

UPLIFT Newsletter

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

AUGUST 2019

A pastor sat across the desk from his physician. "Your test results are in Reverend, but I'm afraid they're not good...you have feet of clay!" "Feet of clay," it's a Biblical image from Daniel 2. King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a giant statue. The head was made of fine gold, the chest and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, the feet of part iron and part clay. I know all too well that a body is only as stable as its feet—you know too. Since ancient of days that image has implied vulnerability, weakness, imminent collapse. As Daniel interpreted the king's dream, he told of what would happen to Babylon in the coming days, and the prophecy was fulfilled.

Greek mythology told of a similar image. Achilles was destined to be a great warrior. Upon his birth, his mother held him by his feet and dipped him into the River Styx. That baptism of sorts covered him with protection that made him undefeatable. Legend says that as a warrior he was protected, except for those small parts of his heel where his mother's hands held him in the water. It was there, on his heel, that an arrow pierced him in battle bringing about his demise.

Feet of clay, Achilles heels are a sad reality of life. The Bible is very clear in identifying them in our heroes of faith. Moses stuttered, David's armor didn't fit, John Mark was rejected by Paul, Hosea's wife was a prostitute, Amos' only training was in fig tree pruning. Solomon was too rich, Abraham was too old, David was too young. Timothy had ulcers, Peter was afraid of death, Lazarus was dead, John was self righteous. Naomi was a widow, Moses was a murderer, Jonah ran from God, Miriam was a gossip, Gideon and Thomas both doubted. Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal, Elijah was burned out. John the Baptist was a loud mouth, Martha was a worrywart, Mary was lazy. Samson had long hair, Noah got drunk, Moses and Peter and Paul had short fuses. There is not one of us who do not have the same feet as our heroes.

But God doesn't require a job interview. He doesn't hire and fire like most bosses. God doesn't look at financial gain or loss, he's not prejudice and partial, not grudging or sassy or brassy. He's not deaf to our cry, not blind to our need. In grace he welcomes us and loves us into the children he wants us to become.

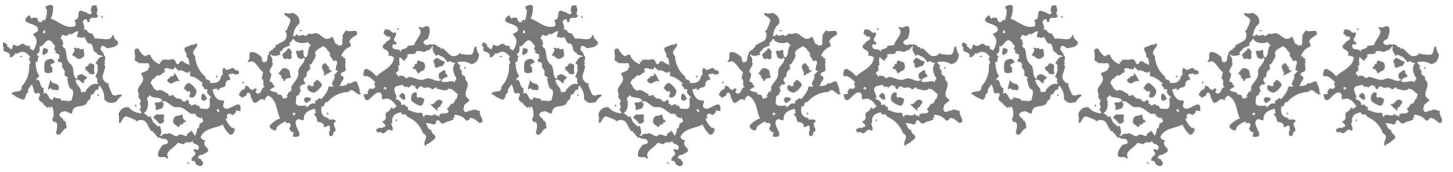
There is a story about a water bearer in India who had two large pots. Each hung on an end of the same pole, which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, while the other pot was perfect. This one always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, while the other arrived only half full. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke one day to the water bearer by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself and I want to apologize to you." "Why?" the bearer asked, "What are you ashamed of?" "I have been able, these past two years, to deliver only half of my load because of the crack in my side causing water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot and in his compassion said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path." Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure. The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there are flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other side? That's because I have always known about your flaw and I used it as an advantage. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walked back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years, I've been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

Paul writes, "Now we have this treasure (the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ) in jars of clay to show that this all surpassing power is from God and not from us." (II Corinthians 4:7) God wants us to be what a vessel is created to be—a container for its intended contents. "Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way! Thou art the Potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me after thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still..." No body or no circumstance is beyond redemption.....

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Jim



Scripture Texts for Worship

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

Sunday, August 4

Hosea 11:1-11
Colossians 3:1-11

Sunday, August 11

Isaiah 1:1, 10-20
Luke 12:32-40

Sunday, August 18

Isaiah 5:1-7
Luke 12:49-56

Sunday, August 25

Hebrews 12:18-29
Jeremiah 1:4-10

Sunday, September 1

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16
Luke 14:1, 7-14

Communion

We will share the sacrament of holy communion Sunday, August 4th during the 10:00 a.m. worship service. Please take time to prepare to receive and share the sacrament. If you are unable to be here for worship and would like to receive communion in your home, please contact the church office, 724-459-7991.

