



The United  
Presbyterian Church  
of Blairsville, PA

# UPLIFT Newsletter

MAY 2017

I count it a blessing to have had a perfect childhood (except for the time I got caught lying about having eaten a one pound Hershey bar over the course of a week). Easter Day was filled with tradition at church and at home. Each year, my sister and I had new outfits to wear for worship, clothed head to toe in freshness to greet the risen Lord. Even my little clip on red tie glowed of resurrection glory. There was an egg hunt in the back yard and baskets full of candy. But one of the most vivid memories was going to Grandma's house where Pappy Moe had dozens of chicks corralled on newspaper on the living room floor. There were sky blue ones and yellow ones and pink ones and green ones and lilac ones. For hours I would giggle with delight. But within a week, they would be gone, no doubt the victim of the dye used to color them. So too the candy would disappear to the point that a few green jelly beans lay beneath the plastic grass. So too the lilies would brown and droop, and the new outfits wear thin, and the "Alleluias" would fade, and Easter would soon be merely a fond memory.

Holidays come and go. Seasons ebb and flow. We tend to bookend our celebrations with dates of the calendar. But there is, in true joy, an unbounded quality. To some, Easter is confined to the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring equinox. To others, Easter is that season that lasts 40 days, the period the risen Lord spent with his disciples after his resurrection until he ascended into heaven. But the reality for us as a people of faith is that Easter joy is at the heart of every day of the year, because the power of the resurrection never fades. The same is true with our baptisms. The purity of the baptismal gowns we wear cover us to the white pall draped over our casket. The covenant promise offered us as the water pours onto our head keeps us secure until we rest in the everlasting arms of God. That which God gives us, is not merely for a season, not merely for a lifetime, but for all eternity. As we read in Peter's letter, "By his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for us, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1:3-5) But the joy of our salvation is not limited to the realm of heaven. It is a joy that fills our heart and comforts our soul as we experience God's kingdom here and now. It is the foretaste of glory divine that encourages us in the midst of the trials in this world.

The texts of these Sundays after Easter Day focus on the witness of those who have seen the risen Lord. There were the women at the tomb, the disciples in the upper room, and more than 500 others who testified to an encounter with him. But we add to that the experiences of the hundreds of millions through the generations who, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, have seen him and felt him in their hearts. And to that joyous chorus we add our declaration that, "He Lives."

As those who have been raised with Christ, know that because he lives, you live also. You don't merely exist, you are offered the fullness of life in all its abundance. The battles you fight, while fierce, will one day be over—and you will be victorious. In the midst of our struggle our faith is refined and purified. Do not lose heart, for Christ has already overcome all that comes over you. In his resurrection, he has claimed us as co-heirs with him in the glorious inheritance that is given us. May your Alleluias resound, and may your joy and hope never fade. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end.....

In Christ's love,

*Pastor Jim*



## Scripture Texts for Worship

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

### **Sunday, May 7**

I Peter 2:19-35

John 10:1-10

### **Sunday, May 14**

I Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

### **Sunday, May 21**

John 14:15-21

I Peter 3:13-22

### **Sunday, May 28**

Acts 1:6-14

I Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11

### **Sunday, June 4**

John 7:37-39

Acts 2:1-21

## Worship Assistants

### **May 7**

Flowers: The Moran Family

Projector: Kayla Moran

Audio: Tyler Moran

### **May 14-Mother's Day**

Flowers: Chick & Connie Stewart

Projector: Blake Tonkin

Audio: Mitchell Tonkin

### **May 21**

Flowers: Marilyn Neal

Projector: Jonathan Clayton

Audio: Alex Baker

### **May 28**

Flowers: Jeff & Rose Lewis

Projector: Shakira McKinney

Audio: Jaison McKinney

### **Offering Counters**

Emma Riggi & Irving Lindsey

## OGHS Offering Update

On Sunday, April 9th, we received our annual One Great Hour of Sharing offering. A total of \$970.71 will be sent to help share God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world by providing relief to those affected by natural disasters, food to the hungry, and help to empower the poor & oppressed.

## Blanket Offering

The Blanket Offering will be received Sunday, May 14<sup>th</sup> during worship. Gifts are sent to Church World Service to supply blankets to those in need. Each blanket costs only \$10, but can be a vital resource for someone needing a little support, warmth and encouragement. Last year, CWS supplied thousands of blankets across the United States.

## Our Summer Schedule will Begin

Beginning June 4th, our worship service will begin at 10:00 a.m. Sunday school classes and the choirs will be in recess. When we begin our Regular schedule again in the Fall, the choirs and Sunday school classes will resume.

Our Regular church schedule runs from the first Sunday after Labor Day in September until the Sunday before Memorial Day in May.

Please mark your calendar for the up-coming changes in worship times.

## Visitors in Our Midst

On Palm Sunday, our General Presbyter and his wife, Don and Becky Wilson chose to worship with us. They commented how welcomed they felt and how touched they were by the congregational singing. We hope they'll stop by again.

## Special Thanks

We again thank all those who enhanced the quality of our Lenten and Easter Season with special music, devotional material, children's activities, flowers, worship opportunities and food (Lenten Lunches, Seder Meal and Easter Breakfast). Your extra efforts are appreciated.

## For Pastoral Care

Local hospitals are no longer calling the church when parishioners are admitted as patients. If you or a friend from the church would like pastoral care at these times, please call the church office or contact Pastor Monroe to let him know.

