



UPLIFT Newsletter

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

SEPTEMBER 2018

If you're expecting a funny story, there is nothing humorous about the topic of my letter. If you're expecting an inspirational message you'll be disappointed. If you're hoping for something fluffy and cute, what follows is anything but. What follows is the ugly reality that consumes some of our children.

The recently published report on the sexual abuse of children by priests in Pennsylvania has shaken the foundation of our communities. The sad fact is that the investigation only addresses what has taken place in the Roman Catholic Church. As horrified as we've been by the findings, they are only the tip of the iceberg. Add to the number of those charged all the incidents of abuse not reported. Multiply what has happened in Pennsylvania by the rest of the states in our nation. While priests have been the focus of social outrage, they are not the only clergy who are guilty of the sin. There are Protestant, Orthodox, Mormon, Jehovah Witness, Amish clergy and leaders who are equally guilty of the sinful crime. And it's not only a Christian reality, it is just as prevalent in Jewish and Muslim communities. While we focus on the vast number of predators within the "religious" community, multiply that by those who victimize in our schools, medical facilities, child care centers. The vastness of the prevalence does not discount the occurrences within religious institutions, especially by men and women who have taken vows to protect. The results of the report do not merely point the finger at Roman Catholic clergy, they call all people of faith, especially leaders to account.

Within society there is a long list of mandated reporters of child abuse any school employee, funeral directors, workers at health care facilities, child care workers, law enforcement, medical service providers, public library employees, attorneys, independent contractors, anyone who has direct contact with children in the course of their employment. The list goes on. Mandated reporters have a legal responsibility to report any suspected case of child abuse or neglect to governmental authorities, who in turn follow through with an investigation.

Within the Presbyterian Church (USA) it is not only Ministers of Word and Sacrament who are morally and legally obligated to report. Our constitution states, "Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry (pastors, elders or deacons) shall report to ecclesiastical (church) and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity..." (Book of Order G-4.0302). Note that anyone who has ever been ordained as a minister, elder or deacon is required to report. Note too that the reporting is to both church and legal authorities. Direct reporting to legal authorities guarantees that things cannot be covered up within the church.

While we focus on the legal issues of reporting any sign or suspicion of abuse, the law is overshadowed by our moral and spiritual obligation to report. As the church, the body of Christ, we are held accountable to Christ, and in Christ to one another. Throughout scripture leaders are admonished to protect the vulnerable, Christians are obliged to confront abuse, and God's judgment on unrepentant abusers is declared. Even more than a social issue, this is a spiritual issue. We've read how Jesus quickly took a stand for the oppressed, how he welcomed the children to himself, and how he condemned those who caused harm to the helpless and innocent.

So, where the rubber meets the road is how we are responding in this part of God's kingdom. For sometime we have had in place a policy on child and youth protection. The session is in the process of finalizing a harassment policy as well. At least twice we have hosted training on how to recognize and report abuse. This training has been open to our church officers, teachers and educational workers, and folks from neighboring congregations. Our teachers have obtained their clearances and background checks (Jill keeps these locked up for the sake of confidentiality). All staff members have not only State Police background checks but also FBI fingerprinting. Those who lead security programs have also fulfilled the required training. Just as we secure the sanctuary during worship for the sake of safety, our education wing is physically secured. The hallway is locked and a camera monitors coming and goings. Doorbells announce a need to get into the area after doors are locked.

It's sad that we have to deal with a changing world, but the fact of the matter is that the sinfulness we face has always been, we didn't hear of it as much. Please know that as your pastor, the sincerity, integrity and effectiveness of the ministry is central to my heart. I am committed to the laws of our commonwealth and even more to the standards of our God. If you have any concerns or questions, or if you wrestle with any issues of being abused or tendencies toward abusing, please talk with me. We are called to live out our faith together as we work for wholeness, peace and healing.....

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jim

Scripture Texts for Worship

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

Sunday, September 2

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

James 1:17-27

Sunday, September 9

Proverbs 22:1-2,8-9,22-23

James 2:1-17

Sunday, September 16

James 3:1-2

Mark 8:27-38

Sunday, September 23

Mark 9:30-37

James 3:13-4:3, 7-8

Sunday, September 30

James 5:13-20

Esther 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22

Sunday, October 7

Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12

Job 1:1, 2:1-10

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).

Communion

We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion Sunday, September 9th 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.

Worship Assistants

September 2—10:00 AM

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone

Flowers: Nancy Campbell

Projector: Blake Tonkin

Audio: Elizabeth Bruner

1ST SUNDAY - REGULAR SCHEDULE

September 9—Communion 11:00 AM

Liturgist: Barb Brown

Flowers: Tom & Janet Smith

Projector: Shakira McKinney

Audio: Jaison McKinney

September 16—11:00 AM

Liturgist: Bonni Dunlap

Flowers: Soni Clapper

Projector: Alex Kirkland

Audio: Andrew Baker

September 23—11:00 AM

Liturgist: Dennis Gould

Flowers: Marilyn Neal

Projector: Kayla Moran

September 30—11:00 AM

Liturgist: Jean Heberling

Flowers: Ed & Becky Bence

Projector: Blake Tonkin

Audio: Elizabeth Bruner

September Offering Counters

Becky Bence and Elaine Jellison

Congregational Meeting

Sunday, September 30th immediately following worship to act on: the 2019 Pastor's Terms of Call; and the report of the Nominating Committee.

