



UPLIFT Newsletter

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

FEBRUARY 2016

The words were written over 450 years ago, yet they warm my heart each time I affirm them. They comprise the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism.

“What is your only comfort, in life and in death? That I belong—body and soul, in life and in death—not to myself but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, who at the cost of his own blood has fully paid for all my sins and has completely freed me from the dominion of the devil; that he protects me so well that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that everything must fit his purpose for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.”

We live in a society where “taking charge” is seen as a virtue. Being in control of one’s future is perceived as a key component of success (or at least the image of it). Many a life is spent posturing in the hope that we can make ourselves look just a little better than the next guy. But the problem is that in running a rat race, even if you come in first, you’re still just a rat. Someone once said, “Don’t fear failure. Fear spending your life succeeding at things that really do not matter.” When you finish your course in this world, is it what you’ve done that will stand the test of time, or is it who you’ve been—the seeds you’ve planted in the lives of others, the faithfulness, you’ve exhibited that points beyond yourself. One of my life verses is Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

There is a Spiritual principle called “coram deo.” It means to live one’s entire life in the presence of God, under the authority of God, to the glory of God. It means seeing oneself, the creature, in light of the creator. It means maintaining the proper perspective of who we are in the midst of this universe. In the midst of the Renaissance, the popular mantra was, “Man is the measure of all things.” Part of the reason the Heidelberg Catechism was written was to counter that notion and draw the attention back to God.

We are not our own, we belong to God. That reality is at the heart of the Lenten Season. We begin by coming in humility and receiving ashes. “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Those are words said to princes and paupers, presidents and peons. Before God, we have no standing other than what his mercy and grace offer us. Who we are in and of ourselves in no way diminishes who he is, yet who he is initiates a relationship and elicits a response from us. This season we prepare to enter is a time for us to reflect on who we are as children of God, what it means to live in the exposing light of God’s truth and what it means to be a family of faith as together we discover what being in God’s watchful presence is all about.

Paul calls us to examine ourselves, to try to see ourselves as God sees us and to test how closely we are walking in the ways of Christ. What we find in that wrestling is not always pretty—but it’s the truth, and the first step to freedom is knowing the truth about ourselves and even more important, about God. As John the Baptist says—“He must increase and I must decrease.” Where in your life will it be less about what you want and more about what Christ wants of and for you? It is only in dying to self that we can be raised with Christ.

May the journey you experience in these coming weeks lessen your sense of self-importance as you gain a broader vision of the grandeur of God. And at the same time may you see how important you are to him in the glory of his grace.....

In Christ’s love,

Pastor Jim



Worship Assistants

February 7

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone
Acolyte: Austin Baker
Flowers: Naomi Sigafoes
Ushers: Boy Scouts Troop 4
Projector: Shakira McKinney
Audio: Jaison McKinney

February 10 Ash Wednesday

February 14

Liturgist: Bonni Dunlap
Acolyte: Eli Borbonus
Flowers: Nancy Boone
Projector: Kayla Moran
Audio: Tyler Moran

February 21

Acolyte: Brylea Borbonus
Projector: Blake Tonkin
Audio: Mitchell Tonkin

February 28

Acolyte: Olivia Eckenroad
Flowers: Sue Harvey & family
Projector: Jonathan Clayton
Audio: Alex Baker

Offering Counters

Tom and Janet Smith

In Memorium

Elaine (Dunmire) Semsick

Born—

March 14, 1933

*United with the
Blairsville Church—*

October 2, 1988

Ordained as Elder—

January 1976

*Entered the Church
Triumphant—*

January 9, 2016

Scripture Texts for Worship

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

Sunday, February 7

II Corinthians 3:12-4:2
Luke 9:28-36

Sunday, February 10

Isaiah 58:1-12
II Corinthians 5:20-6:10

Sunday, February 14

Romans 10:8-13
Luke 4:1-13

Sunday, February 21

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
Philippians 3:17-4:1

Sunday, February 28

Isaiah 55:1-9
I Corinthians 10:1-13

Sunday, March 6

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32
II Corinthians 5:16-21

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

On Sunday, February 7th following worship, we will hold our Annual Congregational Meeting in Fellowship Hall. A light lunch will be provided. The work of the church during 2015 will be reviewed and the 2016 Nominating Committee will be elected.

Newsletter

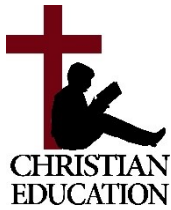
Articles for the March edition of the UPLIFT newsletter should be to the office by Monday, February 15th.

2016 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 2016, that amount is \$28.20 per member on the active roll. That breaks down to: General Assembly—\$7.12, Synod—\$2.30, and Presbytery—\$18.78. 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.