## June Newsletter

Articles to be published in the June edition of the UPLIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Monday, May 15. Please have all information in by this date. Call the office with any questions or concerns.



## Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School is only a little over a month away. The fun is scheduled for the week of June 19-23. The curriculum is entitled, "Water All Around the World." Students ages 3 years (and potty trained) through 5th grade (this year) are invited to attend a week of fun. We will begin in the Fellowship Hall with a light meal at 5:30 p.m. followed by the opening at 6:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Each day we'll travel around the world and visit a different country: Honduras, Cuba, Mexico, Haiti and Ghana! We'll hear exciting Bible stories, sing songs, play fun games and create cool crafts. The evening will end at 8:15 p.m. with a closing in the sanctuary. Please watch your bulletins for more information and to register.

## Volunteers Wanted

If you love to have fun, work with kids and learn new and exciting things, we want you! Volunteers are needed in many areas at this year's Bible school. A planning meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 4th at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. All those interested are invited to attend. No experience is necessary! Those working directly with children will need proper clearances per our church's Child Care Policy. For more information, contact Cindy Borbonus, Nancy Hartmann, Kim McKinney or the church office.

## Graduates

Parents of graduates, our church tradition has been to recognize the efforts and accomplishments of our children and young adults, especially at graduation time. But it is really hard to keep up with who's graduating from what school and what their future plans are going to be. Please notify the office or see Kim McKinney about your child's pending graduation from high school or college so that we may show your son or daughter how much we care. Graduate recognition will be Sunday, June 4<sup>th</sup> during the morning worship service at 10:00 a.m. If your graduate has a talent they would like to share during the recognition service such as singing, playing an instrument, speaking, etc., please let Kim or the office know.

## Camp Lambec Now Open

Camp Lambec is our church camp on the shore of Lake Erie. Due to water purity issues, they were going to be closed for the summer, but the issues were resolved and now they will be open. You can check the schedule by visiting their website—[www.camlambec.org](http://www.camlambec.org).

## Annual Spring Concert

The NuValley Presbyterian Church will host a Spring Concert Sunday, May 7th at 6:30 p.m. presented by "The Hallelujah Choir." A free will offering will be received and will benefit the Choir Fund. Fellowship and refreshments will be available following the concert.

## Free Vaccinations

The Department of Health has scheduled immunization clinics for those who are uninsured or underinsured. Vaccinations are given by appointment only. The Blairsville Community Center is the local site and the clinic will run from 9:45—11:15 a.m. The dates are May 17th, June 21st, July 19th, and August 16th. Please call the Pennsylvania Department of Health at 724-357-2995 if you have questions.

## Save Your Coupons

Coupons for veterans are being collected. Please save manufacturer's coupons only. The program allows up to one month expired. If possible, please cut coupons and separate into food and non-food bundles. There is a box at the back of the sanctuary to place the coupons in marked Coupons for Veterans. If you have any questions, please see Erica Ash or Ellen Williams.

## Torrance Hospital

The deacons are collecting new or gently used men's shoes size 10 or larger for patients at Torrance State Hospital. You can leave the shoes in the office or in the back of the church in or near the Torrance Hospital bin.

## 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.

## **Pursuit of Life for a Fellow Parishioner**

Margaret Caruso of St. Simon and Jude Church in Blairsville is in need of a liver transplant to help save her life. She has battled Non Alcoholic Cirrhosis for several years and despite success in slowing down this chronic disease, it has progressed to the need for a new liver. Despite the seriousness of her condition and likelihood of death without a transplant, people with her condition don't score high enough to have any chance of getting a liver from the nationwide transplant list. Therefore since the liver is the only organ in the human body that can regenerate on its own, Margaret is pursuing a "live donor," where a portion of a healthy person's liver is removed and placed in the recipient. Both livers will regenerate giving new life to the recipient. Not just anyone will qualify as a donor. Donors must be between 18 and 54 years of age and testing is necessary to be sure of compatibility. Anyone who feels called to possibly serve as a donor can contact Margaret's son, John at 919-622-1780 or the church office for more information.

## **Compassion News**

Dear Friends,

How are you doing my beloved friend? I wish you peace from God. My family, friends are doing great. We celebrated Merry Christmas on the 25/12/2016 and it was on Sunday. We were very happy. Soon is my 14th birthday and my sister will be 7. I wish you happy New Year 2017!

Thank You,  
Samuel Mutabazi  
From Rwanda

## **Minute for Mission**—Wills Emphasis Sunday, May 7, 2017

A few years ago, Judy Whitford decided that it was time to get her estate in order. After the passing of her husband, she realized how his work in "putting things in order" had helped her—something she wanted to do for her two children and six grandchildren. "I don't have a lot of money—and if I live as long as my parents and my grandmother, there might not be anything left," she explained. That said, she decided to leave 10 percent of her estate, whatever that might be, to the First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City. "My reason for doing this is basically my upbringing and learning that tithing is the place to begin, not the end." A teacher by background, she loves to empower others—and hopes to do so even after she's gone with the "Whitford Empowerment Fund" set up at the church. Empowering people, for her, has ripples that travel far beyond the initial work. "If we do it here, it can spread all over the world." In recent years the church has received a few bequests, and Whitford thinks it is beginning to open the eyes of others to the possibilities of doing so themselves. One woman, having no family, left her entire estate to the church. "The church was her family," explained Whitford, whose time serving on the session has allowed her to see what a significant impact that one woman's gift has had.

*Pam Greer-Ullrich, APR, director, public relations, Presbyterian Foundation*