



UPLIFT Newsletter

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

APRIL 2020

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.” What the Dickens is going on? it’s a Tale of Two Cities, it’s a tale of the two kingdoms in which we live, trembling about what is, hoping about what will be.

Throughout the Season of Lent we have examined our lives and confronted that within us which is not clean. Just as one microscopic virus has the power to bring the world to a halt, so the slightest presence of sin has the power to infect our souls—to alienate us from God, and to distance our relationships with each other. In recent days we have seen the best and the worst of human behavior. There are those who have barricaded themselves in to protect themselves and their own, and there are those who have ventured boldly into the midst of the needs of others. There are those who have cried in despair about the ravage of pandemic, and there are those who have moved in faith with the vision of resurrection.

Perspective is the secret to a balanced life. We are realistic about the way things are in the world, yet we know that this world is not an end unto itself. We hear the voices of panic and woe, yet as a people of faith we know that God has the final word. We sense the pangs of death and decay yet we find assurance and hope in the knowledge that God has the power to raise up that which is dead and recreate that which has decayed. “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—will he not give us all things through him? (Romans 8:31-32)

We are called to live responsibly in this world, taking care of our health, avoiding dangerous behaviors, looking out for the wellbeing of our neighbors. We do the best we can with what we have, trusting God with that which is beyond our control. From the beginning we have been told that this world is not our permanent dwelling place. Our true home is in the arms of the everlasting God. No matter what our present circumstance, knowing that we have God, or should I say, knowing that God has us, is enough.

This world has seen much, much worse than the events of recent weeks. I don’t mean to discount what you’ve been experiencing, but I want you to hold onto the perspective our faith affords us. Paul writes, “Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.” (II Corinthians 1:9).....“We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.” (II Corinthians 4:8-10)

May God refresh your hearts and minds in the power of resurrection so that your faith would be strengthened and encouraged.....

In Christ’s love,

Pastor Jim

Scripture Texts for Worship

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

Sunday, April 5—Palm Sunday

Philippians 2:5-11
Matthew 21:1-11

Maundy Thursday April 9

I Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Easter Day, April 12

Colossians 3:1-4
John 20:1-18
Matthew 28:1-10

Sunday, April 19

Acts 2:14A, 22-32
I Peter 1:3-9

Sunday, April 26

I Peter 1:17-23
Luke 24:13-35

Sunday, May 3

I Peter 2:19-25
John 10:1-10



May Newsletter

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

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. Prayer requests are kept in confidence unless permission is given to share.

We're Here...

We realize that life has been disrupted by the effects of the pandemic. The Session wants to do its best in seeing that your basic needs are met. If you would like some help with daily activities—picking up something from the store or doing something around the house, please call the church office and let us know. If there is a financial burden resulting from the current situation, we have limited resources that may get you through. (Sadly, we cannot replace what you may have lost in your stock portfolio during the first quarter.) Seriously, let the pastor know if there is anything we can do to lighten your load.

Online Worship

Though we cannot come together in person for worship, we are offering an opportunity to worship together in spirit. Each Sunday at around 11:00 a.m. worship is broadcast via Youtube.

You can access our Youtube channel by going to our website, www.r-church.com and clicking on the purple button labeled Sunday Worship.

You can also find us on our facebook page, **The United Presbyterian Church of Blairsville**. The link will be available and labeled for you to click on.

By accessing us either way, you will be redirected to Youtube and can click on the video to begin worship. The bulletin is available under the video. You can scroll along with the words for the Call to Worship, Prayer of Confession, Hymns and Affirmation of Faith.

A BIG thank you to Pastor Monroe and Marilyn Neal for preparing the service; to Jonathan and Doug Clayton for their technical talents; to Mary Hileman for the palms and Easter flowers, and to Sandy Duffey and Jill Wolford for their support roles.

If you have any questions, please call the church office 724-459-7991. We are maintaining office hours of Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Tithes and Offerings

"We thank you for your support of the work of this congregation. Without your generosity we could not faithfully carry out our call. At every turn, the Session seeks to model good stewardship in the use of your gifts."

This was the opening words of a letter you received early this year. It could not be truer today as we face the closed doors of our church building. Ministry is still occurring at the church it just looks different. Online worship in your home has replaced sitting in the pews of the sanctuary. As before, the office is occupied 5 days a week to answer phone calls and requests for help. Like you, we are adjusting to this new temporary normal and like you our current expenses continue. Your gifts are important to our unceasing ministry at this time.

We thank you for prayerfully supporting our ministry. We thank the many who have continued to send their offerings to maintain the operation and work of the church. Please consider supporting the church. Tithes and offerings can be sent to:

UPC
137 N. Walnut Street
Blairsville, PA 15717

Christian School



Mission Moment—*A girl and a Bible*

“Did you write this?”

I glanced at the page. Squarish letters in black ink with variable-width strokes. Just the kind I used to make with a chisel-end pen. Just the kind I inscribed on numerous baptismal certificates and wedding records over the years. Definitely my work.

This inscription was in a Bible, and the Bible belonged to the director of Christian education at the church we are attending in retirement. Holding it up during the service, she showed it to the children who were about to receive Bibles of their own. She told them it had been given to her when she was 9 years old. She had carried it with her on her journey of life so far, and she expected she always would.

After reading a verse about the inspiration and usefulness of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16), she called the children up to receive their Bibles. They came, one by one, and they returned to the front pew clutching their treasures. Then she prayed them back to their families.

During the years of my pastoring, the congregations I served also presented children with Bibles. What ever became of those Bibles? We seldom heard.

But here was one of those Bibles from over 20 years ago, in the hand of the girl who had received it, a girl all grown up now with children of her own, heading up Christian education for a whole congregation, and now handing out Bibles herself to a new crop of kids.

One of the blessings I am finding in retirement is the chance to see, here and there, fruit from the work of ministry which I pursued for 40 years. Something someone still remembers from a sermon I have forgotten. People still using gifts I tried to nurture. My former congregation moving into a new chapter with a new installed pastor.

I’m getting a few glimpses of the positive effects of my pastoring — not enough to get a big head, but maybe enough to keep the doubts at bay. Did it matter that I was there? Did we accomplish anything of lasting value?

Well, there was a little girl who received a Bible from our church. She took that Bible with her on her life journey, and today, all grown up, she presented Bibles in another congregation to another group of children.

She won’t know all the influence those Bibles will have. She won’t see how the future will unfold for all those children. But maybe one day, 20 years from now, one of those children will hold up one of those Bibles and speak of the journey they have made together. And perhaps that child, now grown, will be passing out Bibles to another pew full of children. I suspect it will be an occasion for a smile and a tear. I know it was for me.

Ken Rummer, Retired PC(USA) Pastor, writing for the Presbyterians Today blog

All Activities Cancelled

As you may already be aware, all activities and meetings are cancelled until the bans on gathering together are lifted by the government. When activities resume, we will notify you.

BE UPLIFTED