



# UPLIFT Newsletter

The United  
Presbyterian Church  
of Blairsville, PA

APRIL 2018

My mother-in-law has a friend from church named Flo. Flo is 107 years old and has had quite a life, with dozens of highs and her share of lows. Among the more difficult times were burying three husbands, two sons and a daughter. When asked the secret of facing each day, she replies, "I get up every morning and thank the Lord for a new day. Then I ask him what he wants me to do, where he wants me to go and who he wants me to help. Then I follow his lead to see what he is doing in the midst of the day."

It's amazing what we can discover when we move through the day with an expectancy, with eyes of faith and hearts of hope and hands stretched out in anticipation of experiencing something new. On this side of Easter, it is in such expectancy we are called to live, seeing God in a new light, trusting God with a new confidence, serving God with a fuller purpose. For the 40 days of Lent, we looked inward and pondered our devotion to Jesus. We considered the love and passion he showed toward us in the act of our redemption and salvation. But in the resurrection, our vision is broadened as we begin to explore the fullness of God's activity in new ways and new places.

Matthew and Mark tell us little about what happened during those forty days between Jesus rising and his ascending into heaven. Luke tells us of that journey two disciples made on the road to Emmaus where Jesus walked with them, but they didn't recognize him. Was there something about Jesus that made him unrecognizable or was there something within the disciples that made them unable to recognize who he was? There are those times our eyes are closed to what we assume is impossible, and we miss an opportunity. John's witness is fuller. As Mary weeps by the garden tomb she hears a voice. So consumed by her grief she assumes it's the gardener. Who else could it be? It's only when that voice calls her by name she recognizes it's Jesus. When the disciples are visited in the upper room by the risen Lord, they tell Thomas the good news, but he refuses to believe until he sees for himself. Later, as some of the disciples are out fishing, they hear a voice calling from the shore but don't know who it is. Of the seven in the boat it is only Peter who recognizes that it is Jesus who is calling them. As John tells us of these encounters, he adds that Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in his account. (John 20:30) He ends his gospel by saying, "if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." (John 21:25)

If you wrote down the places where you have seen evidence of the risen Lord, would it fill a page, would it be a pamphlet or could it be a book? Have you had encounters with the power of resurrection and have not recognized them for what they are? Has the risen Lord knocked on the door of your heart and you have ignored it because such a possibility is in your mind too good to be true?

In the resurrection of Jesus and in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit the limits we put on life have been removed. The word "impossible" has been taken from our vocabulary, and the walls that once imprisoned us have been toppled. While our vision was once limited by conventional thought, with Christ's resurrection, the blinders have been removed. The question becomes, where do you see Jesus now and how do you recognize him in new ways? Do you sense his presence in the midst of your circumstance? Can you see him as loving even the one you can't? Does God's power over death give you a new perspective of God's power over what's killing you?

Jesus says, "Because I live, you will live also..." (John 14:19) The gift of resurrection was not given to Jesus alone. It is offered to all those who believe, who die to their "self", their selfish desires, their old ways—and in so doing are raised with Christ and made new. Resurrection is a gift we can begin to experience in this world as we live each day with the risen Christ, and the joy therein is magnified as we grow in the goodness of his kingdom.

For some, Easter is a day. For some it is a 40 day period of time. But God's intention is for Easter to be our way of life as we celebrate his boundless gift of grace that carries us into eternity.....

In Christ's love,

*Pastor Jim*

## Scripture Texts for Worship

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

### Sunday, April 1

Isaiah 25:6-9

John 20:1-8

### Sunday, April 8

Acts 4:32-35

John 20:19-31

### Sunday, April 15

Acts 3:12-19

Luke 24:36-48

### Sunday, April 22

I John 3:16-24

John 10:11-18

### Sunday, April 29

I John 4:7-21

John 15:1-8

### Sunday, May 6

I John 5:1-6

John 15:9-17

## May Newsletter

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

## Prayer Chain

The prayer chain is coordinated by the Adult Sunday School Class. If you have a prayer request or know of someone's need for prayer, please contact Nancy Campbell or the church office. Prayer requests are kept in confidence unless permission is given to share.



## Worship Assistants

### April 1—Easter

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone

Acolyte: Brylea Borbonus

Ushers: The Moran Family

Projector: Alex Kirkland

Audio: Andrew Baker

### April 8

Liturgist: Rick Shoemaker

Flowers: Linda George

Ushers: Todd & Stacy Faulk

Tom Holby, Pat Swope

Projector: Kayla Moran

Audio: Tyler Moran

### April 15

Liturgist: Bonni Dunlap

Acolyte: Willow Weimer

Flowers: Ron & Kim McKinney

Ushers: Tonkin's & Moran's

Projector: Blake Tonkin

Audio: Elizabeth Bruner

### April 22

Liturgist: Dennis Gould

Flowers: The Neal Family

Ushers: Jean Heberling,

Linda George

Projector: Shakira McKinney

Audio: Jaison McKinney

### April 29

Liturgist: Jean Heberling

Flowers: Bill & Deb Lint

Ushers: The Baker Family

Projector: Alex Kirkland

Audio: Andrew Baker

### Offering Counters

Elaine Jellison & Naomi Sigafos

## WyoTech Luncheon

A WyoTech Luncheon is planned for Tuesday, April 10th 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 Joan Moran.

## Family Promise Program

We will host families in the Family Promise Program beginning Sunday, April 22nd through Sunday, April 29th. Family Promise is a ministry to families who find themselves homeless. An evening meal and housing is provided by area churches and positive training is given to adults during the day at the Family Promise House. The goal is to help families in homeless situations, find stable employment and safe housing. If you would like to volunteer, please contact the church office.

