



# UPLIFT Newsletter

The United  
Presbyterian Church  
of Blairsville, PA

NOVEMBER 2018

The gang from the Peanuts comic strip were gathered around the Thanksgiving table reflecting on the blessings they've received. Linus, clutching a blanket, expressed his gratitude for God's gift of security. Schroeder delighted in God's gift of music, Snoopy rejoiced in the gift of a vivid imagination and all the adventures it affords him, and Woodstock, Snoopy's fine feathered friend, gave thanks that he was not born a turkey.

With grateful hearts we thank God for the goodness he has put into our lives. But so too we are mindful of those things he has spared us of. We don't have to look very far to count our blessings, and at the same time to recognize the hardships of others. Paul's counsel in I Thessalonians 5:18 is "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." In his letters he recounts the tough times he endures: "five times I received forty lashes minus one, three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, one night and a day I floated in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move and in harm's way..." (II Corinthians 11:24ff). "For I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry.....I can do all things through him who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:11ff) The Christian life is not defined by what we call God's goodness, rather by the fortitude of faith received in the face of adversity. In the midst of his losses Job declares, "Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I shall depart. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21)

There are those who go through life with a sense of entitlement. They feel they are owed the fullness of God's bountiful hand (and everything in the hands of those around them). And when you see yourself as the center of the universe you're bound to be disappointed when your expectations of the world are not met. The fact of the matter is that we are owed nothing from the world or from God. From that perspective, everything we do receive is a gift. And every gift requires a response, an acknowledgment and a giving of thanks.


In our Reformed tradition, there are two words that are inseparable—grace and gratitude. You can't have one without the other. Where God initiates a relationship we are called to respond. We love because God first loves us. We forgive because we have been forgiven. We are gracious because we have been shown grace. We are merciful because God has been merciful to us. I like the cartoon that depicts a husband and wife standing in line at the pearly gates. She warns him, "Now George, whatever you do—don't demand what's coming to you." "The wages of sin are death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

As those redeemed in Christ, we have been given a marvelous gift—a future of hope. The way we live our lives here and now is a "thank you" note to God for all he has done and will do. Thanks living is at the heart of thanksgiving. We often affirm our faith on Sunday morning with the words of the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism— "What is your only comfort in life and in death? - That I am not my own, but belong body and soul, in life and in death to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ..." The second question of the catechism follows, "What must you know to live and die in the joy of this comfort? - Three things: first, how great my sin and misery are; second, how I am set free from all my sins and misery; third, how I am to thank God for such deliverance."

As you see what is happening in the world around you, do you respond as Jesus responded to the chaos in your life? In your relationships, do you deal with others as God has dealt with you? In your circumstances, do you trust that God is in control and works all things for the ultimate good? Are you mindful of all that God has saved you from and all that God has saved you for?

With gratitude we respond to the grace by which we have been made right with God. In that gratitude may all you do bring him glory and praise.....

In Christ's love,



## Scripture Texts for Worship

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

### Sunday, November 4

Hebrews 9:11-14

Mark 12:28-34

### Sunday, November 11

Hebrews 9:24-28

Mark 12:38-44

### Sunday, November 18

Hebrews 10:11-25

I Samuel 1:4-20

### Sunday, November 25

II Samuel 23:1-7

Revelation 1:4-8

### Sunday, December 2

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Luke 21:35-36

The church office  
will be closed  
Thursday, November 22  
and  
Friday, November 23  
for the  
Thanksgiving  
Holiday

## December Newsletter

Articles to be published in the December edition of the UP-LIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Thursday, November 15th. Please have all information to the church office by this date.

## Election Day

Tuesday, November 6  
Voting in Fellowship Hall  
all day

## Worship Assistants

### November 4

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone

Flowers: Cindy Borbonus

Flowers: Barb Kocsis

Projector: Shakira McKinney

Audio: Jaison McKinney

### November 11

Liturgist: Connie Bruner

Flowers: Dick Gibson

Projector: Alex Kirkland

Audio: Andrew Baker

### November 18

Liturgist: Thanksgiving Team

Flowers: Terry & Barb Brown

Projector: Kayla Moran

Audio: Olivia Eckenroad

### November 25—Communion

Liturgist: Jean Heberling

Flowers: Annabel Machak

Projector: Blake Tonkin

Audio: Elizabeth Bruner

### Offering Counters

Marilyn Neal and Linda George

## Thanksgiving Baskets

Our Deacons will assemble Thanksgiving Baskets for families in the community. We ask that you consider donating food items or giving a monetary contribution. Articles of food can include: canned fruit or vegetables, boxed baked goods, pie fillings, Jello, boxes of stuffing mix, cranberry sauce, just to name a few. Boxes will be available at the back of the church for the collection of food donations. Please check expiration dates on items before donating them.

