



UPLIFT Newsletter

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

MARCH 2017

To be sure, ours is a society of instant gratification. We expect what we want when we want it. On Demand services allow us to view any movie at any hour of the day or night. While we pump our gas, we can punch in our order for sandwiches so they're ready to be picked up when we pay for our fuel. Tax refunds are available as soon as the paperwork is filed. We have lost sight of the value of waiting—of anticipating that for which we long.

The world wants to jump from Thanksgiving to Christmas, forgetting the Season of Advent. In the same way, there are those who want the joy of Easter Day without moving through the Season of Lent. But reality is that we cannot truly celebrate the risen Lord, if we have not walked with him to Jerusalem, to the cross, and to the grave.

Lent is the forty day period in which we the church, prepare our hearts and minds for the mystery of the resurrection. The number "forty" is significant throughout scripture as a time of testing our faith as we seek to trust God more fully. Noah and his family endured 40 days and 40 nights of rain, the Hebrews endured 40 years of slavery in Egypt, the Israelites wandered 40 years in the wilderness, Moses was on Mt. Sinai for 40 days and nights (twice). Elijah went without food and water for 40 days on Mt. Horeb. Jonah prophesied against Ninevah for 40 days. And Jesus endured 40 days in the wilderness fasting, praying and being tempted by Satan. Such a time of testing can break us or make us unbreakable in our bond with God.


Our Lenten journey begins on Ash Wednesday as we are humbled by the reality of our humanity. As the ashes (made by burning the palm branches from the previous year) are imposed, we hear the words—"From dust you were formed, and to dust you will return." Throughout the Bible, we read of those great and small sitting on the ash pile, throwing them overhead as a sign of acknowledging and repenting of their sin. We begin our journey fully aware of our unworthiness before God. And from that point we seek to discover his mercy and grace.

Throughout the 40 day period (which does not include Sundays, because every Sunday is like a little Easter), we take on special acts of sacrifice and service. For some it is fasting from certain activities, or eating certain foods. We "give up" certain things to show that we love God more than we love "them." But just as important as "giving up" certain things is "taking on" certain disciplines. We spend more time reading the Bible, praying, giving of ourselves and our resources to the service of those around us. Some take the money they used to spend on their vices and give it to virtuous pursuits, like helping those in need. Just as Jesus gave of himself for our sake, so too we give of ourselves for the sake of others. Often that temporary discipline of giving becomes a permanent change in the way we live. The closer we walk with God, the more like him we become—because the more of him lives in us. Each day we die to our old sinful nature, and in that dying to the old, we are raised to a new way of living.

In many ways, Lent is personal because we are especially intimate with God. But there is part of the journey we share with each other. The ashes on our foreheads bear witness to others about our contrite and humbled heart. Together we worship as we move closer to the cross. Each day we read the same devotional booklet and focus our prayers. As we consider our One Great Hour of Sharing Offering, we give of ourselves to the same acts of mercy and grace. Each Wednesday at noon, we gather with our brothers and sisters from other congregations for worship and fellowship. By spending time together we discover what it means for the church to be the body of Christ—the body that serves, the body that makes sacrifice, the body that is raised from death to life.

In this Season of Lent, take time to be holy—speak oft with your Lord, abide in him always and feed on his Word. Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak, forgetting in nothing his blessing to seek. Without a Lenten journey, you will never know the true joy of Easter Day. In taking time to be holy, may you be blessed.....

In Christ's love,





Scripture Texts for Worship

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

Ash Wednesday, March 1

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
II Corinthians 5:20-6:10

Sunday, March 5

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7
Matthew 4:1-11

Sunday, March 12

Genesis 12:1-4
John 3:1-17

Saturday, March 19

Exodus 17:1-7
John 4:5-42

Sunday, March 26

Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41

Sunday, April 2

Ezekiel 37:1-14
John 11:1-45

Souper Bowl Update

We received our Souper Bowl of Caring Offering Sunday, February 5th during morning worship. The total received this year is \$885.00. One hundred percent of these gifts have been sent to the ICCAP for the Food Bank. Thank you to all those who supported the Souper Bowl Offering.