Lenten Devotional

Devotionals will be available at the back of the sanctuary for our journey through the season of Lent. The booklet is entitled, “Living Lent as People of the Resurrection” by Dr. Rich Bimler. There are daily devotions that lead us from the cross to the empty tomb watching for signposts of Ponder, Purpose, People, Proclaim, Praise, Pain and Promise along the way. Please be sure to pick one up.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

*Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser:
teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.
Proverbs 9:9*



****REMINDER TO ALL CHILDREN****

WINTERFEST IS FEBRUARY 13, 2016 FROM 1:00 TO 3:00

If there is snow bring your snow gear, we will play out in the side yard.

We will have a story, be making a Valentine to give to your favorite Valentine, play a game or two,
have Hot Chocolate to warm us, plus other fun things.

There are registration forms in Sunday's bulletin or just call the church and register.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR MARCH EVENTS!!!

***FAMILY FAITH NIGHTS ***

March 4, 11, and 18

6:00 to 8:00 PM

This Lenten Season Family Faith Nights will offer 3 different lessons
beginning with Palm Sunday and ending with the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ.
We will enjoy a meal and a time of fellowship from 6 to 7 then from 7 to 8 we will have our lesson.

- ♦ Friday, March 4 the lesson will be: PALM SUNDAY led by Gene Artman
- ♦ Friday, March 11 the lesson will be: THE LAST SUPPER led by Bill Lint
- ♦ Friday, March 18 the final lesson: THE CRUCIFIXION & RESURRECTION led by Pastor Tim

During the adult lessons the children will go upstairs and have the same lessons,
but with a little fun added.

The children's time will be led by Deb Lint and helpers.

You don't want to miss all we have to offer this Easter Season.

ALSO COMING IN MARCH

- ⇒ March 19 EASTER EGG-STRAVAGANZA AND EGG HUNT
- ⇒ March 20 PALM SUNDAY (kid's process in with Pastor Tim, please plan on attending)

More information in March's UPLIFT





Ash Wednesday

At 7:00 on Ash Wednesday, February 10, we will gather for worship. 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.

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.

Family Promise Update

There has been a change to our 2016 Family Promise schedule. The dates of May 15-22, **has changed to May 29-June 5**. 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 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 7th during morning worship. One hundred percent of these gifts will be sent to the ICCAP Food Bank. 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 10th, a service will be held at 12:00 noon followed by a light lunch. The schedule is as follows:

Feb 10.....	Free Methodist Church	Rev. Cory Braatz
Feb 17.....	C&MA Church	Rev Harold Hicks
Feb 24.....	United Presbyterian Church.....	Rev. Scott Shaffer
Mar 2.....	Hebron Lutheran Church	Rev. Brett Dinger
Mar 9.....	First United Methodist Church	Rev. Tim Monroe
Mar 16.....	Hopewell Methodist Church	Father Steve Buggy
Mar 23.....	SS Simon & Jude Church	Rev. Rusty McClurg
Mar 25.....	Connect Church.....	Rev. Jim Kendall
		7:00 p.m. Good Friday

What Is an Evangelical Christian?

In conversation about political voting blocs and denominational identity, we hear the term "evangelical Christians" bantered about. While all evangelicals are Christians, not all who consider themselves Christian are evangelical. The word "evangelical" has been understood in different ways at different times of history. In today's society, an Evangelical Christian is one who holds the following four beliefs:

- * The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe.
- * It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior
- * Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin.
- * Only those who trust Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation.

Confirmation Classes

As Spring approaches, we are planning to offer Confirmation Classes to give young people a chance to explore their faith and consider what it means to be a part of the church. Traditionally classes have been held on Sunday afternoons. We gather for a light lunch after worship. The class then meets until 2:00 p.m. Parents are welcome to sit in on the classes. The proposed schedule is as follows: March 13, 20, April 3, 10, 17, 24, and May 1. Students would then unite with the church during worship on Pentecost, May 8. If you have any questions about the classes, please contact Pastor Monroe or Deb Lint.

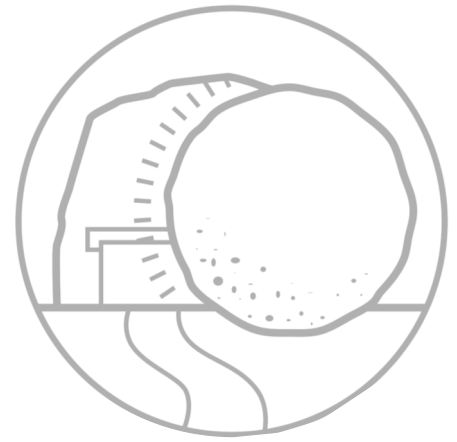
7 Reasons Why Serving in the Church Nursery is Important

