



# UPLIFT Newsletter

The United  
Presbyterian Church  
of Blairsville, PA

MARCH 2016

There are those times in life when we do not have the luxury of mincing words, those times when we have to say what we mean and mean what we say. That is true in our relationship with each other, and even more important, in our relationship with God. Lent is such a time of candor and truth telling. As Paul concludes his letters to the Corinthians he instructs them—"Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves." That is in essence what Jesus was doing in the wilderness, enduring temptation to see where his loyalty lay. Hebrews 4:15 reminds us, "that our Lord, Jesus Christ is able to sympathize with us in our weaknesses. In every respect, he is tempted as we are, yet without sin." Each time he was tested, Jesus passed with a perfect score. Sadly, we do not.

The reality of our sin haunts us. Reminders of our failure are ever near. King David writes, "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment" (Psalm 51). On a personal level, we know when we have sinned. But on a more intimate level, God knows we've sinned even in those times we don't realize it. The reason is that while we are sometimes the victim of sin and sometimes others are the victim of our sin, the ultimate victim of our sin is God. God is the one who is offended and his holiness is violated, and there is a price to be paid for that. You break the law, there is a consequence. You harm someone by your actions, you are liable to make restitution. The problem is, how do you make things right with God? How can we right our wrongs? The fact of the matter is that we can't. In and of ourselves we are helpless. We have been declared guilty. The sentence is spiritual death. God has no obligation to cut us a break. Justice requires us to deal with the penalty.

But God does not want the relationship to be broken. While he is saddened by our sin, he still loves us and wants us. Therein is love—the essence of who God is. So God chooses to pay the price he is owed as the penalty for our sin. Mind you, it's not that the penalty is simply dismissed and God says, "Just forget about it." The price still has to be paid, but it's him who chooses to pay. God comes to us in Jesus and takes our sin upon himself. "For our sake, God made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (II Corinthians 5:21). The cost of our sin was not dismissed, it wasn't just written off as an expense of doing business with humanity. The weight of our sin was lifted from us and put upon Jesus and taken to the cross and to the grave.

As we move through Lent, drawing closer to the cross, the seriousness of our sin becomes all the more real. We can lament over all that is wrong with the world, but until we come to terms with the reality that "we" are what is wrong with the world, we have not confronted the truth. We can look at the cross and shake our heads at its ugliness, but until we are stirred by the understanding that there in is our ugliness, we do not fully know what it means. The story of Holy Week is not merely one of history retelling what happened long ago and far away. It is the story of who and how we are. It is personal in that we are every bit to blame and yet we are the very ones that are redeemed. We are the ones who have slapped God and yet we are the ones he embraces and welcomes home. Come to terms with your unworthiness, for only then will you begin to experience the beauty of his grace.....

In Christ's Love,

*Pastor Jim*



## Worship Assistants

### March 6

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone  
 Acolyte: Brylea Borbonus  
 Flowers: Dave Semsick  
 Ushers: The Baker Family  
 Projector: Shakira McKinney  
 Audio: Jaison McKinney

### March 13

Acolyte: Willow Weimer  
 Ushers: Bill & Vicky Westley and  
 Sunday School kids  
 Flowers: Annabel Machak  
 Projector: Kayla Moran  
 Audio: Tyler Moran

### March 20 –Palm Sunday

Acolyte: Cole Stuchal  
 Ushers: Tom & Julia Holby  
 Gary & Shane Boone  
 Flowers: Rick & Willa Shoemaker  
 Projector: Blake Tonkin  
 Audio: Mitchell Tonkin

### March 24 –Maundy Thursday

Ushers: Bob & Charlotte Cosharek  
 John & Mary Hileman

### March 27 –Easter

Acolyte: Chase Stuchal  
 Flowers: Easter Lilies & Tulips  
 Ushers: Jeff & Rose Lewis  
 Tony & Collin Yackuboskey  
 Projector: Jonathan Clayton  
 Audio: Alex Baker

### Offering Counters

Tom and Janet Smith

## Schedule of Holy Week

**March 19** ..... Egg-stravaganza  
 10:00-noon ..... & Easter Egg Hunt  
**March 20** ..... Palm Sunday  
 11:00 AM ..... Worship  
**March 23** ..... Lenten Lunch  
 noon.....SS Simon & Jude Church  
**March 24** ..... Maundy Thursday  
 7:00 PM..... Worship & Communion  
**March 25** ..... Good Friday Community  
 7:00 PM.... Worship-Connect Church  
**March 27** ..... Easter Day  
 8:00 AM ..... Early Worship  
 9:30 AM ..... Easter Breakfast  
 11:00 AM ..... Easter Worship

## Confirmation Classes

As Spring approaches, we are offering Confirmation Classes to give young people a chance to explore their faith and consider what it means to be a part of the church. As of now, we have nine students participating. Classes will be held on Sunday afternoons. We will 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 class schedule is as follows: March 13, 20, April 3, 10, 17, 24, and May 1. Students will 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.