Worship Assistants

March 1, Ash Wednesday

Liturgist: Jean Heberling
Ushers: Andrea Clayton, Joan Moran, Emma Riggi, Naomi Sigafoes
Projector: Mary Anzelone

March 5

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone
Flowers: Joanne Torrance
Ushers: Bruner Family
Projector: Shakira McKinney
Audio: Jaison McKinney

March 12

Liturgist: Bobbi Monroe
Flowers: The Reeves Family
Ushers: Tom & Julia Holby
Gary & Shane Boone
Projector: Kayla Moran
Audio: Tyler Moran

March 19

Liturgist: Dennis Gould
Flowers: Annabel Machak
Flowers: Sondra Clapper
Ushers: Baker Family
Projector: Blake Tonkin
Audio: Mitchell Tonkin

March 26

Liturgist: Rick Shoemaker
Flowers: Rick & Willa Shoemaker
Ushers: Jean Heberling, Nancy Campbell,
Projector: Jonathan Clayton
Audio: Andrew Baker

Offering Counters

Tom & Janet Smith

April Newsletter

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

Ash Wednesday

We will gather for worship at 7:00 p.m. on Ash Wednesday, March 1st. 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.

Lenten Devotionals

This year's Lent devotional booklet is entitled, "Living the Gospel Life: Lent 2017." We are Christians on a mission, even in the season of Lent! The daily devotions in this booklet highlight the concepts of being sent, demonstrating faith in action, and being mission-minded each day of Lent. Suggested activities are associated with preparing our hearts, souls and minds to reflect on the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ and his mission for us. Devotionals are available for you to pick up at the back of the sanctuary. Please help yourself.

CE Dates to Remember

The Christian Education Committee met Tuesday, February 14 and approved the following dates. Please mark your calendars and watch Sunday bulletins for additional information.

March 4 Youth Group, 6:00 pm
April 8 Eggstravaganza, 10:00 am
May 21.... Teacher Recognition, 11:00 am
June 4 ... Graduate Recognition, 11:00 am
June 19-23 Vacation Bible School
June 25 VBS Sunday, 11:00 am

Graduates

On June 4, 2017, we will recognize our High School, College or Technical School graduates during morning worship. If you are aware of someone from the church who will be reaching this milestone, we would like to know. Please submit their name to Kim McKinney or leave it in the church office. We would like to celebrate this accomplishment with all of our graduates.

Community Lenten Mid-week Services

The Blairsville Area Ministerium will offer community Lenten services followed by a light lunch. Beginning Ash Wednesday, March 1st, a service will be held at 12:00 noon followed by soup and sandwiches. The schedule is as follows:

March 1	Cross Roads Community Church.....	Rev. Cory Braatz
March 8	C&MA Church	Rev. Steve Bugay
March 15	Hebron Lutheran (& 1st Baptist Church)	Rev. Joe Baird
March 22	1st United Methodist Church	Rev. Tim Monroe
March 29	Hopewell United Methodist Church.....	Lutheran Pastor
April 5	United Presbyterian Church	Rev. Dawn Krishart
April 12	SS Simon & Jude Church	Rev. George Prior
April 14, Good Friday, 7:00 p.m.....	Abundant Grace Assembly of God Church	Rev. Rusty McClurg

Laundry Love

Laundry Love is a new outreach ministry sponsored by St. Peter’s Episcopal Church. Starting Sunday, March 12 and second Sundays from 12:00 noon—2:30 p.m. help will be provided at E&F Norge Laundry right down the road from the church on N. Walnut Street. Quarters, detergent and dryer sheets will be provided to those who would benefit from assistance with clean linens or clothes for work, job interviews, church or school. St. Peter’s has joined with a national non-profit organization whose mission it is to help people who are struggling financially by assisting them with doing their laundry in situations where washing clothes presents both a logistical problem and a financial hardship. For further information, contact Kathy Baird at 603-674-6329 or kathy950@gmail.com. Join the mission! New volunteers welcome to assist with your own personal touch.