Volunteers are Needed to Continue

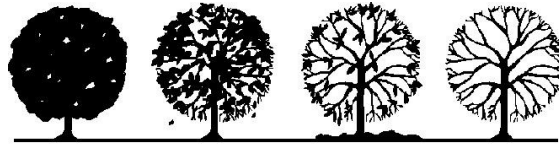
Since it has begun in Indiana County, we have been a part of the Family Promise Program, offering homeless families a safe place to stay for four weeks of the year. We make sure they are transported to and from the Day Center in Indiana, they have a well balanced meal each evening and they have comfortable 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 one more time this year, (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 know of your willingness to help.

October Newsletter

Articles to be published in the October edition of the UPLIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Sunday, September 16th. 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.

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.



Fall Schedule

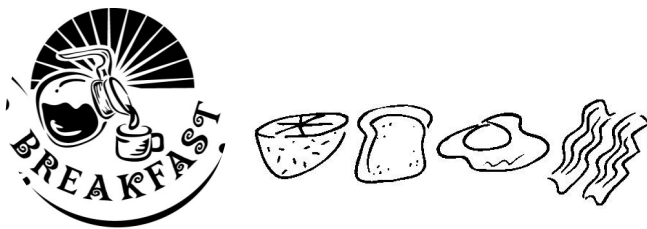
Sunday, September 2.....Worship—10:00 AM
 Monday, September 3..... Labor Day, Office Closed
 Wednesday, September 5..... Choir Rehearsals Begin—7:00 PM
Sunday, September 9 **“Radical Welcome Breakfast” - 9:45 AM**
Worship and Communion—11:00 AM
 Wednesday, September 12..... Choir Rehearsal—7:00 PM
 Sunday, September 16.....Sunday School Classes Begin—9:45 AM
Worship—11:00 AM

Any questions, please contact the church office.

Sunday School Classes for 2018-2019

The count down is on! Sunday, September 16th will be the first day of class for those attending our Sunday School. Are you thinking that Sunday School is for kids? It is BUT, classes are available for ALL ages. If you’ve never tried Sunday School or its been a while since you attended, why not try it out this year. Our classes and teachers are listed. If you have any questions, please see Kim McKinney or contact the church office. We would be glad to hear from you.

Preschool & KindergartenJamie McKinney, teacher
 Grades 1, 2 & 3 Cindy & Sheila Borbonus, teachers
 Grades 4, 5 & 6 Heidi Weimer, teacher
 Grades 7-12 Bobbi Monroe, teacher
 Homebuilders Class-adults Various teachers
 Men & Women’s Class-adults Gene Artman & Bill Lint



Sunday School Kick-Off

On Sunday, September 9th at 9:45 a.m. the Christian Ed Committee will host a “Radical Welcome Breakfast” aka “The Cool Breakfast.” If you’ve never been to Sunday School but you would like to try it, or if you look forward to classes every year, you are invited! We have something different planned for this breakfast. Plan to come and see what Sunday School is all about. Breakfast is compliments of the Christian Ed Committee.

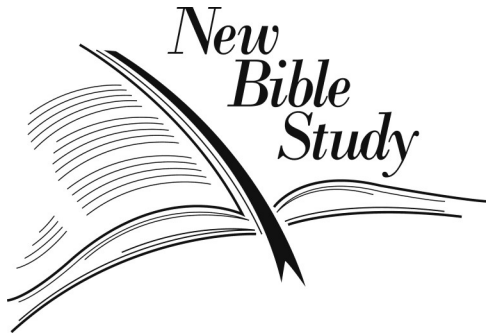


Movie Night

You are invited Saturday, September 29th to the Fellowship Hall at 5:00 p.m. for a light dinner followed by the showing of the Sight & Sound Production of “Sampson.” This will be a fun evening spending time together as a church family! Everyone is welcome. Dinner and a movie is provided in cooperation by the Congregational Fellowship and Christian Ed Committees.

Save the Date

On Sunday, October 21st the Christian Ed Committee will host a luncheon following worship. Mark your calendars...you won't want to miss this one!



Interested in a Bible Study?

We are investigating:

- ◆ a day of the week
- ◆ convenient time
- ◆ mornings or afternoons
- ◆ how many are interested

This study is open to both men and women. Pastor Monroe will be teaching along with some others. If you are interested, please fill out the attached form with your preferences and place it in the offering plate or call the church office.

I'm interested in a daytime Bible Study

Name(s) _____

Day of the week _____

Convenient time _____