



# UPLIFT Newsletter

The United  
Presbyterian Church  
of Blairsville, PA

AUGUST 2018

Ignatius of Loyola was born in the Basque region of Spain in 1491 to a prominent family. As a young man he had a keen interest in the military and devoted his energies to that service. Sadly, he was hit by a cannonball that wounded his right leg and fractured his left. As a result of multiple surgeries one leg was shorter than the other, leaving him with a permanent limp, thus ending his military career. However, it was during his recovery that he had a spiritual conversion leading to his entrance into the priesthood. He eventually founded the order, the Society of Jesus, known by many as the Jesuits.

At the same time, John Calvin was called to lead the Protestant Church in France and Switzerland. While each were on different ends of the theological spectrum, both took seriously “an active attentiveness to God joined with a prompt responsiveness to God.” Therein they both sensed the importance of knowing the presence of God in our daily lives. A spiritual practice that helps us to be mindful of God in our midst is prayer walking. The spiritual exercises developed by Ignatius help us to develop inwardly and outwardly. There are six questions he encourages us to consider as we make our way through the day.

As you walk, *What do you see that brings you gladness?* Are they the things of nature, flowers, trees, animals, clouds? Are they people you know, people enjoying their relationships with each other, a child playing, someone gainfully employed, someone helping another, a couple sitting on their porch? Are they places that bring back memories or places to build new memories? Give God praise for these good gifts, these blessings from his hand.

As you're filled with gladness, *What do you see that makes you thankful?* Gratitude is the appropriate response to being blessed. What in your life elicits thanks? What do you see in the lives around you that makes you grateful? What are those small things that we take for granted? What are those wonders we've enjoyed, those things, those people who have enhanced our lives? While we are thankful for things that have come into our lives, what are we thankful has not come into our lives?

As you walk, *What do you see that brings joy to the heart of God?* Where do you see love and peace and hope and joy? What do you see that makes God laugh and smile? Where do you see faithfulness being lived out?

Conversely, as you walk, *What do you see that breaks God's heart?* Is it hate or anger or hopelessness or loneliness? Are there signs of brokenness or defeat? God rejoices with those who rejoice and weeps with those who weep, so too should we.


*Where do you see signs of God working?* Throughout the scriptures, God declares, “Behold, I do a new thing, can you not see them?” Sometimes that new thing is a fresh creation. Sometimes that new thing is the removal of an old, painful thing. If anyone—or anything—is more deeply in Christ, there is a new thing. God's hand does not remain idle.

*What do you think God is dreaming/hoping for the place you are walking?* And when you have a vision of how God is at work, how can you become a part of that vision? Where are you in God's active work of becoming?

These questions are intended to make us more aware of God in our midst, and in a Spirit of expectancy to sense his presence more intimately. They are also intended to draw us out of ourselves into a deeper awareness of those around us. Our lives are one continuous act of prayer, an ongoing conversation with the one who formed us in his image. We have been so created that we can be in relationship with our maker and all else he has formed.

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) As you walk, pray with your mind and your heart open....and don't forget to keep your eyes open too.....

In Christ's love,



## Scripture Texts for Worship

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

### Sunday, August 5

Mark 2:23-3:6

II Corinthians 4:5-12

### Sunday, August 12

II Corinthians 4:13-5:1

I Samuel 8:4-20

### Sunday, August 19

II Corinthians 5:6-17

I Samuel 15:34-16:13

### Sunday, August 26

Mark 4:35-41

I Samuel 17:32-49

### Sunday, September 2

II Corinthians 8:7-15

Mark 5:21-43



I think that I shall never see  
A church that's all it ought to be;  
A church whose members never stray  
Beyond the straight and narrow way.  
A church that has no empty pews,  
Whose pastor never has the blues.  
A church whose deacons always 'deak'  
And none are proud, and all are meek.  
Where gossip never peddle lies,  
Or make complaints or criticize.  
Where all are always sweet and kind,  
And all to others' faults are blind.  
Such churches perfect there may be,  
But none of them are known to me.  
But still I'll work and pray and plan  
To make my own the best I can.

## September Newsletter

Articles to be published in the September edition of the UPLIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Wednesday, August 15th. Please have all information to the church office by this date. If you have questions or concerns, contact the church office at 724-459-7991 or email [upchurch@r-church.com](mailto:upchurch@r-church.com).