## Scripture Texts for Worship

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

### Sunday, March 6

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

### Sunday, March 13

Isaiah 43:16-21  
 John 12:1-8

### Sunday, March 20

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

### Sunday, March 24

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

### Sunday, March 27

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

### Sunday, April 3

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

## Newsletter

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

## Community Lenten Mid-week Services

Community Lenten services followed by a light lunch are held each Wednesday at 12:00 noon. The schedule is as follows:

Mar 2 .....Hebron Lutheran Church ..... Rev. Brett Dinger  
 Mar 9 .....First United Methodist Church .....Rev. Tim Monroe  
 Mar 16.....Hopewell Methodist Church ..... Father Steve Bugay  
 Mar 23.....SS Simon & Jude Church ..... Rev. Rusty McClurg  
 Mar 25.....Connect Church..... Rev. Jim Kendall  
 7:00 p.m. Good Friday



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS AND EVENTS



## LENTEN "FAMILY" FAITH NIGHTS

March 4, 11, 18 from 6:00-8:00 PM

Join us around our table for a bowl of soup and homemade bread. Then, be part of the discussions of Holy Week in 3 weekly parts.

- ◆ March 4: Palm Sunday, presenters Gene Artman & Dave Semsick
  - ◆ March 11: The Last Supper, presenter Bill Lint
  - ◆ March 18: Crucifixion and Resurrection, presenter Pastor Tim
- Children will have similar programming in the Sunday School area.

## EASTER EGG-STRAVAGANZA

March 19 from 10:00 AM— 12:00 noon  
Ages preschool— Grade 5

Join us for the story of Easter told in a creative way, craft, games and of course the Easter Egg Hunt! Please remember to bring a basket for collecting your eggs.

If you have any questions, please see Jen Borbonus or Deb Lint. Volunteers are greatly appreciated. Please consider helping out.



## SEARCHING FOR OUR GRADUATING SENIORS

On June 5, 2016, we will recognize our High School, College or Technical School graduates. If you are aware of one of our students who will be graduating, please contact Deb Lint, CE Chairman, Pastor Tim or call the office. Please let us know by April 1.

## LOOKING AHEAD...

Vacation Bible School  
 June 20—24

⇨ "CAVE QUEST" ⇩

*Jesus Gives us Hope* (Ps. 71:5)  
-The prophets foretell Jesus' Birth (Jn.1:1-18; Is 9:2)

*Jesus Gives us Courage* (Mt.14:27)  
-Jesus & Peter walk on the water (Mt. 14:22-36)

*Jesus Gives us Direction* (Pr. 3:6)  
-Jesus sheds light on how to live (Mt. 5-7)

*Jesus Gives us Love* (1 Jn. 3:16)  
-Jesus dies and comes back to live (Lk. 23:1-24:12)

*Jesus Gives us His Power*

**PLAN FOR A WEEK OF  
LEARNING AND FUN!!**

**THERE WILL BE NO SUNDAY  
SCHOOL CLASSES ON EASTER  
DAY, MARCH, 27TH**

## **“Call to the Church” Conversation**

A “town hall” conversation about the future of our church, in response to a “Call to the Church” by Moderator Heath Rada will be held for all pastors, elders, and church members in western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Eastern Ohio Tuesday, March 15th from 10:00 AM—1:00 PM at Crestfield Camp and Conference Center in Slippery Rock, PA. The event is free, though gifts to defray meal costs will be welcome.

If you are interested in attending this event, please call the church office, 724-459-7991 by Wednesday, March 9th so we can make reservations.

## **Minute for Mission—International Women's Day**

International Women’s Day (IWD) is a day set aside each year to address challenges that are unique to women and girls, including educational and vocational opportunity, voting rights, and an end to violence. This year, International Women’s Day programs and activities focus on the issue of gender parity. Gender parity can be defined simply as gender equality. But the issue itself is complex: in many places around the globe a yawning disparity exists between the sexes in the areas of life that make an abundant life: pay, education, health and political access. According to the IWD website, “While we celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievement of women, progress towards gender parity has actually slowed in many places. Urgent concrete action is needed around the world to accelerate gender parity. . . . In 2015, they estimated that a slowdown in the already glacial pace of progress meant the gender gap wouldn't close entirely until 2133.” Can we as followers of Jesus Christ allow this and the next generations of women and girls to live within this gap? International Women’s Day is March 8th and reminds us to reflect on our responsibility to make this world a just world.

*Carissa Herold, Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.*

## **Dining with Diabetes**

Dining with Diabetes is a program for adults with diabetes and their families. Classes are offered weekly for four weeks with a three-month follow-up class. Preregistration is required due to space limitations. Participants will learn how to prepare meals that are healthy, simple, and taste good. Recipes will be demonstrated and participants will have the opportunity to taste each one. Participants will also learn up-to-date information on nutrition, meal planning, and exercise as well as how to understand common, diabetes-related medical tests. Recipes and handouts will be given to each participant. Diabetes is a very serious and costly disease, but research has shown that those who learn to manage their blood glucose (sugar) levels, eat healthy, and exercise regularly can lower their risk of complications and lead a healthier and more productive life. Classes will be held in the Fellowship Hall beginning Monday, April 18th from 10:00 AM until 12:30 PM that also meets April 25th, May 2nd, May 9th and July 25th from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Registration for this program can be made by calling 724-837-1402, Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM—4:30 PM or by accessing our web site at

[extension.psu.edu/diabetes](http://extension.psu.edu/diabetes) and clicking on “Upcoming Classes.”

Dining with Diabetes is sponsored by Penn State Extension.

## **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, March 16th and April 20th. Please call the Dept. of Health to schedule an appointment 724-357-2995.