



# UPLIFT Newsletter

The United  
Presbyterian Church  
of Blairsville, PA

NOVEMBER 2019

As the story goes, Sammy Smith was having a birthday party. His whole third grade class was invited to the house for cake and ice cream and games. Everyone had a marvelous time. When Johnny's parents picked him up he told them all about it. His mother asked, "Did you thank Mrs. Smith for the wonderful afternoon?" "I didn't have to," Johnny said, "the little girl ahead of me thanked Mrs. Smith, and she said, 'Don't mention it,' so I didn't." In a world of instant gratification and abundance we tend to take our blessings for granted. Its as though we expect God to give to us. After all, that's His job, isn't it? Well, I hate to burst your bubble, but.....

Each Lord's Day, as our offerings are brought forward we sing the doxology, "*Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise him all creatures here below, Praise him above ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.*" The words are as ancient as the Psalms. The tune to which we sing them has been used for centuries. They are an acknowledgment of the faithful bearing witness to the goodness of the Lord, to the ways God has chosen to fill our emptiness and calm our troubled lives.

At the heart of our relationship with God is the reality that at every turn it is God who is the initiator. "We love, because God first loved us." We are lifted up because God reached out to us. We know God, because God chose to disclose himself to us. He sent out the invitation to the party. He set the table with good things. He welcomed us—and therein, we have found joy and hope and peace.

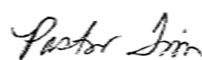
So the question becomes, what do we do in response? How do we express gratitude for all that has flowed into our lives? While we can never repay God for his goodness, how do we show him our appreciation? In days of old, the priests would offer burnt sacrifices in the temple with their prayers rising to God's nostrils in the smoke. Through the ages worshipers would dance and sing out their praises in a loud voice. The Psalms are chalked full with the words they declared. In devotion, the blessed would bow down in body and in spirit and in humility recount the deeds of the Lord one by one. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul and forget not all his benefits.....(Psalm 103)." We can raise our voices to the heavens. We can dance with the gyrations of David returning the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (II Samuel 6:1-23). But the roots of our praise are found in the joy that has filled our heart and comforted our souls.

While it sounds cliché, gratitude is an attitude and true thanksgiving manifests itself in thanks-living. Our English word "thank" comes from the German word "danke" which means to think, to be mindful of, to remember. It takes us back to what God has done for us and in us and calls us to respond appropriately in some way. The Spanish word for thanks is "gracias" (Italian word is "grazie") which reminds us of the grace we have received so freely from Christ Jesus. The French word, "merci" reminds us of the mercy shown us on the cross that spared us from the penalty of our sin. No matter how you say it, it brings us back to God, the source of all good things.

Paul consoles us, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (I Thessalonians 5:16) Its noble to acknowledge God as the blessings flow. The challenge comes when the heat of the sun bears down and the burdens of life weigh heavy. Its difficult to be grateful when we still feel in need, when the answers we long for are not forthcoming. Yet even then, especially then, we wait to see what God will do in the midst of our circumstance—how we will experience our redemption in an even fuller way. Faith enables us to say "Thank you, Lord" even before we fully recognize what he is doing—for in all things God is working for ultimate good. Do we trust it is coming? When it does, will we recognize it? When we see it, will we claim it as the gift of grace and mercy it is?

In all things may you be mindful of the gifts from God's hand. As you have received of his mercy, may you respond by being merciful to others who do not deserve it from you any more than you deserved it from God. And in the grace shown to you, may you be gracious to others that in you, they would see your response to the Lord's blessing.....

In Christ's Love,



## Scripture Texts for Worship

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

### Sunday, November 3

Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4

Luke 19:1-10

### Sunday, November 10

Haggai 1:15b-2:9

II Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17

### Sunday, November 17

Isaiah 65:17-25

II Thessalonians 3:6-13

### Sunday, November 24

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Colossians 1:11-20

### ADVENT BEGINS:

### Sunday, December 1

Isaiah 2:1-5

Matthew 24:36-44

## 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.

## Veteran's Day Concert

The Blairsville Community Concert Band will perform their Annual Veteran's Day Concert Monday, November 11th at 7:00 p.m. at the Blairsville High School auditorium. All are welcome.



## Worship Assistants

### November 3

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone

Flowers: Cindy Borbonus

Projector: Shakira McKinney

Audio: Jaison McKinney

### November 10

Liturgist: Lon Ferguson

Flowers: Annabel Machak

Projector: Alex Kirkland

Audio: Andrew Baker

### November 17

Liturgist: Rick Shoemaker

Flowers: Terry & Barb Brown

Projector: Kayla Moran

Audio: Olivia Eckenroad

### November 24—Communion

#### Thanksgiving Worship

Liturgist: Jean Heberling

Flowers: Pat & Janeen Swope

Projector: John Clark Bruner

Audio: Elizabeth Bruner

### Offering Counters

Irving & Beverly Lindsey



## 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.

## December Uplift

Articles to be published in the December edition of the UPLIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Friday, November 15th. Please call the church office with any questions or concerns, 724-459-7991.

## You're Invited to Be a Part...

Some years ago, the Session and members of the congregation spent a day "in retreat" – looking at the present state of the church and planning for the future. The Session has determined it's time to do that again and has scheduled two evenings in November (13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.) to assess what we've done since that retreat and what we should do. Rev. Kathy Nice will facilitate the work sessions – to help lead us in how we should carry out our mission and vision.