## Worship Assistants

### August 5—10:00 AM

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone

Flowers: Ron & Kim McKinney

Ushers: Joan Moran, Ken Doak  
Judy Trimble, Bonni Dunlap

Projector: Blake Tonkin

Audio: Elizabeth Bruner

### August 12—Communion 10:00 AM

Liturgist: Bobbi Monroe

Projector: Shakira McKinney

Audio: Jaison McKinney

### August 19—10:00 AM

Liturgist: Connie Bruner

Flowers: Gene & Chery Artman

Flowers: Bill & Deb Lint

Projector: Alex Kirkland

Audio: Andrew Baker

### August 26—10:00 AM

Liturgist: Lon Ferguson

Flowers: Rick & Willa Shoemaker

Projector: Kayla Moran

Audio: Tyler Moran

### August Offering Counters

Marilyn Neal & Linda George

## Volunteers Needed

Since it has begun in Indiana County, we have been a part of the Family Promise Program, offering homeless families a safe place to stay for four weeks of the year. We make sure they are transported to and from the Day Center in Indiana, they have a well balanced meal each evening and they have comfortable accommodations to get a restful sleep. We are only able to provide these resources because of the volunteers from our congregation. While folks are quick to step forward for transportation and meals, we have had difficulty finding people who are willing to spend the night. Ideally we have two volunteers stay being available to address any emergency that may arise. To date we've never had a problem that needs to be addressed, but we err on the side of caution. While we plan to host two more times this year, (August 12-19 and October 21-28), we are hesitant to commit to hosting families during 2019 unless we have enough people willing to stay overnight. It involves arriving at the church by 7:00 p.m. and then leaving after our guests leave at 8:00 a.m. We only ask that you commit to one night through the week. Please consider taking your turn after all, how often are you encouraged to sleep in church. Let Janet Smith or the church office, 724-459-7991 know of your willingness to help.

## Communion

We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion Sunday, August 12th during worship. Please take time to prepare to receive and share the sacrament. If you are not able to come to Sunday morning worship and would like to receive communion in your home, please call the church office at 724-459-7991 and arrangements can be made for the sacrament to be shared with you.

## Food Bank Update

The food bank has moved to the **second 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 (Indiana County Community Action Program).

## Budget Planning Begins

The Finance Committee will soon begin to review information for the 2019 budget. Committee chairs are asked to begin looking at your plans for next year and consider your financial needs. If you have any questions, please contact the church office.

## Schedule Change

The school year will soon begin and our Summer Schedule will change over to our Regular Schedule. On Sunday, September 9th (the first Sunday following Labor Day) our worship service will return to 11:00 a.m. and our Sunday School will host a "Radical Welcome Breakfast" at 9:45 a.m. Our choirs will be back from vacation, and students will return to our Sunday School classrooms on September 16th. If you haven't attended Sunday School in the past, please consider trying it out this year!

## What Do You Prefer?

The Session is attempting to determine whether or not members of the congregation would like to have other ways of giving your offerings to the church. We would like to know if you would prefer being able to do direct deposit or debit withdrawals, in addition to your ability to give checks or cash. Please let us know by email (secretary@r-church.com) or by dropping a note in the offering plate, if you would like these additional options. We would like to have your input by August 30th.

## Our Nominating Committee

The work of the Nominating Committee is some of the most important in the life of the church. Those serving have the responsibility to bring before the congregation the names of those who will potentially serve as elders and deacons. Our Nominating Committee will begin this important task in the coming weeks. Please be in prayer for them as they discern God's will for our church's leadership. Also be in prayer for those individuals who will be asked to serve.

The Nominating Committee includes: Elaine Jellison-chair, Dennis Gould-elder, Andrea Clayton-deacon, Gene Artman, Matt Borbonus, Janet Smith, Linda George and Pastor Monroe. Irving Lindsey is the alternate.

## Compassion Child Update

Dear United Presbyterian Sunday School,

Beloved parent, May God's peace be with you. Have you been well? I'm fine and I'm thankful to God and I have no problem. At school, it's fine and it's going well and I'm studying in senior two and I hope that I will be promoted in another class next year. I thank you for the prayers you continue to pray for me so that God is protecting me. I will continue to pray for you so much. My family and I are fine.

Thank you so much. May God continue to protect us.  
Thank you so much.

Samuel Mutabazi, Rwanda

## Summer Musician Schedule

Guest musicians are scheduled to share their musical talent during worship. Please see Cindy Borbonus or contact the church office if you have a suggestion for a guest musician.

Music Schedule:

August 5 .....Adam Loucks  
August 12 .....Dave Hiltabidle  
August 19 .....Vicky Westley and friends  
August 26 .....Danielle & Matthew Cyphert

**A choir picnic** is scheduled for Sunday, August 12th at 1:00 p.m. at the Borbonus farm. All choir members and their families as well as those interested in joining the choir are invited to attend. Please bring a dish to share and your swim wear.

# The Fellowship Community at General Assembly: An Overview The 223rd General Assembly As We Saw It

by The Fellowship Community Board

The primary focus of the national Fellowship Community is on nurturing a broad 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 in the world. Although our mission does not include advocacy within PCUSA, Fellowship had an official presence at the recent PCUSA General Assembly (GA). We connected with and supported numerous Assembly commissioners and observers through our exhibit hall booth and in nightly debrief and prayer gatherings. We also strengthened relationships with a number of PCUSA leaders and national staff.