1. **GOD IS THERE**—This may come as a shock, but the Bible has specific promises about God's presence when children are welcomed and loved in Jesus' name.
2. **IT HELPS OTHERS**—Your service in the church nursery allows churchgoers to focus on worship rather than worrying about their children.
3. **BABY'S FIRST IMPRESSION**—The first (and sometimes lasting) feelings a child will have toward church is formed in the nursery department. A positive experience in the church nursery is essential.
4. **THE MOST SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT**—When you serve in the nursery, you are being entrusted with the most important (and vulnerable) members of the church family. There is no greater treasure on this side of heaven than the little ones God has given us. You must be someone special to have a job that is so important.
5. **YOUR OWN GROWTH**—Your service is essential for your own spiritual growth. You may have never looked at it this way, but a growing Christian is always a serving Christian. Jesus was known for putting others first, when you serve in the church nursery you are walking in his example.
6. **VISITORS FIRST IMPRESSION**—The church nursery is the first contact young families will have with your church. Your friendly greeting and exceptional care for their children can make a great first impression for your church. If they don't feel like their children are safe, they will not return, and rightly so.
7. **FRONT-LINE PRAYERS**—Your service in the church nursery is a powerful opportunity for prayer. If every nursery worker would spend several minutes praying over the children in their care, imagine how God might begin to change this coming generation. There is no better way to create an environment of spiritual nurture than to pray while you serve in the nursery.

Remember that God blesses those
who serve his children.

Pastor's Study Leave

Pastor Monroe will be taking part in a course entitled, "The Art of Transitional Ministry" February 29—March 4 at Pittsburgh Seminary. Please call the church office with any messages or if you need to contact him during this time.



Valentine Dinner

Family Promise is sponsoring a Valentine Dinner at Grace United Methodist Church in Indiana on Sunday, February 14th. Dinner will be served beginning at 5:00 p.m. with the *7 Mile Run* concert to follow at 6:30 p.m. Ticket cost for your meal and the concert is \$25 per person. Dinner includes choice of stuffed chicken, stuffed pork chops or ham, salad, red potatoes, dessert, and beverage. Tickets can be obtained by calling the Family Promise office at 724-464-5220. Join us for a relaxing evening with fantastic food and great music from local musicians.

Variety Show Scheduled

The Blairsville Underground Railroad Museum will hold its annual fundraiser, a variety show entitled, "Showtime," on March 12th, 7:00 p.m. at the Blairsville High School Auditorium. This year's theme is *Sing Cities, USA*. Tickets can be purchased at the Blairsville Historical Society, The Koffee Shoppe, This, That & More and at the auditorium door. Advanced adult tickets are \$9 each and students are \$6 each. At the door adult tickets are \$11 each and students are \$8 each.

Vaccinations Available

The Dept. of Health will offer free or low cost vaccinations to those uninsured or underinsured at the Blairsville Community Center from 9:45-11:15 AM, January 20th, February 17th, March 16th and April 20th. Please call the Dept. of Health to schedule an appointment 724-357-2995.

Joyful Java

Joyful Java & Music Café is held at the Koffee Shoppe each Tuesday evening from 7:00-9:00 p.m. All are welcome.

Minute for Mission—*Souper Bowl of Caring*

Brad Smith, then a seminary intern serving at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina, gave birth to the Souper Bowl of Caring with this prayer: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat."

This youth-led movement to help hungry people shifts the attention given to the Super Bowl to collect dollars and canned food for those who struggle to put enough nutrition on their tables. Youth collect donations at their schools and churches in soup pots, and then send every dollar directly to a local anti-hunger group of their choice.

In that first year, 1990, with 22 churches in the area participating, they raised \$5,700. Each year the contributions increase, and in 2002 the now Reverend Brad Smith became the first paid staff.

Twenty-five years after its founding, hunger in the United States is lamentably still with us. Why? Because more than 45 million Americans live in poverty. The majority of these people work, but still cannot earn enough to guarantee their daily bread. 15.3 million children live in food-insecure households!

In 2015, Souper Bowl raised more than \$8 million. The spirit of generosity clearly exists and we produce more than enough food for everyone, yet poverty and inequality in our nation prevent many from enjoying this basic human right. As people with faith in the imminent kingdom of God, let us join in the difficult work of reshaping systems that prevent the flourishing of life.

Andrew Kang Bartlett, Associate for National Hunger Concern



"He's today's greeter."

Compassion News

Dear Miss Debb and the United Presbyterian Sunday School,

Hello beloved sponsor! How are you doing? My family and I are all doing well. Currently we are in the rainy season. We are sowing different crops and we hope that we will have a good harvest. In school I am doing well. There is no problem. Please keep on praying for me. I will be praying for you too.

May God's protection be upon you!

Thank you,
Samuel Mutabazi, Rwanda

Dear United Presbyterian Sunday School,

Today I want to bless you and your family. I want to tell you that in the future I'd like to learn more about automotive engineering and I'd also like to visit Argentina. I'd like to help elderly people because sometimes they are abandoned and I'd like to learn to speak Italian. I want to tell you that in my country there is a diversity of flora and fauna such as the Condor of Andes which is the representative animal of our country. I want to thank you for your letters, sponsorship and blessings. What do you do for living? How is the culture in your country? I want to ask you to pray for me and my family and my spiritual life. I leave you with affection wishing God keep you and I want to share this verse with you, Psalm 88:1-2.

With Love,
Jeferson Morales, Colombia