



# UPLIFT Newsletter

The United  
Presbyterian Church  
of Blairsville, PA

SEPTEMBER 2019

No doubt, you have heard of the Great Wall of China. Some of the women from this congregation have walked on it. It was built long before Jesus trod this worldly soil. Spanning 13,171 miles (half the length of the Equator), it is 20-46 feet high and an average of 21 feet in width. American astronauts testify that it is visible to the naked eye from 200 miles above the earth.

The second most famous wall is Hadrian's Wall, built in 117 AD to mark the northern reaches of the Roman Empire. While it was once 80 miles in length, today those hiking the fields in northern England might easily trip over its rubble.

While walls once marked national boundaries for defense, immigration control and taxation purpose, such is not the case in Africa. Wanderers may pass from one country to another without even realizing it. In the midst of political turmoil, many find themselves constantly on the move to save their lives. Such is the case on the border between Sudan and Ethiopia. Severe flooding in recent years has destroyed homes and caused many to seek a place to live. Even more devastating than natural disaster is the persecution Christians from Sudan face. Because it is an Islamic nation, Sudan subscribes to Sharia Law. Those who are Christian face stoning, flogging and even crucifixion. Any Muslim who converts faces the death penalty for the crime of apostasy. This harsh reality has forced hundreds of thousands to seek refuge in Ethiopia, with the number growing every day. While the government has used its limited resources, the church has had to step up to meet the needs of their new neighbors, brothers and sisters in Christ.

For over 100 years, the Presbyterian Church has engaged in mission work throughout Ethiopia. Michael and Rachael Weller have served the southwestern region for decades, ministering to 200,000 Neur people. With the recent influx, the spiritual needs are more than can be handled by the Wellers. By all rights, I should go and you should go to assist. But by the grace of the Holy Spirit there are Ethiopian natives who are being called to share the love and grace of Christ in that region. We have a seminary in that part of the country, but it is in need of a library to resource the training of more pastors. That is where we can make a difference so that those pastors are well equipped to serve the people.

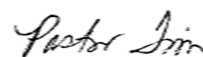
A few years ago, our congregation sponsored Steve and Brenda Stelle as they taught in the seminary. Last year they had to return to the US for family health concerns. We in turn shared support with Kay Day who teaches in our seminary in Rwanda. Several months ago, Les and Cindy Morgan, missionaries in Bangladesh retired. The Mission Committee and Session looked for a new international ministry to support. Assisting with the construction of the seminary library in Gambella and providing the needed resources is in line with our historical commitment to mission.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church of Mt Airy, Maryland has already gathered thousands of books. They will be shipped to Ethiopia by the Theological Book Network, a nonprofit ministry based in Grand Rapids that stocks seminary shelves throughout Africa and Asia. The library has already been designed and can be constructed for a cost of \$35,000. The work will be done by local Ethiopian contractors, but will be supervised by Ron and Adam Pollock (son and grandson of a former missionary who served there). The building will be simple, 23 x 70 feet made of cement block, with a veranda all around to provide extra study areas. Proper ventilation will extend the life of the books in a very humid climate. Back up power sources will be installed as electricity is erratic.

Because the Morgan's have returned to the US and retired from their mission service in Bangladesh, we will begin sending that mission support to the Library Project in Gambella, Ethiopia. It will be about \$100 per month. The mission money we invest goes a long way in the future of ministry.

Bobbi and I have already made a Spirit led investment in this project. I have been in conversation with Ed Pollock, coordinator and designer of the building and frequent traveler to the site in Ethiopia. I have been in consultation with the Theological Book Network about how I can have portions of my personal library shipped there. My good friends, Steve and Brenda Stelle, former missionaries at the school stand by the integrity and need. I am grateful for and proud of this congregation's commitment to see that the message of the gospel is taken to all lands and pastors are properly equipped to do the Lord's work. Should any of you be interested in supporting the construction beyond our congregational outreach, I would be glad to share more information.....

In Christ's Love,



**Regular Worship  
Schedule Begins  
Sunday, September 8th**

**9:45 am**

Sunday School Activities

Light Breakfast

**11:00 am**

Worship &  
Communion

Chancel Choir

Returns to Worship

### 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.

### Communion

We will share the sacrament of holy communion Sunday, September 8th 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.