If any member of the congregation is aware of a family who may need a Thanksgiving basket please contact Pastor Tim or Marilyn Neal. Thank you for your generous help in the past, and we look forward to sharing another happy holiday with those in our community!



## 4th Annual Coats-For-Kids Drive

The Coats-for-Kids drive is underway. 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 That Time of Year!

Don't forget to set your clocks back...Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, November 4th.

## Food Bank

The Blairsville Area Food Program (Food Bank) is held the second Tuesday of each month in our Fellowship Hall. Volunteers unload the food truck, sort food items, and pack grocery bags. Then food bags are distributed to folks from our community between the hours of 12:00 and 1:00 p.m.

When residents sign up for the first time, proof of address in the Blairsville Borough is needed. The Blairsville Food Bank is sponsored by ICCAP.





## 11th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

Sunday, November 18, 2018

Immediately following worship  
in Fellowship Hall

Come join our church family for a great  
Thanksgiving meal and fellowship!

Please fill out & return the form in the offering plate

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

How many attending, including yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

Maybe you would like to share your favorite:

Vegetable \_\_\_\_\_

Casserole \_\_\_\_\_

Salad \_\_\_\_\_

Dessert \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to help prepare on Saturday,  
November 17 @ 10:00 AM by peeling potatoes and  
setting tables?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Would you like to help prepare on  
Sunday morning during worship?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Thank you to all who help to make this dinner  
an enjoyable event each year!

Please contact a committee member  
for more information.

**Happy Thanksgiving to all!**

## Veteran's Day Concert

A Veteran's Day Concert will be performed by the Blairsville Community Band Monday, November 12th at 7:00 p.m. at the Blairsville High School. The concert is free to the community.

## Chili/Soup Cook Off

Boy Scout Troop 4 will hold their 3rd Annual Soup and Chili Cook Off, Sunday, November 11th from 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Cost is \$10.00 per person. There will be a variety of soups and chili's made by the Troop 4 scouts and scout leaders, to see who has the best soup and the best chili. This is a Boy Scout fundraiser to help cover expenses incurred in camping and other activities throughout the year.

## Christmas Concert

The Blairsville Monday Music Club is organizing their annual Christmas Concert to be held at SS Simon and Jude Church, Monday, December 10th at 7:00 p.m. Local church choirs are invited to take part, as well as, individuals to be included in the Community Choir. If you would like to participate, please contact Nancy Gould by email at [dngould@verizon.net](mailto:dngould@verizon.net). The Community Choir rehearsals will be held from 7:00—8:30 p.m. the following dates and locations:

Nov. 5 .....SS Simon & Jude

Nov. 19 .....United Presbyterian

Dec. 3.....SS Simon & Jude

Dec. 10.....Concert at SS Simon & Jude

## Live Nativity

The United Methodist Church is inviting participation in the Live Nativity and activities for the Blairsville Light Up Night on December 1st. Volunteers are needed for setup & cleanup, actors in the live Nativity, a narrator to share the Christmas story, parade participants, singers, food & drink, etc. Those interested in helping are asked to contact the UMC, 724-459-6155.

## Pathway Donations

During the month of November the Deacons are collecting the following items for the Pathway Homeless Shelter: pillows, washcloths, towels, and all types of cleaning supplies. You may leave the items in the box in the back of the sanctuary marked for Pathway.

*We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion Sunday, November 25th during worship.*

*Please take time to prepare to receive and share the sacrament.*

## Community Thanksgiving Worship

A Community Thanksgiving Service will be held Sunday, November 18th at 7:00 p.m. This year Crossroads Community Church (formerly Blairsville Free Methodist) will host worship. Rev. Jim Kendall will share the message. The Blairsville community is invited to attend. The service is coordinated by the Blairsville Area Ministerium.