This GA acted on hundreds of issues as a response to the biblical mandate to be God's faithful people in the 21st century: seeking justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with our God. It was noted by our Fellowship GA participants that Christian forbearance and respect marked the spirit of this assembly. It was our experience that persons from a broad range of perspectives repeatedly thanked conservatives for staying in the PCUSA and engaging issues in faithful ways. A Fellowship pastor, Don Meeks, was invited to preach for the Friday worship service and offered a powerful call for unity and love despite disagreement.

We offer here a summary of events and outcomes of significance to our network of churches:

**Leadership** — GA elected two gifted women, Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann) as Co-Moderators of PCUSA, one of whom is a Latina who once served on the Presbyterians For Renewal (PFR) Wee Kirk Northeast MA/PR team. Diane Moffett was also confirmed as the new Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency in Louisville. This commitment to racial and gender diversity is historic for the PCUSA.

**Israel/Palestine & Peacemaking** – GA again sought to advocate for peace in the world, the Middle East and particularly in Israel/Palestine. We reaffirmed PCUSA's support for a two state solution including Jerusalem's status, grassroots efforts bringing together Israelis and Palestinians, human rights for all Israeli citizens especially minorities, positive investment in the region, concern about violence in Gaza and Israeli land use in occupied areas, reaching out in open dialogue with our Jewish interfaith colleagues, and freedom of speech. GA prayed for, encouraged, and actively supported the ancient Christian communities and our partners especially in the Middle East. It is our perspective that GA sought to moderate a third way when proposals were overly partisan. As always, we urge fact checking media reports with primary sources when reading about actions of the GA. The Assembly also urged peace efforts in Syria, Iran, South Sudan, North Korea, Nicaragua, Central America, Madagascar, and Yemen.

**Sexuality Issues** – GA approved a resolution affirming several things including the full dignity of transgendered persons and their right to be free from violence and injustice. It also gave thanks for those seeking how best to show hospitality and Christian love to sexual minorities despite theological differ-

ences. The General Assembly adopted an authoritative interpretation of the Constitution that protects the conscience of sessions and ministers to adopt policies on weddings. This is important for those in the PC (USA) who continue to hold that marriage is limited to the covenant between a man and a woman.

**Stewardship of Creation** – GA again reaffirmed our process of corporate engagement through investment. We celebrated some progress with influencing large fossil fuel corporations toward better stewardship of the environment. GA voted against divesting from fossil fuels, preferring to advocate in cooperation with our partners as corporate shareholders.

**Other Issues** – Among many other actions, GA called for an end to separation of families at the border, strengthened policies against misconduct, harassment and abuse, issued recommendations for drug policy including opioid abuse, and condemned racist nationalism and gender injustice especially for women of color. GA advocated for suicide prevention, prevention of gun violence, and a moratorium on US executions. The General Assembly voted to initiate the process of adopting MLK's *Letter from Birmingham City Jail* as a confession of the church. We believe the PCUSA continues to support outstanding mission work around the world.

**The Future of PCUSA** – GA adjusted its governing structure and initiated a review of its funding model, recognizing that per capita should be increased as little as possible while still allowing for the Church to fulfill its essential mission. Fellowship Community board member Bill Teng was elected to a 4-year term to the only remaining "at-large" seat on the newly reconstituted corporate board of directors of A Corporation of PC (USA).

**Statistics** – PCUSA has 9300 churches with 1.415M members, a decline of 43% over 20 years. We are 90% white. 72% of churches have under 150 members (66% under 100). 72% of Presbyterians are in 300+ member churches. The recent wave (since 2012) of over 600 church departures has abated, over half to ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians, the most recently formed Presbyterian denomination. We celebrate the fact that the PCUSA has launched 540 'new worshiping communities' in the last several years. We believe the presence of The Fellowship Community at GA played a positive and necessary supporting role among evangelical and like-minded commissioners and observers alike as we connected with and supported them in their calling to serve the whole Church. We continue to affirm that at the heart of The Fellowship Community is the desire to reclaim a covenanted biblical community, where we are united by a clearly articulated theology, a shared commitment to disciple-making, and a culture of encouragement and accountability. If we can help interpret any of the actions taken by the 223rd General Assembly, please feel free to contact us.

*Our congregation is a part of The Fellowship Community and we appreciate their report of what happened at General Assembly. If you would like more information about any of the GA actions, or if you would like clarification on implications any of these actions have on our local congregation, please feel free to speak with Pastor Monroe. Remember our policy that we only remit General Assembly per capita for those who have paid it.*

