



The United  
Presbyterian Church  
of Blairsville, PA

SEPTEMBER 2017

# UPLIFT Newsletter

As the story goes, renowned theologian Karl Barth was at Rockefeller Chapel on the campus of the University of Chicago during a lecture tour in 1962. During a Q and A time, a student asked him if he could summarize his whole life's work in theology in one sentence. Barth responded, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." There is power and truth in the songs we learn as children. At the time they are cute little ditties, but as we mature in faith they remind us of the essentials of the nature of God.

Another such song goes, "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world." Chances are you have fond memories of standing in front of the congregation singing that song with all your heart, because you believed it to be true. But for too many, the purity and innocence of that proclamation has faded. I know it has for me, and that is something I'm not proud of.

I'd like to say I'm not racist and I show no prejudice, but as I look at myself in the mirror, I know it's a lie. When I have to call my credit card company, I do it between 8 and 4 because if I call after hours, I get stuck talking to someone overseas (and I'm sure if they access my information, they'll misuse it.) When I'm on an elevator and some young people of a different race get on, my right hand goes on my right pocket to make sure my wallet doesn't go missing. When I'm in an urban area and I see some kids messing around, I remember when I was 14 catching some kids in the church vandalizing the vestibule with a fire extinguisher and turning it on me. Life experiences have tainted my "colorless" perception. While you will never see me at a march, and I would hope you would never hear any hate speech come from my lips—I'll be the first to admit that I have allowed ethnicity, race and economic status to tinge my perception of life. But before you judge me for my confession, I would challenge you to look into your mirror.

I may not love all the "little children" of the world, but I know that God does. "Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight." That's the thing about God's love, it is unconditional and consistently pure. In Genesis we are taught that all people are created in the image of God. That means that a part of God abides in me, and in everyone around me—no more, no less. Just as the parent of twelve children has the capacity to love each of them as much as the parent of one child loves theirs, so God has the capacity to love each and every person who is, and ever was, and ever will be. I was, as the Psalmist declared, "fearfully and wonderfully made, knit together in my mother's womb by God's hand." That intimacy makes me special in the eyes of God, but no more special than anyone else. While I am "precious in God's sight," I am no more or less precious than that little girl who was born into poverty in Ethiopia five thousand years ago, or that little boy who will be born on a space colony two thousand years from now. God's heart welcomes me as much as it welcomes Mother Theresa and a penitent mass murderer. The privilege I have enjoyed my entire life is not an entitlement to special position in the kingdom, it is rather a responsibility to be about the work of the kingdom, the work of healing and justice and peace.

Jesus says, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven." God's kingdom transcends the worldly issues of race and ethnicity and social status. No matter how we define ourselves, God sees each of us as an equal part of his family. And any attempt to exclude another is a blatant exclusion of him. Being found in Christ, may we see with the eyes of Christ, through the lense of love. No matter how we may be different, may we see that in the most important things, the things of faith, we are alike—and in that we are truly one.....

In Christ's love,  
*Pastor Jim*

## Schedule Change!

### Sunday, September 10:

Sunday School Kick-off Breakfast 9:45 a.m.  
Worship 11:00 a.m.

### Sunday, September 17:

Sunday School Classes  
Begin 9:45 a.m.  
Worship 11:00 a.m.

## Scripture Texts for Worship

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

### Sunday, September 3

Romans 12:9-21  
Matthew 16:21-28

### Sunday, September 10

Romans 13:8-14  
Matthew 18:15-20

### Sunday, September 17

Romans 14:1-12  
Matthew 18:21-35

### Sunday, September 24

Philippians 1:21-30  
Matthew 20:1-16

### Sunday, October 1

Philippians 2:1-13  
Matthew 21:23-32

## Worship Assistants

### September 3

Speaker: Clark Bruner  
Liturgist: Connie Bruner  
Flowers: Nancy Campbell  
Projector: Blake Tonkin  
Audio: Elizabeth Bruner

### September 10—Communion

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone  
Flowers: Sondra Clapper  
Projector: Shakira McKinney  
Audio: Jaison McKinney

### September 17

Liturgist: Barb Brown  
Flowers: Annabel Machak  
Projector: Alex Kirkland  
Audio: Andrew Baker

### September 24

Liturgist: Jean Heberling  
Flowers: Pat & Janeen Swope  
Projector: Kayla Moran  
Audio: Tyler Moran

### Offering Counters

Jean Heberling & Gene Artman

## Blanket Offering Update

In May of this year, we received a Blanket Offering which was sent to Church World Service to purchase blankets to be given to those going through chaotic times. From January through June of 2017 shipments have been sent to the countries of Georgia, Syria and throughout the US.



## Congregational Meeting

### Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup>

Immediately following worship

To act on:

- ♦ the 2018 Pastor's Terms of Call
- ♦ the report of the Nominating Committee

We hope you will plan to attend.

## The Rwanda Experience

Trinity Presbyterian Church in Clarksburg will host our friends from Rwanda September 12 from 2:00—5:00 p.m. Dinner will follow the presentation. RSVP for dinner with the presbytery office.

## October Newsletter

Articles to be published in the October edition of the UPLIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Friday, September 15th. Please have all information to the church office by this date.