Torrance Hospital Donations

Through out the year the deacons will be collecting items for either Torrance State Hospital patients or for the Pathway Homeless Shelter in Black Lick. During the months of February and March the Deacons will be collecting the following items for Torrance State Hospital patients: liquid and bar soap, shampoo, new or used music CD’s, puzzles and greeting cards. You may leave the items in the box in the back of the sanctuary marked for Torrance State Hospital. Please watch your bulletins and newsletters for updates throughout the year.



Food Bank

The food bank is held at our church the first Tuesday of each month. Food items are distributed between the hours of 12:00 and 1:00. Proof of residence is needed when signing-up for the first time. The food bank is sponsored by ICCAP.

March4Schools

MARCH 4 SCHOOLS is a prayer walk to be held from March 9 through March 15th beginning at 6:00 p.m. each evening. Walking will be at either the Blairsville football field track or Saltsburg track. The goal is to unite both sides of the school district for 7 consecutive days for the purpose of walking together, praying together and believing together that our actions and our faith will have a positive impact on the Blairsville-Saltsburg School District. Each day of the prayer walk will have a specific topic of prayer on which participants will focus. We will walk 1 lap each evening but, on March 15th, we will walk at Saltsburg’s track and walk 7 laps. The schedule of prayer topics are:

Thursday, March 9.....	4 School Board Members
Friday, March 10.....	4 Administrators
Saturday, March 11	4 Teachers & Staff
Sunday, March 12.....	4 Elementary Students
Monday, March 13	4 Middle School Students
Tuesday, March 14	4 High School Students
Wednesday, March 15	4 Peace, Healing
.....	& Prosperity in the BSSD

If you are unable to walk but would like to be a part of the prayer time, satellite sites will be open. Our church will be the satellite site in Blairsville. For more information, please check out the website at www.march4schools.com or see Pastor Monroe.



“Human beings need an authentic community where we truly belong: where we can celebrate and where we can cry; where we can be challenged to be our very best and where we can be forgiven when we have been our very worst.

We need a community where we can be welcomed and accepted, no matter who we are, where we’ve been, or what we’ve done, but where we can grow in our relationship with God and with one another.

We need a community where humility is genuine, radical life change is expected, spiritual growth and transformation is celebrated, and prayer and worship are central.

We need to be part of a community that is not about us except to help us to be our best as we love, serve, and influence the world around us.

The Body of Christ—the Church—is intended to be this community, but for many of us, the contemporary “church” that we experience is tired, stressed, embattled, and afraid; a place of confusion, conflict, and fragmentation; a poor imitation of the broken world around it.

That world is broken. Apart from God, human beings will continuously find new ways to isolate, manipulate, fragment, and abuse other human beings and the world God created. Followers of Jesus are commissioned and empowered to live differently—to be limitless in our generosity, outrageous in our compassion; faithful to Christ and accountable to one another in the use of our resources, our influence, and our sexuality; joyful, hopeful, and confident in our identity as God’s beloved children irrespective of our circumstances.

The Fellowship Community is committed to rebuilding the community human beings need within the Body of Christ. We are a network of churches and leaders called together to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ by growing in Christ’s likeness, living by God’s Word, and joining in God’s mission to the world. We are apprentices of Jesus, beginning in the PC(USA) and reaching out in every direction, irrespective of denominations and labels, to welcome, challenge, befriend, and embrace anyone who seeks to grow in joyful obedience to our Redeemer and service to the world he is redeeming.

The Fellowship is not a club or an agency—it is not designed to rescue institutions or advocate ideologies. The goal of the Fellowship is to create and sustain a movement within the Church that will replicate itself in a thousand different locations and give contemporary disciples the community we so desperately need.”