## Christmas Stockings for Patients

We will be filling 25 Christmas stockings for male patients at Torrance State Hospital this holiday season. Our deacons are asking for your participation in providing donations of the following items:

- Greeting Cards (birthday, get well, thinking of you, or blank)
- Stationary
- Word puzzles,
- Playing cards
- Card games (Uno, Skip-bo, and Phase 10 or children card games)
- Socks – white crew
- Soap-body wash
- Shampoo
- Hair products for African Americans
- Deodorant (no spray cans)
- Lotion
- Paperback books
- Underwear (larger sizes – briefs)

There is a box at the back of the sanctuary to collect donations. Thank you for your generosity. If you have any questions, please see Susie Cotti.

## Christmas Eve Early Worship

The Christmas Eve early worship has traditionally been a service for families with children. This year we would like to have our children of the church participate in the 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve worship service. Participation can include: speaking, singing, playing a musical instrument—just to name a few. We plan to hold rehearsals during the Sunday School hour with possibly one rehearsal close to Christmas Eve. Please consider having your child be a part of this year's worship service. If you have questions or your child(ren) would like to participate, or you would like more information, please see Cindy Borbonus or call the church office.



## Christmas Cantata

Christmas Cantata rehearsals are being held Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m. This year's cantata is entitled, "Darkness into Light" by Mary McDonald. *The cantata will be presented in worship Sunday, December 23rd at 11:00 a.m.* A final rehearsal will be held Saturday, December 22nd at 10:00 a.m. Anyone wishing to participate is welcome. Regular choir practice will continue to be held Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. followed by cantata rehearsal at 8:00 p.m. If you would like more information, please see Cindy Borbonus.

## Advent Devotionals

Our devotional this Advent season is entitled, "God with Us" by David Boyd. We often say to one another "God be with you!" But we often fail to contemplate the miracle and meaning behind the message of "God with us" in the person of Jesus Christ. Theologians call this the incarnation. We simply call it Christmas—the day God came down to be with us, embodied in the human flesh of a baby born in Bethlehem. There is something very real and personal about God coming down to be with us in this way. His dwelling among us is something that shapes us, comforts us, nurtures us and directs us. In this time of preparation, explore the deep impact this embodiment of God has on our very hearts and souls and life of faith. The Season of Advent begins Sunday, December 2nd.

## Bell Choir

Our Bell Choir rehearses Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. in the Bell Room. We are looking for two ringers. No experience is necessary just a willingness to learn. If you are interested in more information about the bell choir, please see Vicky Westley. You are also welcome to come to rehearsal to see what happens there.



## BEGIN ANEW!

Come and be apart of the Advent Celebration

*Sunday, December 9th, after worship*

Soup and Bread Luncheon  
with fun and thought provoking activities

All children of God invited!



### CPR Training

CPR training is being coordinated by the Deacons. If you are interested in attending a CPR training event, please call the church office at 724-459-7991 or see Susie Cotti. The date for training will be set at the first of the year, according to the availability of those interested in attending and the trainer.

### Worship Assistants

- ◆ The Worship Committee is looking for volunteers to be liturgists during morning worship. If you are interested in more information or to volunteer, please contact Elaine Jellison.
- ◆ The deacons are looking for volunteers to usher Sunday mornings during worship for the months of November and December. A sign-up sheet is located on the table at the back of the sanctuary. If you would like to volunteer, please sign –up for your choice of dates or see Jenny Borbonus or Tom Holby.

### Home Communion

If you are not able to come to 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.

### 2019 Budget

The Finance Committee is working on the 2019 budget. All church committees are asked to consider their ministry plans for the New Year and submit numbers for the 2019 budget by Monday, November 12<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions, please contact the office, 724-459-7991.

