



UPLIFT Newsletter

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

JUNE & JULY 2021

If someone came up to you and asked, "Tell me about yourself, who are you?", how would you answer? There are many ways to approach self description. It could be in terms of the work you do, the past-times you enjoy, the relationships you maintain. It could be your cultural heritage, your politics, your emotional state of mind. Each of us are the culmination of dozens, if not hundreds, of factors. But if you were asked to choose which one best defines your self-identity, which would it be?

As people of faith, we well may respond, "I am a child of God." The things of this world may describe our life style, but the essence of our lives is found in our spiritual DNA. Scripture is clear that before anything of this world existed, God knew that each of us would be. In Psalm 139, David declares, "It was you who formed my inward parts, you knit me together in my mother's womb...your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed." As different as the variety of people who have trod this soil, we all have one thing in common—we were created by the same God. No matter when we were born, where we were raised, what our social standing, we have in common the reality that we are creatures, made in the image of our Creator.

Genesis 126, "Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness:'" Does that imply that each of us are little gods? No, but what it does tell us is that we have a special relationship with God, a capacity to know God, to feel God, to enjoy God, to reflect the nature of our Creator in all we do. The Psalmist asks, "What are humans that thou art mindful of him, and mortals that thou doest care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor." (Psalm 8). Of all the creatures that God made, we are special. Into us was breathed the breath of life. To us was given the ability to reason and rationalize. To us was given a soul whereby we can sense the presence of God and commune with him as he guides us. To us has been given a moral capacity to know right from wrong and to act accordingly. To us was given the power to have dominion over the rest of the natural world. But with each of these gifts comes a responsibility to use them reasonably, not for ourselves but for God's glory and praise.

Having been created in the image of God leads some to become arrogant in their position, elitist in their approach to life. But the reality is that we are all creatures, and not one of us is more precious in the sight of God than another. It was the same breath of God that gave life to Adam that gave life to a peasant 3,000 years ago, that gave life to a king 1,000 years ago, that gave life to you. While we were given dominion over creation, we are not given dominion over each other. God loves and wants those who may never speak his name as much as he loves and wants us. The promises he has extended to us are also offered to those we want no part of. God does not have favorites. To be sure he is pleased with those who love and serve and honor and praise him, but he is also concerned for those who do not. In his compassion he reaches out to them and calls them to respond and to return to him with all their heart that the relationship would be restored. And as those who know we have been created in his likeness, we too work for that restoration. Remember, the same Jesus who died for your sins also died for the sins of those you think unworthy. The grace with which God set you free is the same grace God calls you to work for the freedom and peace of others.

It's all about relationships, God reaching out to us and us responding by reaching out to him and to others (whoever they may be). God's love transcends those worldly things that are used to define us. Our identity is firmly rooted in the one who called us out to be his own. Be to others as God in Christ has been to you, and welcome the freshness of his Spirit as he strengthens your hands, guides your feet and opens your heart.....

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Jim

Scripture Texts for Worship

The scripture texts for June and July are given for your study in preparation for Worship.

Sunday, June 6

Genesis 3:8-15
II Corinthians 4:13-5:1

Sunday, June 13

Ezekiel 17:22-24
Mark 4:26-34

Sunday, June 20

Job 38:1-11
Mark 4:35-41

Sunday, June 27

II Corinthians 8:7-15
Mark 5:21-43

Sunday, July 4

II Corinthians 12:2-10
Mark 6:1-13

Sunday, July 11

Amos 7:7-15
Ephesians 1:3-14

Sunday, July 18

Jeremiah 23:1-6
Ephesians 2:11-22

Sunday, July 25

Ephesians 3:14-21
John 6:1-21

Sunday, August 1

Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15
John 6:24-35



OUR SUMMER SCHEDULE

Begins Sunday, June 6th. The worship hour will begin at 10:00 a.m. throughout the summer months. Our choirs and Sunday School will be in recess. Following Labor Day, our Regular Schedule will resume. Please mark your calendars.