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.

September Newsletter

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

Worship Assistants

August 4—Communion

Flowers: Ron & Kim McKinney
Sp Music: Adam Loucks
Projector: Blake Tonkin
Audio: Elizabeth Bruner

August 11

Flowers: Gene & Chery Artman
Sp Music: Matthew & Danielle Cyphert
Projector: Shakira McKinney
Audio: Jaison McKinney

August 18

Flowers: Bill & Deb Lint
Projector: Alex Kirkland
Audio: Andrew Baker

August 25

Flowers: Rick & Willa Shoemaker
Sp Music: Blairsville Brass Ensemble
Projector: Kayla Moran
Audio: Olivia Eckenroad

Offering Counters

Bob & Charlotte Cosharek

Food Bank

The Food Bank will distribute groceries from Fellowship Hall the second Tuesday of each month from 12:00-1:00 p.m. Proof of residence within the borough is needed when signing up for the first time. If you have any questions, please call the church office.

Mandated Reporter Training

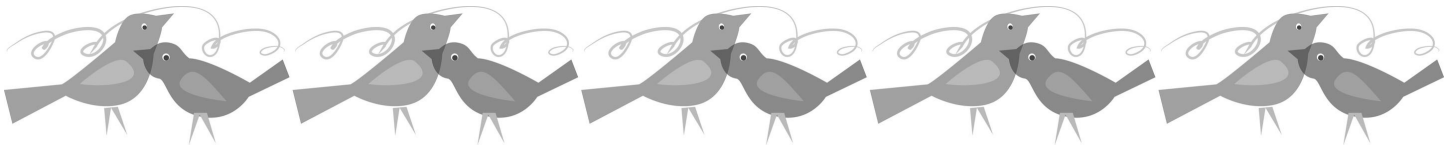
The Homer City United Presbyterian Church will host Mandated Reporter Training Saturday, September 7, 2019 from 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. Reservations can be made by calling the Homer City Church at 724-479-2695 from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon Monday or Friday. The church has limited office hours so please call in this time frame.

Guest Musicians

Our Chancel Choir is in recess for the summer months. We host guest musicians who provide Special Music during our worship service. If you or someone you know would like to share a musical talent during worship, please see Cindy Borbonus or contact the church office.

If God had texted the Ten Commandments to Moses...

1. no1 b4 me, srsly
2. dnt wrshp pix/idols
3. no omg's
4. no wrk on w/end (sat 4 now; sun 18r)
5. pos ok—ur m&d r cool
6. dnt kill ppl
7. :-X only w/m8
8. dnt steal
9. dnt lie re: bf
10. dnt ogle ur bf's m8 or ox or dnkey.myob



Mission Moment

2019 Presbyterian Youth Triennium volunteer makes up for lost time

Despite having worked in youth ministry at two Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations before becoming a marriage and family counselor, 72-year-old Gregg Dana has never attended Presbyterian Youth Triennium (PYT). He could've gone to the first two Trienniums in 1980 and 1983, but he was serving large PC(USA) churches with active summer programs.

"Triennium sort of didn't fit into what we were doing," he says. "I very much regret now that we didn't go."

Still enthusiastic about youth ministry following his retirement, Dana applied to serve on the 2019 PYT production team. Grateful to be accepted, he'd expressed interest in serving on the small group ministry team. Part of that team's responsibility was putting together content for the 200 small groups that meet to engage in Scripture — and the 100 leaders who will staff them.

"This is where the voice of youth is actually heard," he said, "where they get a chance to speak back, respond, ask questions and express doubt. I would've loved to have had something like that growing up."

Thrilled to put energy into how small group leaders could best facilitate small group experiences, Dana worked closely with Theresa Cho, pastor of St. John's Presbyterian Church in San Francisco. After she'd written the small group leaders' manual, he offered to read and edit it.

"It's what my family does," says Dana. "My daughter, dad and brother were all editors. It's just the way our brains were organized; it's a genetic thing. The manual was Theresa's creation. I just put commas in, that kind of thing."

But Cho, who describes her creative process writing the manual "as just you and your own brain writing it," knows better. She's grateful for the input of the entire team, including Dana's editing help.

