuffed bunnies and bears given to the Alice Paul House and Citizen's Ambulance Service, dignity robes to the Indiana Hospital Women's Imaging Center, lap robes for those in our church, and dining scarves for residents of St. Andrew's Village. These are just some of the distribution points of our sewing projects. As you consider your needs for the upcoming holiday gift-giving season, look to fill your stockings or gift bags with some of the following. Your generosity will help to support the sewing projects within our church and the community.

<b>Fleece Scarves .....</b>	<b>\$10.00</b>
<b>Decorative Scarves.....</b>	<b>\$12.00 - \$20.00 (depending on style)</b>
<b>Stuffed Bears &amp; Bunnies.....</b>	<b>\$15.00</b>
<b>Knitted Dish Cloths .....</b>	<b>\$3.00 medium \$4.00 large</b>
<b>Shopping Bags.....</b>	<b>\$3.50</b>
<b>Hanging Hand Towels .....</b>	<b>\$4.00</b>
<b>Hot Pads &amp; Pot Holders.....</b>	<b>\$3.50 to \$5.00 (depending on size)</b>

Contact: Janeen Swope (724) 739-0130

## Christmas Cantata 2015

Christmas is in the air and many voices have been busy rehearsing for this year's Christmas Cantata entitled, "The Silence and the Sound" by Heather Sorenson. The Christmas choir will present the cantata during the worship hour Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. If there is anyone who would like to join the choir for the cantata, please contact Cindy. It's not too late. All are welcome to join us!

## A Big THANK YOU!

Thank you to all those who donated toward the Deacon Thanksgiving Basket Project. This year we were able to give out several baskets within the community! Thanks to the generosity of many including the Blairsville School District and Dollar Tree. Numerous families were able to have a blessed Thanksgiving!

## Year End Information

It won't be long and the year 2015 will soon come to a close. A congregational meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, February 7, 2016 immediately following worship. We will look at 2015 in review and look forward to the 2016 New Year. Please make plans to attend.

## Year End Reports

Committee chairs and treasurers are asked to write a report to include in the annual report for the Congregational Meeting. Please have your report to the church office by Sunday, January 31st. 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](mailto:upchurch@r-church.com).

## 2015 Year End Financial 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.

## 2016 Flower Chart

The Flower Chart for 2016 has been posted in the hallway outside the office. Take time today to sign-up for your choice of dates. Flowers are placed on the organ during worship and can be taken home with you following the service. Flower arrangements are \$20 each and checks can be made payable to the: Board of Deacons.

## 2016 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for the New Year will be in the back of the sanctuary soon for you to pick up. If you do not have envelopes and would like a set, please contact Jill in the church office at 724-459-7991 or see Pastor Monroe.

## Church Kitchen Information

The church has received from the department of agriculture, an Eating and Drinking License to operate in the kitchen. This requires that no wet dish cloths or towels be left in the kitchen to dry. There is a drying rack 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 counter in the kitchen. Please remember these guidelines if you or your group are planning to use the kitchen.

## Our Cross

Each Sunday as we worship, we enjoy the beauty of the cross that is placed on the communion table. We are grateful to Gary Wyant who keeps that cross polished. We ask that no one moves the cross from the communion table. If for some reason it must be moved, there are white gloves on the piano in the choir room that should be worn. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping our cross free of fingerprints.



## Newsletter Mailings

We send our newsletter to a number of people. Every now and then, we do a review of our mailing list to keep it current to those who have shown an interest in the life and work of the congregation. Should you stop receiving this newsletter, but would like to stay on the mailing list, all we ask is that you call the church office and your name will be put back on the list. We do this as an issue of stewardship so that we are not sending out unwanted mail.

Congratulations to Jill Wolford for achieving 15 years of service on December 4th as our financial secretary. For all that are working to accomplish God's work through this church, it is well recognized the degree to which Jill factors into our successes. Anyone wishing to recognize Jill may send a personal thank you to the church office.