### Property & Maintenance

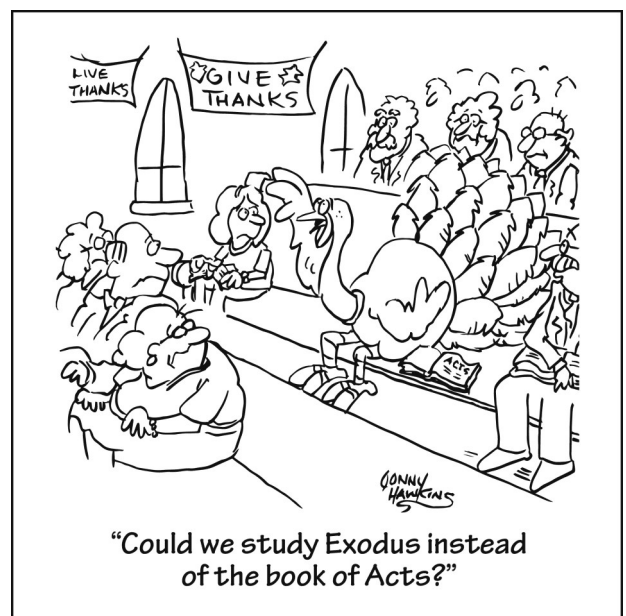
If you notice something around the church property that needs repaired, please refer the matter to the Property & Maintenance Committee. Either place a note in the offering plate or leave it in the church office. The secretary will forward the concern to the chair of the committee. Please be very specific as to what the problem is, so that the issue can be handled. Thank you.

### 2019 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for the New Year will be available soon for you to pick up. If you do not have church offering envelopes and would like a box set, please drop a note in the offering plate or contact Jill in the church office at 724-459-7991.

### Bible Study

Bible study is held Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. We have been looking at Acts 19-20 and Ephesians 1. The study is led by Pastor Monroe. All are welcome.



## Poinsettias

The Board of Deacons will once again give the congregation opportunity to order poinsettias for Christmas. Please watch your Sunday bulletins for more information and order forms.

## Made in America (*Blairsville*, to be exact)

The Grannies sewing group have several handmade items available for your purchase. Funds raised through the sale of these items help to support our mission of providing blankets, quilts, stuffed bunnies and bears, dignity robes, lap robes, hats, and dining scarves to individuals and organizations in our community. Look for our display in the church parlor coming soon. If you have any questions, please see Janeen Swope or any of the grannies or contact the church office. Thank you for your support so we can continue our ministry to those in our congregation and community.

## Compassion News

Dear Friends,

I, Hagenimana Vestine, greet you in the name of Jesus Christ. I thank you for accepting to be my parents. I wish you may come to visit me. Now in Rwanda, we are experiencing the cold weather. We are growing beans and maize. I like to eat bread. I am studying in senior one and I am doing well at school. I wish you may send to me your picture. May God bless you. Thank you.

Vestine Hagenimana

## Mission Moment

It's your birthday. The phone rings. While it could be a family member or a friend wishing you well on your special day, the last thing you might expect to hear is a 99-year-old man on the other end of the call singing "Happy Birthday" to you. But that's exactly what happens to those who attend Westminster Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, NC, where Carl Webb has found his purpose, his "call" so to speak, in serving God. And that "call" is to be the birthday crooner of the church.

In all of the 18 years of this unique ministry, Webb has had only five days off. And that's only because on those days he didn't have anyone to sing "Happy Birthday" to, he says. He's kept track of the number of calls he has made over the years. "I've done between 35,000 and 36,000 'Happy Birthday' calls to people at my church—even strangers," Webb said. More than 2,000 people attend his church. Webb estimates that he averages six calls a day.

His ministry started when he began attending church with his daughter, Betsy Hyslop. He noticed church secretaries taking a sheet of paper from a packet on one of the church's walls. Webb asked his daughter what they were doing. His daughter replied that it was a list of birthdays for the month—for all of the people who went to church. "I thought, 'Doggone it, you love to sing,'" Webb said. "You can sing 'Happy Birthday' to people." He asked for a copy of the birthday list, and the "Birthday Man" was born.

"He couldn't walk and see as well as he once did," said Hyslop. "He was trying to find something he could do for the church." Once people in the church knew who was singing—and why—word spread beyond the church family. Even people Hyslop didn't know were trying to get on her father's "Happy Birthday" singing list. On Webb's 99th birthday this past May, Westminster Presbyterian Church did something special for the famous birthday man: The entire congregation sang "Happy Birthday" to him. The song was followed with a standing ovation and thunderous clapping. "It was a great joy to know people remembered me on my birthday, in the same way that I remember them," Webb said.