### Scripture Texts for Worship

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

**Sunday, September 1**

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

Luke 14:1, 7-14

**Sunday, September 8**

Luke 14:25-33

Jeremiah 18:1-11

**Sunday, September 15**

I Timothy 1:12-17

Luke 15:1-10

**Sunday, September 22**

I Timothy 2:1-7

Jeremiah 8:18-9:1

**Sunday, September 29**

I Timothy 6:6-19

Luke 16:19-31

**Sunday, October 6**

II Timothy 1:1-14

Luke 17:5-10

### 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.



### Worship Assistants

*SUMMER SCHEDULE ENDS*

**September 1—10:00**

Liturgist: Mary Anzelone

Flowers: Mary Anzelone

Projector: John Clark Bruner

Audio: Elizabeth Bruner

*REGULAR SCHEDULE BEGINS*

**September 8—Communion-11:00**

Liturgist: Rick Shoemaker

Flowers: Bob & Vicky Doty

Projector: Shakira McKinney

Audio: Jaison McKinney

**September 15**

Liturgist: Lon Ferguson

Flowers: Soni Clapper

Projector: Alex Kirkland

Audio: Andrew Baker

**September 22**

Liturgist: Jean Heberling

Flowers: Tom & Janet Smith

Projector: Kayla Moran

Audio: Olivia Eckenroad

**September 29**

Liturgist: Dennis Gould

Flowers: Ed & Becky Bence

Projector: John Clark Bruner

Audio: Elizabeth Bruner

### Offering Counters

Pat & Janeen Swope

### Congregational Meeting

A Congregational Meeting will be held immediately following worship **Sunday, September 22nd** to accept the report of the Nominating Committee and the 2020 Pastoral Terms of Call.

### 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.

## **Mission Moment**

*Update from Kay Day, Mission Co-Worker in Rwanda*

Dear Friends and Family,

This is not the usual prayer letter that I send. I did something radical (for me) in July and took a 10-day vacation. I went to Malawi to visit friends and adopted family. Now I did work diligently in Rwanda to make this happen (teaching courses on two campuses, preaching at three churches and two weddings and conducting 15 English tutorial sessions for staff) so the month was productively spent.

The highlight of the month, though, was enjoying the incredible beauty of God's creation at Kutchire Lodge in Liwonde National Park. My friends Sam and Lonnie Ncozana, who own and operate the safari camp, have created a comfortable, welcoming atmosphere in the middle of nature. Kutchire means jungle in Chichewa, the local language. They have built their camp in the middle of the jungle, disrupting as little of the landscape as possible, while giving their visitors safety and fun. They provide comfortable chalets for couples or families and "treehouses" for those who want to see nature from the top down and dorm rooms for groups. There is no guarantee that animals will wander through the camp, but it is likely. Two of the nights I was there, elephants made their presence known, and one morning a water buck causally strolled past the breakfast table. And the tables are moved around the grounds to suit the needs of the guests. The Sunday morning I was there, my friends Silas and Margaret Ncozana (parents of Sam's and well known to many in the Malawi Partnership) and I had breakfast outside their chalet - great room service before leaving for church. The meals are generous and delicious. They have three full-time chefs who work magic. I am not a fan of vegetables, but one evening, I wanted to lick the vegetable serving dish. The gentle spices made them perfect. Each evening there is a campfire and conversation with the other guests, a regular United Nations meeting, with folks from US, UK, Germany, Switzerland, and of course, Malawi, just in the time I was there.

But the purpose of a safari camp is the wildlife. Between morning game drives and afternoon boat trips on the Shire River, we managed to see 15 different animals and 19 species of birds. We did have a breath-takingly close encounter with an elephant who faced the vehicle and let us know he was bigger. Elephants do not charge unless they feel threatened. We made certain he was not. That was the talk of the campfire. I was able to share this experience with both my sons and two of my grandchildren. It was a great way to celebrate turning 70 in August and I am grateful for the opportunity.

Now I am back to work. This is a time for final exams and students writing dissertations, many of which I edit for English, so I have come back to a full schedule. Thank you for your support and for making all that I do possible. You bless me greatly in your partnership with me. I hope you are enjoying your summer, too.

Yours in Christ,  
Kay Day

## **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.

## **October Newsletter**

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

## Kick up your heels and get ready...for fall learning!



Join us for a scrumptious light breakfast  
and an enjoyable morning  
getting to know your church family  
and finding out about...

- The Present Word
- Homebuilders
- Feasting on the Word
- Wednesday Bible Study

Special rewards for those who get a “kick”  
out of learning  
about God!

**Join us for the 2019 “Kick-Off”  
Sunday School Breakfast  
@ 9:45 AM September 8  
in Fellowship Hall**



### Sunday School Classes for 2019-2020

The count down is on! Sunday, September 15th 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 Joan Moran, Bobbi Monroe or contact the church office. We would be glad to hear from you.

- Grades K, 1 & 2..... Jamie McKinney, teacher
- Grades 3 & 4..... Cindy & Sheila Borbonus, teachers
- Grades 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

### Children’s Ministry

Our policy for those working with children in the church requires that copies of the Child Abuse History Clearance and the PA State Police Criminal Record Check for Volunteers be on file in the church office. These documents are kept in a secure area. Clearances are free for volunteers every 5 years. For more information on clearances or to obtain your clearances, please visit [www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov](http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov). If you have any questions, please see Joan Moran or contact the church office.