You may have noticed the Fellowship Community logo on the cover of your newsletter. Our session invited a representative from the Fellowship Community to come and share information with us on July 2, 2015. The gathering was open to our congregation and other Presbyterian congregations in the area. Following that evening, session decided to become members of the Community.



Christian Camping Opportunities

For many years four presbyteries (Kiskiminetas, Beaver-Butler, Shenango, and Lake Erie) have shared in ministry through two church camps, West Minster Highlands in Emlenton, PA and Camp Lambec on the shore of Lake Erie. Because of low attendance at the Highlands it is not financial feasible to open the

camp in 2017. Because of water sanitation issues, Camp Lambec is not able to open for the season. Should your children be interested in Christian camping, there are two camps located fairly close, Pine Springs Camp in Jennerstown, PA is administered by Washington and Redstone Presbyteries and Camp Crestfield is affiliated with Pittsburgh Presbytery. For more information, you can contact Pastor Monroe or visit the camps websites: www.crestfieldcc.org and www.pinesprings.org.

Spaghetti Dinner

Ebenezer Presbyterian Church in Lewisville will serve an all-you-can-eat spaghetti dinner Sunday, March 26th from 12:30—2:00 p.m. Dinner costs are \$8.00 per adult and \$4.00 for kids under age 12. Take-outs will be available. All proceeds benefit the Rwanda Mission Fund.

WyoTech Luncheon

A WyoTech Luncheon is planned for Tuesday, March 14th at 11:00 a.m. The luncheons are an outreach ministry of the Mission Committee and friends. If you would like to help with the luncheon, please see Pastor Monroe or Gene Artman.

The Blairsville Underground Railroad

Presents the 8th Annual SHOWTIME

March 25, 2017

7:00 p.m.

Blairsville High School Auditorium

Advance Tickets: Adult—\$9.00

Children under 16 years—\$6.00

Available at: Blairsville Historical Society, Koffee

Shoppe, Indiana County Tourist Bureau

Tickets at the door: Adult—\$11.00

Children under 16 years—\$8.00

For more information call 724-459-5779.

Financial Literacy Collaboration

Do you run out of money before you run out of month? The Financial Literacy Collaboration can help. You are invited to attend an interactive and free Financial Literacy Workshop. Topics will include: Wants vs. Needs, Tracking Spending Habits, Preparing a Budget, Living Within Your Needs and Saving Money & Debt Repayment. The schedule is:

March 85:45-8:30 pm.....ICCAP

April 12.....12:45-3:30 pm..... PA Careerlink Bldg

May 108:45 am-12:15 pm..... PA Careerlink Bldg

June 14.....5:45-8:30 pm.....ICCAP

Contact Family Promise to register at 724-464-5220.

Vaccinations

The Department of Health is offering free or low cost vaccinations for those uninsured or underinsured. Shots are given by appointment only at the Blairsville Community Center. The schedule is: February 15, March 15 and April 19 from 9:45—11:15 AM. Please call the PA Department of Health at 724-357-2995 if you have questions or to schedule an appointment.

We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion Ash Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, March 19th at 11:00 a.m. during worship. Please take time to prepare to receive and share the sacrament.

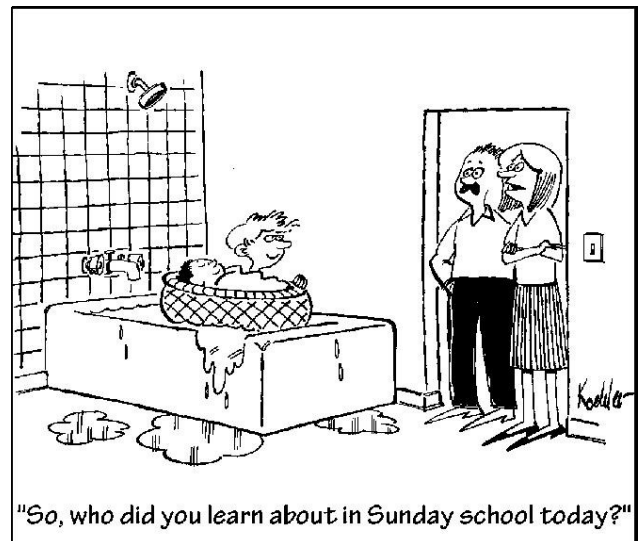
Dates to Remember for the Season of Lent and Easter