## Food Bank

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



## The 3rd Annual Coats-For-Kids

The Coats-for-Kids drive is now under-way. Again this year we are receiving monetary donations for the purchase of specific size coats. Please mark your donation clearly for "Coats". If you know of a family with children who may need a winter coat, please contact Janet Smith.

## It's a bird! It's a plane! No... It's a Middle School Youth Group Leader!

All students entering grades 4, 5 and 6 for the 2017-2018 year are invited to attend MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP! The next gathering will be Saturday, September 16th from 5:30—7:30 p.m. Your fearless leaders are Jen Borbonus and Heidi Weimer. If you have questions, please see one of them.

## What's in the box?

On October 21st, we will be joining in the Fellowship Hall to bake cookies and package them up for College Students and Military Service Personal. We need suggested names to mail packages to...and we need volunteers to add the love and help bake and package up the boxes.

## Calendar Party

October 28th, we are planning a Calendar Party. We will be setting up tables for each month, and you will sit with people who were born in the same month as you. We need volunteers to decorate one table with a theme for that month.

Please see Nancy Hartmann or Elaine Jellison for more information.

## Sunday School Annual Kickoff Breakfast

*"You are God's Masterpiece!"* Ephesians 2:10

**Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup> 9:45 AM**

Join us as we begin our Sunday School year with our annual Kick-off Breakfast. Everyone is invited...come enjoy fellowship with us and learn more about the different classes that are available to you. The breakfast is compliments of the Christian Ed Committee.



## Sunday School Classes for 2017-2018

Preschool & Kindergarten .....Jamie McKinney, teacher  
 Grades 1, 2 & 3 ..... Cindy & Sheila Borbonus, teachers  
 Grades 4, 5 & 6 ..... Heidi Weimer, teacher  
 Grades 7-12 ..... Bobbi Monroe, Susie Cotti & Jim Weimer, teachers  
 Homebuilders Class-adults ..... Various teachers  
 Men & Women's Class-adults ..... Gene Artman

## Bread Baking

On Saturday, September 30th, the Congregational Fellowship Committee will offer a Bread Baking event in our church kitchen. If you've ever wanted to learn the art of bread baking this event is for you. The finished products will be served on Sunday, October 1st. Some of the bread will be used during worship as we celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion. And then following worship, a soup and bread luncheon is planned for the congregation. We hope you will plan to attend the bread baking experience and/or share in the blessings of the efforts. The class is sponsored by the Congregational Fellowship Committee.



## A 300th Reflection

Old Stone Presbyterian Church in Lewisburg, WV, is thought to be the oldest church building in continuous use west of the Allegheny Mountains. Originally named Lewisburg Presbyterian Church, the church's sanctuary on Church Street was built in 1796 from native limestone, with walls 22 inches thick. The church escaped damage during the Civil War, when it was used as a hospital and sleeping quarters for troops.

*We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion Sunday, September 10th during worship. Please take time to prepare to receive and share the sacrament.*

## Family Promise Thank You

*We just wanted to say "Thank you" all so much for helping our family. We greatly appreciate all the time and energy you all have spared us. Also, the kindness and fellowship was wonderful! We enjoyed everything so thank you again for making this difficult situation wonderful for our family.*

*Love & God bless*

## Compassion News

Hello,

It's your child Vestine greeting you in the name of Christ. I am happy writing to you again this letter. We are harvesting crops, what about you? I am in primary six. I am concluding by wishing you God's peace. Me and my family, we are thanking you a lot for the letter you sent to me, wishing me happy birthday. Thanks.

Vestine Hagenimana  
From Rwanda

Dear Friends,

I greet you with great love in Jesus' name. I want to thank you for each one of the blessings you have given me during this whole time. It was always of great happiness for me to know that I could count on you. May God bless you and always give you peace in your heart, it is a beautiful work. I encourage you to continue helping and blessing children and young people like me.

Since I already received and fulfilled all the programs of Compassion, I finish the process. With my whole heart I thank you for this opportunity. During this time I learned something about music, sports, electricity, office automation. Some of the benefits I received were Christmas and birthday presents, camps, medical helps, celebrations. My tutors always looked after me and it is a great privilege because few people count with these opportunities. My desire is to continue studying, be a professional, help my family and I also want to serve God.

Thank you for everything and I wish you the best that God has for your lives. I ask you to not take me and my family out of your prayers. I say goodbye with a lot of love, I care for you.

Blessings,  
Jeferson Rojas  
From Colombia

## Shelocta Spirit 5K Run/Walk

Shelocta Community Presbyterian Church will host it's 1st Annual 5K Run/Walk Saturday, September 23, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. Registration will be at the Shelocta Community Presbyterian Church at 9:00 a.m. Individual and family fee rates available. Early registration discount by September 13. Shirt guaranteed to pre-registered by September 13 and as available on race day. For more information, call 724-354-2352 or email [webhost@sheloctapc.org](mailto:webhost@sheloctapc.org). Online registration at [www.sheloctapc.org](http://www.sheloctapc.org). Registration forms are available in our church office. Call the office or stop in.

*\*If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office. We would like to include all of our church family on the birthday and anniversary lists.*