"He has gifts I don't," says Cho, who preached at Triennium in 2013. "Theologically trained, he was very good at looking at the instructions and activities for the small groups, to make sure they made sense with what I was trying to accomplish."

Cho worked closely with worship and recreation team ministry coordinators to incorporate more seamlessly what they were doing into small group activities and discussion. Instead of just asking questions with a hoped-for outcome in mind, she wanted to develop a process by which youth could find a nugget, a thread of inspiration — even an epiphany.

But above all she wanted Triennium youth to think critically about the passages of Scripture with which they'd be engaging.

"It's kind of like they are detectives finding out the who, what, when, where and why of each Scripture passage," she said. "I want them to look at it through multiple lenses and then ask, 'what does this say about not only the story, but about God?'"

Seeing the resources and people — both staff and volunteers — on the production team has convinced Dana that if he'd taken the kids from the churches he served to Triennium years ago, it would've taken his youth ministries to a whole new level.

"I'm talking with pastors of bigger churches here in Twin Cities now telling them to not miss out," he said.

"I don't care if they're taking their kids for summer mission trips. Nobody could give them an experience like Triennium every three years."

It's an experience that moves people like Samantha Hassell, one of the small group ministry team leaders, nearly to tears every three years.

"It's the magnitude of this event," she said. "How many people it takes to pull off an event for 5,000 individuals? So many people doing one job."

"That we can set up this community and pull off this event, that starts with an idea, a spark — that's an amazing testament to the power of the Holy Spirit," she said, "who is in the details."

The Presbyterian Youth Triennium is supported by your gifts to the Pentecost Offering.

Paul Seebeck, Mission Communications Strategist, Video and Digital Asset Management, Presbyterian Mission Agency

Fall Bible Study

On Wednesday, September 11th at 10:00 a.m. we will begin our Fall Bible Study. Last year we worked through Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. Now we will turn to the Old Testament book of Daniel. Daniel teaches us what it means to be people of faith in a world that is not concerned about a relationship with God. At the same time Daniel's prophecy assures us that God has a plan and is in control. We focus on the Biblical text and ways it applies to our lives and informs our faith. We hope you will attend—Wednesday mornings from 10:00-11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Sunday School 2019-2020 Teacher Review

The Sunday School curriculum used by our young people this Fall will follow the lectionary. All students will be studying the same texts. While the lessons will be appropriate for the different age groups, there are common themes for teachers to consider. We are asking teachers to attend a general review of those themes on Wednesday, August 28th at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Pastor Monroe will offer a general overview, highlighting more important points of the lesson.

TEL-A-STORY

Tel-a-story telephone number is 1-888-878-8660. After listening to the recorded message, a child is given the opportunity to press "1" to talk to a real person and hear more about believing in Jesus. What a great way to reach more children! Please be sure to share this number with the children you know. Call today!

Here is the solution!

Can you...find thirty (30) books of the Bible in the paragraph below?

Actually there are thirty-one (31) Bible names, one is a variant of an Old Testament prophet.

"This is **A MOST** re**MARK**able puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket, on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu**LU**, **KEE**ping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much, he passed it on to some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his **JOHN** boat. Another friend studied it while playing his ban**JO**. **EL**aine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend **JUDGES** the **JOB** of solving this puzzle so involving, **sHE BREWS** a cup of tea to help her nerv**ES**. **THERE** will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a **FACT**. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a **JAM**, **ES**pecially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. **TRUTH**fully, **FROM ANS**wers we get, we are forced to admi**T IT US**ually takes a minister or a scholar to see some of the**M AT THE W**orst. Research has shown that something in our **GENES IS** responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in this paragraph. During a recent fund raising event, which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta **PHI LEMON**ade booth set a new record. The local paper, the **CHRONICLE**, **Sur**-veyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As **DANIEL** **HumANA HUMB**ly puts it, "The books are all right here in plain view hidden from sight." **THOSE** **A**ble to find all of them will hear great **LAMENTATIONS** from those who have to be shown. One **REVELATION** that may help is that the books like **TIMOTHY** and **SAMUEL** may occur without their **NUMBERS**. Also, keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are nor**MAL**. **A CH**ipper attitude will help you com**PETE** **R**eally well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mad **EXODUS**, there really are 30 books of the Bible lur**KING S**omewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found. God bless."