## Welcome

On Sunday, March 11th we welcomed two new members to the congregation.

**Dale Hogue** is married to Kelly. He enjoys deer and turkey hunting, car shows and drag racing. Dale grew up in the Free Methodist Church. After many year of working, he is now enjoying retirement.

**Kelly Hogue** is married to Dale. She has two daughters and one granddaughter. Kelly grew up in the Methodist Church, in fact her father was a minister. She has many interests but little time to enjoy them. Kelly works full-time for an HVAC business in Loyalhanna and part-time for Accent Fuels in Blairsville.

We welcome Dale and Kelly!

## OGHS Offering Update

We received the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering Sunday, March 25th during the worship hour. These gifts were sent to aid with food for the hungry, aid and shelter for those overcoming catastrophe and conflict and to resource communities working to end poverty and oppression. This year's offering totaled \$763.23. We thank all those who supported the OGHS Offering



## Vacation Bible School 2018

VBS is only a few months away. The fun is scheduled for the week of June 11-15. If you love to have fun, work with kids & learn new and exciting things, we want you!

Volunteers are needed in many areas. All those interested in helping this year are asked to contact the church office or see Cindy Borbonus. No experience is necessary!

For the safety of our children, the policy of our church is that those working with children are required to have their clearances. For more information, contact the church office.

## Prescription Drug Take-Back

A Permanent Drug Take-Back box is located at the Blairsville Borough Police Dept., These collections are anonymous, no questions asked. Please remember to remove all personal information from containers. Permanent boxes are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### Acceptable items include:

- Prescription and over-the-counter dosage medications (tablets, liquids, capsules, patches)
- Liquid medications (creams, ointments)
- Nasal sprays
- Inhalers
- Pet medications

### CANNOT accept:

- Sharps, Syringes/needles
- Illicit drugs (heroin, marijuana, etc.)
- Radioactive Medications

## Hunger in America

Below is a simple True/False quiz about Hunger in America. Test your knowledge.

1. One in every six Americans does not have access to enough food.
2. Most individuals struggling with hunger are homeless and out of work.
3. Very few children struggle with hunger because there are programs to take care of them.
4. Most people in low-income households would be fine if they just worked harder.
5. Even educated people struggle with issues of hunger in this country.
6. The lack of adequate nutrition only affects children's physical growth.
7. In school, children from food insecure households perform just as well as children who have enough nutrition daily.
8. More than 2 million rural households experience food insecurity.
9. Urban counties have the highest poverty rates in the U.S.
10. 49 million Americans don't have consistent access to enough food due to limited money and resources.

## Mission Moment— Youth Worker Sabbath Day

Presbyterian youth worker Michelle Phillips felt the weight of the world on her shoulders. “Recently some students skipped high school,” she said, her voice trailing off. Then she explained: Speeding, the students were in a tragic car accident. One of the passengers died; the other was in critical condition. The driver walked away without any physical injuries. None of the students were involved at Rolling Hills Presbyterian Church in Overland Park, Kansas, where Phillips serves as the director of youth and family ministry. But students in Overland Park wanted answers. They came to her asking, “Why did this happen? Why wasn’t the driver hurt?” For Phillips, the “why” questions that come after a tragedy are the hardest part of a youth worker’s job because often the youth worker will never be able to answer them. “It takes a lot out of you,” she says. “It hurts. Sometimes your foundation is shaken. “ When she feels this way, Phillips starts thinking of the students who come to youth group at Rolling Hills, because for some it is the only place they are accepted and feel love. In those moments she’ll close her office door. The quiet reminds her that God is present even when there are no answers to why. It gives Phillips “enough hope and courage and faith for tomorrow” — which is what she shares with her students. “God is with us, even in the ugly.” “Anything that rocks our society, whether it’s a school shooting or natural disaster, shatters our kids’ worlds,” she said. “We live in such fragile times.”

Youth workers like Phillips are on the front lines, constantly tending to the spiritual lives of youth. Walking with them through tragedy. Taking late-night phone calls and texts. Spending weekends leading retreats. “They’re notorious for giving generously of themselves,” said Michael Harper, director of the Presbyterian Youth Workers’ Association (PYWA). “But they do this often at the expense of taking care of themselves.” PYWA, in partnership with Presbyterian Mission’s Ministries with Youth, wanted to do something about that. They are hosting the first-ever Youth Worker Sabbath Day. Local groups across the country have organized events to enable youth workers to engage in Sabbath practices together. Each group will begin the morning with a video presentation and program designed specifically for the event by speaker, author and spiritual director Mark Yaconelli about the significance of holy rest and restful work. Then resources offering suggested activities of prayer, art and conversation will help each group sculpt the rest of their day. Phillips, a Sabbath group host, says PYWA is “empowering youth workers by giving them permission to take that time that will draw us closer to God.” Her group is meeting at a local church. After the morning session, they’ll go to a park to be by themselves. Some will read and others will pray. Phillips plans to paint. They’ll meet for dinner to discuss how they can support one another. “This will give us the strength to be available,” she said. “We’re the adults that kids turn to when all else fails.”

*Paul Seebeck, Mission Communications Strategist, Presbyterian Mission Agency*

*\*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.*

### Hunger Quiz Answers

- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| 1—true  | 2—false |
| 3—false | 4—false |
| 5—true  | 6—false |
| 7—false | 8—true  |
| 9—false | 10—true |