March 1st.....Ash Wednesday Worship, 7:00 pm
WednesdaysLenten Lunches, 12:00 pm
April 5We host Lenten Lunch, 12:00 pm
April 8Eggstravaganza, 10:00 am
April 9Palm Sunday
April 13Maundy Thursday Seder
April 14Community Good Friday Worship
Abundant Grace Church, 7:00 pm
April 16Early Easter Worship
Easter Breakfast
Easter Worship, 11:00 am



Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 12, 2017.

Be sure to change your clocks. We spring forward !



**Sunday School classes are available
for all ages each Sunday at 9:45 a.m.**



Mission Moment

Disciple-Making Church Conference offers a spiritual detox of the soul

Rev. Jeff Eddings was here to keynote the Presbyterian Mission Agency's annual Disciple-Making Church Conference. The 2017 conference, titled *Abide in Me... A Spiritual Purging*, based on John 15:4. Eddings maintains that the spiritual exercises developed by Ignatius—and for which he was famous—are well suited to help today's disciples live fuller mental and spiritual lives in order to bear more fruit for Jesus Christ and Christ's church. Eddings then asked the gathering, "What would it mean to purge ourselves of the toxins in our spiritual life?" such as fear, regret, anxiety, broken relationships, addictions, expectations, and disappointments. "Over the next couple of days we will engage in a spiritual detox of our souls, a purging of all of the stuff that has accumulated in our attics and in our closets," he continued. "How do we make our spiritual purge last? How do we abide in Christ in a lasting manner? Ignatius talks about 'a way of proceeding.'" That "way" is characterized by Interior Freedom, Disordered Attachments, and Spiritual Indifference, principles that Eddings explained—and illustrated—by way of powerful personal story and example. Eddings's presentation on January 17 explored the impact of Interior Freedom, which is defined as contentment based not on exterior circumstances but on an interior relationship with God. Subsequent keynote presentations addressed Disordered Attachments and Spiritual Indifference. "There is no need to wear yourself out—hear that, pastors, we're not supposed to wear ourselves out," he said, speaking to the call to interior freedom. "Make a competent and sufficient effort, and leave the rest up to God. Interior freedom is not about being important or getting ahead. It's about our relationship with God. Despite your best efforts to be terrible, you can't make God love you any less than God loves you right now. If we can internalize that and believe that, we can find more interior freedom in our lives and in our ministries." Later in small groups, participants were asked to discuss such related questions as "What mental, spiritual, and physical toxins are you dealing with in your life currently?" and "What sense of importance do you need to let go of?" The evening concluded with an original drama, "Stickin' with Fishin'," In the drama based on Mark 1:14-19, in which Jesus calls the first disciples, Eddings and Walker explored—both with humor and remarkable vulnerability—what might have happened had fishermen Peter and Andrew held onto their nets. As Eddings' s Peter lay tangled up in his own net on the floor, Walker—describing the disciple's entanglement as a metaphor—launched into a personal monologue. "The fist fight I have with myself is my struggle with the net, which is different for each person," Walker said. "We are entangled by our anger, resentment...our entitlements. They lock us in and tangle us up. Then, when we try to find a way out, we're writhing on the floor asking, how do we get out of that?" Citing further passages in Mark where the disciples were silenced for preaching the good news, Walker closed by saying, "We can never stop preaching what we have seen, heard and experienced. We will never stop saying the name of Jesus. Did Peter and Andrew keep their fishing jobs? Not on your life."

Emily Enders Odom, mission communications strategist