It's important that we have not just members of the Session involved, but other members of the church. Please consider attending one or both of these sessions; contact Rev. Monroe or Bonni Dunlap for more information or to let us know you'll be coming.

## Congratulations

Marilyn Neal is celebrating 15 years of music ministry in our church! When you see her, let her know how much you appreciate her talents!

## Election Day

Tuesday, November 5th - voting in Fellowship Hall all day

## Don't Forget...

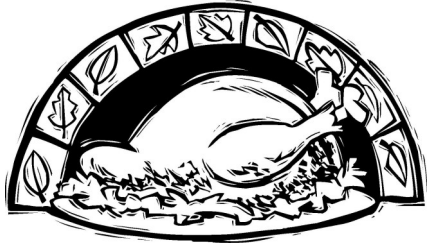


Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, November 3rd. Mark your calendars and remember to change your clocks!

## Wanted...

We are in need of some comfortable, gently used over stuffed chairs and a couch for the youth Sunday School room. If you are contemplating a change in decor, please keep us in mind and contact the church office.

Thanks!



# 12th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

Sunday, November 24, 2019

In Fellowship Hall  
immediately following worship  
Come join our church family for a great  
Thanksgiving meal and fellowship!

Please fill out & return this form in the offering plate –

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

How many are attending? \_\_\_\_\_

Maybe you would like to share your favorite:

Vegetable \_\_\_\_\_

Casserole \_\_\_\_\_

Salad \_\_\_\_\_

Dessert \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to help prepare on Saturday,  
November 23 @ 10:00 AM by peeling potatoes or  
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!**



## Handbell Choir

Our Handbell Choir rehearses Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. The choir and director would love to have more members become ringers. No experience is necessary; training is free. We are in need of two ringers to complete our choir. If you are interested and would like more information about our bell choir, please see Vicky Westley, director.

## Christmas Cantata

Christmas Cantata rehearsals are being held Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m. This year's cantata is entitled, "Everlasting Light—The Promise of Christmas" by Lloyd Larson, Mary McDonald, Jay Rouse and Larry Shackley. *The cantata will be presented in worship Sunday, December 22nd at 11:00 a.m.* A final rehearsal will be held Saturday, December 21st 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.

## Calling All Singers!!!

The Blairsville Monday Music Club is sponsoring  
Annual Community Christmas Concert Program  
Monday, December 9, 2019  
7:00 p.m.

Christian & Missionary Alliance Church  
135 E. Burrell Street, Blairsville

We are welcoming anyone that enjoys singing to participate in the Community Choir. We have 2 Christmas selections to perform and the *Hallelujah Chorus*. Practices will be as follows:

- Monday, Nov. 18 ..... 7:00-8:30 p.m.—C&MA
- Monday, Nov. 25 ..... 7:00-8:30 p.m.—C&MA
- Monday, Dec. 2 ..... 7:00-8:30 p.m.—C&MA
- Monday, Dec. 9 ..... 7:00 p.m.—Concert at C&MA



## **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.

## **Thanksgiving Baskets**

The 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 Marilyn Neal or Pastor Monroe by Monday, November 18th. Thank you for your generous help in the past, and we look forward to sharing another happy holiday with those in our community!



## **The 5th Annual Coats-For-Kids Drive**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Coats-For-Kids Drive is now underway. Again this year we are receiving monetary donations for the purchase of specific sized coats. Please

mark your donation clearly "Coats" and place it in the offering plate.

If you know of a family with children who may need a winter coat, please contact Janet Smith or the church office.

## **New Member Orientations**

Pastor Monroe will lead new member orientations for those who would like to unite with the congregation. The times together are scheduled for November 10 and November 17 at 9:45 a.m. in the parlor. Participants will unite with the church Sunday, November 24 during worship. If you are interested in becoming a member, please see Pastor Monroe or contact the church office at 724-459-7991.

## **New Elders and Deacons**

Officer training is scheduled for Sunday, December 15th immediately following worship. Oncoming elders and deacons are asked to please bring a bag lunch and plan to stay for a time of conversation.

The church office  
will be closed  
Thursday, November 28  
and  
Friday, November 29  
for the  
Thanksgiving  
Holiday

## **2020 Offering Envelopes**

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

## **Craft Show**

SS Simon & Jude Church will host a Craft Show Saturday, November 9th from 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m. Over 40 crafter tables, holiday items, baked goods, candy, wood crafts, basket raffle and SS Simon & Jude Bake Sale. Door prizes (donated by crafters) awarded every half hour. Kitchen will be serving soup and sandwiches. Admission is free.

*We will share the sacrament of Holy Communion Christ the King Sunday, November 24th during the 11:00 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.*

## Community Thanksgiving Worship

The Blairsville Area Ministerium will host a community Thanksgiving Service Sunday, November 24th at 7:00 p.m. We will gather at the Hebron Lutheran Church. We look forward to seeing you there.

## 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.

## Advent Devotionals

A variety of Advent Devotionals will be available to you on Sunday, December 1st. These guides are meant to help you as you move through the season to the coming of the Christ Child. You can pick one up at the back of the sanctuary.

## Reaching Out Can Change Your Life

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is Saturday, November 23rd from 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m. at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Indiana. You are not alone. The day will be filled with discussion, stories, activities and resources to help with healing after loss. The event features a screening of an AFSP-produced documentary made especially for International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day. This event is sponsored by the Suicide Task Force of Indiana County and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. To register, visit [www.stf32.com](http://www.stf32.com).

