



UPLIFT Newsletter

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

AUGUST 2020

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6) To many in the world, these words are nice, but cliché—poetic, but empty. They’re old words that seem irrelevant as we face the challenges of today. And if they were the words of an old man who lived long ago, far away such may well be the case. But the word Paul shares is not of his own creation, it is a word from God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, spoken to the generations of every age and place and circumstance. And as the Word of God it has power and promise and peace in facing the challenges before us.

The covenant promise at the heart of faith is that “the Lord will be our God, and we will be his people.” Therein we find assurance that no matter what happens, God will be present to us and with us. “I will not leave you desolate, I will not forsake you,” he promises. Peace comes in the knowledge that God’s Spirit abides in our hearts and he is as close as our every thought, our every breath. But so too, God’s presence is experienced by the fellowship we share with our brothers and sisters in the faith. As I see what God is doing in your life, I can recognize a little more clearly what God is doing in my own. Being created in the image of God we are wired to be in community with God and with each other. 400 years ago, the poet John Donne penned, “No man is an island entire of itself.” Without God we are nothing, without each other we are less than God intended us to be. That is why we care for each other and pray for each other. Just as a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, so we are only as strong as our neighbor’s weakness. The Christian faith is one of mutual encouragement where we pray for each other’s concerns, share our resources to meet each other’s needs, pick each other up when one falls, cheer one another on in the face of discouragement.

Our basic human instinct is self preservation where survival of the fittest is the law of the jungle. And, if we were wild animals such would be our nature. But being found in Christ we are no longer consumed by the ways of the flesh. Rather we have been set free to live in the ways of the Spirit. In that freedom, we are released to work for the well being of others—to see beyond ourselves to the tears and fears of those around us.

I have been touched by the acts of kindness I have witnessed in these recent months. I have seen the love of Christ expressed in beautiful ways. I have been carried to new places and encouraged by renewed strength. I trust it has been so with you. Be sensitive to the needs of those around you. Let the words of your prayers be hands of service and arms of comfort that envelope others as God has enveloped you.....

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 2

Romans 9:1-5

Matthew 14:13-21

Sunday, August 9

Romans 10:5-15

Matthew 14:22-33

Sunday, August 16

Romans 11:1-2, 29-32

Matthew 15:(10-20) 21-28

Sunday, August 23

Romans 12:1-8

Matthew 16:13-20

Sunday, August 30

Exodus 3:1-15

Matthew 16:21-28

Sunday, September 6

Romans 13:8-14

Matthew 18:15-20

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 Sunday, August 16th. Please call the office with any questions or concerns.

Summer Music

In-house services have resumed. We will host guest musicians during worship. If you or someone you know would like to share a musical talent during worship, please see Cindy Borbonus or contact the church office.

As We Gather

Because of the nature of this pandemic we understand the responsible caution being taken in returning to in person worship services. The best time for you to return is when you feel healthy and safe in social situations. It is impossible to guarantee safety, but be assured we are doing everything in our power. If you are in the building and notice anything that brings you concern, please let the pastor or church office know so the issue can be addressed.

Stewardship Works

Your faithful acts of stewardship have been appreciated, especially during these recent months. Our expenses continue whether the sanctuary is filled or empty. Because of your generosity we have been able to retain staff, meet monthly bills and assist those in need.

Thank You

We thank those who have been working so hard to prepare the church building for our return. Please know that we are making every effort to provide a safe environment. Your patience and cooperation in this process is appreciated.

Pastoral Care

Because of health restrictions, visitors (even pastors) have not been permitted to enter hospitals and other care facilities. Clergy have also been advised not to enter personal residences as not to spread any disease unknowingly. If you have any pastoral needs, please contact the minister so some creative solution can be found.

A Few Opportunities as we Move Forward

Jonathan and Doug Clayton have been instrumental in putting together the technology needed to share our worship services online. New equipment has been purchased to upgrade what we currently have and supplement to meet standards. They estimate that three people will be needed each Sunday morning to livestream the service. At some point this Fall, Jonathan will need to return to college, and work schedules will restrict some peoples' availability. For this reason we need people to be trained to work the equipment. There are projection needs, sound needs and computer needs. We have a new camera, new sound board and new computer. Please let the church office know of your interest in being a part of this new venture, by the first week of August so that the training can be coordinated.

Social Security Administration

Social Security services are still available despite the pandemic. Although local offices are not open and walk-in visits are not happening at this time, a local representative is available to take your call at the Indiana office Monday thru Friday from 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m. at 877-405-7679 or 1-800-325-0778. They may be able to schedule an appointment if help is not available by phone. You may also visit SSA.gov.

Mission Moment

Dear friends and family,

Greetings from Rwanda. We are entering our fifth month of the COVID-19 pandemic and, in many ways, life has assumed a new normal, a change to everything, that many predicted would happen, but in some ways, many elements of our former lives are still functioning. There is a reminder of that former life I hear and see every day. Before the mass closure of life in March, PIASS (the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences) had begun constructing a new classroom building to house the new faculties of Architecture and of Green Technologies. This construction is just across the dirt road from my house. With the lockdown, all activity stopped but one of the first signs that some restrictions had been lifted in May was the resumption of construction of the building. Each day the sound of construction has been my constant companion since early May. The cutting of rebar steel, the cranking of a cement mixer, the sawing and pounding of lumber, the chatter of the workers, especially when they take a lunch break in the shade of the bougainvillea bush which hangs over my wall, accompanies me from 7:00 in the morning until 6:00 in the evening. These sounds encourage me that life is returning to normal as we build for the future. There is the great anticipation of the project and all it will mean for the future growth of PIASS. It has become a symbol of the future. When we still can't gather in groups of more than 50, when classes are all conducted online, when social distancing and mask wearing are mandatory, I hold out hope for the future with every nail pounded and every pillar of concrete erected. I have watched the progress with fascination as the building progresses daily and my spirit has been encouraged. It reminds me of God's words for his people through the prophet in Jeremiah 29:11. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." This is the hope in which we are living here at PIASS and that I hope you are living in your situations of life.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your faithful support of me and of the ministry here during this pandemic. I know this is a sacrifice for many of you and I don't take your support for granted. I could not be here without your prayers and your financial contributions. Thank you.

Blessings in Christ,
Kay Day



Food for Family Thought

1. If you had to complete the following sentence for each person in the room with you right now, how would you finish it?

You are really special to me because _____

-When you speak about yourself or another family member, keep this in mind—we were each created with love by a loving God. Practice praying Psalm 139: "You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb. I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works!"

2. If someone gave you \$1,000 in cash—in the form of ten \$100 bills—and told you that you had to give it all away within twenty-four hours, to whom would you give the money?

-Advertising fills our children's imaginations with many things they can acquire and possess. Counter that by showing your child the joy of being a creative giver. For example, invite your child to donate toys and clothes to those in need or to assist a neighbor who could use a helping hand.

3. If you could create the most beautiful stained-glass window in the world, what design or images would the window contain?

-We parents owe our children two seemingly paradoxical gifts: roots and wings. If, early on, we help our children sink their roots deeply into faith in a loving God, it's much more likely that in adulthood they will find their wings and truly soar.