### BIG and Little Churches

The largest 10 percent of congregations in the United States contain half of all those who attend worship; that is, half of worshipers go to the top 10 percent of congregations by attendance. The other half attend the remaining 90 percent of congregations. The average congregation in the United States has 70 regular participants, including adults and children, and an average budget of \$85,000. Bigger isn’t necessarily better, observers say. Most congregations are more like families than businesses. Their members have shared histories and often shared ethnic ties and are frequently deeply embedded in local communities (RNS).

## Did You Know...

On July 18, 2019, The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada announced the result of "What is the greatest hymn of all time?" *Holy, Holy, Holy* was the winner receiving more than 800 of the 1,200 votes. Amazing Grace came in second. Dr. Christopher Phillips of Lafayette College in Easton, PA comments, "The words and music have a stately, majestic quality, something many worshippers want to associate with the traditional hymn repertoire. The hymn is an elegant way of affirming the basic belief in the Trinity that unites most Christian denominations regardless of other doctrinal differences."

## The Peace Window

Some of you may remember a young man who grew up in our church by the name of Mark Loucks. Mark is now a filmmaker specializing in short-form documentaries. *The Peace Window* is his latest endeavor. The 2nd Presbyterian Church of Chicago houses numerous stained glass windows from the Arts and Crafts movement of 1880-1920. This short documentary follows Tom Venturella as he works to restore one of those works of art; the Tiffany "Peace" Window. To take a look at this film's trailer, go to <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/the-peace-window-a-short-documentary-film/x/2107944#/>

A bit more funding is need to finish this project and get it out to the world.

## Our Nominating Committee

The work of the Nominating Committee is some of the most important in the life of the church. Those serving have the responsibility to bring before the congregation the names of those who will potentially serve as elders and deacons. Our Nominating Committee has begun. Please be in prayer for them as they discern God's will for our church's leadership. Also be in prayer for those individuals who will be asked to serve.

The Nominating Committee includes:

Elaine Jellison-chair, Kim McKinney-elder, Jen Borbonus-deacon, Gene Artman, Terry Brown, Willa Shoemaker, Elizabeth Bruner and Pastor Monroe. Tammy Ritchie and Janeen Swope are the alternates.

**The Worship Committee** is looking for youth or adults interested in operating the sound or projector during worship. The equipment is located in the balcony. Audio and projection techs are scheduled on a rotating basis. Those interested would be scheduled approximately once a month. If you would like more information, please see Elaine Jellison or contact the church office.

## Report of the Stated Clerk Kiskiminetas Presbytery

### Annual Statistical Report for the Year 2017

#### MEMBERSHIP

Active Members	6,636
35 Non-Caucasian:	4 Asian
	9 African-American
	9 Hispanic
	13 Other
Church School Enrollment	1,595
Baptism of Children	53
Baptism of Adults	9

#### FINANCES

Total Receipts	\$8,386,974
Total Expenditures	<u>\$7,495,949</u>
Difference	\$ 891,025

## Bell Choir News

Bell Choir rehearsals will begin Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. We have a new practice room! We will now gather in the old Calvin Room.

Two ringers are needed to complete our choir. If you are interested, please contact Vicky Westley. Experience in ringing is not necessary.

## Chancel Choir News

Chancel Choir rehearsals will begin Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. New and familiar voices are always welcomed! Please see Cindy Borbonus for more information.

## Elder Abuse

In Pennsylvania, elder abuse is defined as abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment. The signs of elder abuse may not be easy to read. If someone you know needs help, call Aging Services, Inc. at 724-349-6190 24 hours a day. Reporter's identities are never disclosed.

## Budget Planning Begins

The Finance Committee will soon begin to review information for the 2020 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.

## 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!

## Blood Drive

The American Red Cross will hold a Blood Drive at the Blairsville Community Center Gym Tuesday, September 17th from 2:00—6:30 p.m. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 1-800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: bcbcc.

## Compassion News

Dear United Presbyterian Sunday School,

I student number Rw 953 Kaziba, and your child Hagenimana Vestine, greets you before I write to you in the name of Jesus Christ. Glory be to God that we are still alive up to now. You accepted to be my parent. Many people are not existing on the earth but because we are living and we did not give anything to God for our survival. It is because of his grace. My family, friends and relatives greet you. We would like to see you face to face. Is it okay with you? I love you so much.

Thank you,  
Your child Vestine Hagenimana



## The 5th Annual Coats-For-Kids

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 size 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.