Worship Assistants

June 6

Flowers: Joe & Elaine Jellison
Streaming: Olivia Eckenroad
Proj/Audio: Kristi Eckenroad & Dennis Gould
Ushers: Elaine Jellison & Alan Lowman

June 13

Flowers: Gary & Barri Stuchal
Streaming: Chase Stuchal
Proj/Audio: Austin Baker
Ushers: Pat & Janeen Swope

June 20

Flowers: Jim & Chris Antis
Streaming: Mark Borbonus
Proj/Audio: Eli & Brylea Borbonus
Ushers: Pat & Janeen Swope

June 27

Flowers: Mary Gorslene
Streaming: John Bruner
Proj/Audio: Elizabeth & Abigail Bruner
Ushers: Pat & Janeen Swope

Offering Counters

Pat & Janeen Swope

Worship Assistants

July 4

Flowers: Karen Ruda
Streaming: Olivia Eckenroad
Proj/Audio: Kristi Eckenroad & Dennis Gould
Ushers: Pat & Janeen Swope

July 11

Flowers: Pat & Janeen Swope
Streaming: Chase Stuchal
Proj/Audio: Austin Baker & Cole Stuchal
Ushers: Pat & Janeen Swope

July 18

Flowers: Ron & Kim McKinney
Streaming: Mark Borbonus
Proj/Audio: Eli & Brylea Borbonus
Ushers: Pat & Janeen Swope

July 25

Streaming: John Bruner
Proj/Audio: Elizabeth & Abigail Bruner
Ushers: Pat & Janeen Swope

Offering Counters

Elaine Jellison & Becky Bence

COVID-19 Worship Update

Based on the May 13, 2021 report from the CDC entitled, "Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People", the Session would like you to know:

- ◆ While we welcome the wearing of facial masks for those who prefer them, we no longer require that they be worn.
- ◆ Ribbons will be removed from the pews to increase seating options with the exception of the front right quarter of the sanctuary which will remain roped to maintain physical distancing for those who choose to.
- ◆ Offering plates will remain at the end of the center aisle.
- ◆ The Passing of the Peace will be exchanged verbally without physical contact.
- ◆ The Lord's Supper will be shared by coming forward, while those who prefer to remain seated will be served in the pew.
- ◆ Following worship, dismissal will not be pew by pew. Rather you are free to leave at your leisure.

It is our desire that all are able to worship in an environment where they feel safe and comfortable.

The Session of
The United Presbyterian Church of Blairsville
05/18/2021

Please Welcome Our Newest Members

Six people united with our church family on Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd. They were asked to share a little more information about themselves. So let us introduce to you:

Christine (Chris) Antis lives in Indiana with her husband, Jim. They have a son, Matthew and a daughter, Kate. They also have five grandchildren. Chris grew up in the Roman Catholic Church, then attended a Lutheran Church for a few years. At age 23 she moved to the Episcopal/Anglican Church. She enjoys gardening, reading, cooking, bowling, card club, coffee clache, dinner club and most of all, time with family and friends. Chris worked many years for Dr. Don Hogan, DMD and Dr. Deborah Edwards, DMD. She also volunteers with Meals on Wheels and IRMC. Chris sees herself as an active participant in the ministries of the church.

James (Jim) Antis is also from Indiana and is married to Chris. His faith background is in the Lutheran, Episcopal and Anglican churches. Jim enjoys British car restoration, motorcycles, reading, yardwork, wood carving and, of course, grandchildren and family. Jim worked as an educator including teaching, principal, superintendent, Prof. Assoc. Exec. Director and as a hospital courier. Jim also looks forward to being an active part of the ministries of the church.

Katherine (Kathy) Mooney lives in Blairsville and has one daughter and four grandchildren. She grew up in the Methodist Church in Maryland. Kathy enjoys crocheting, walking, reading and spending time with her grandchildren. She worked in the restaurant business in many capacities. Kathy is interested in becoming a member of our Chancel Choir and becoming involved in activities as they pick up after the pandemic.

Greg and Marlene Shirley are married and live in Saltsburg. They have one son, one daughter and one grandchild. Their faith background is in the Baptist Church and then at Trinity Presbyterian Church for the last 30+ years. They enjoy any activities with their grandson, Dante. Greg is the owner of Shirley Heating & Air Conditioning. They are glad to be welcomed into the church family and would like to help out in any way they can.

Mel Woodring lives in Blairsville, was married to Barbara (deceased) and has three sons, Jeff, Dan and Chris (deceased). He grew up and was baptized in the Methodist Church. For fun and relaxation, Mel enjoys golfing, watching all sports, yard work, spending time with family and friends, gardening, and hunting and fishing. He was the proprietor of Mel's Barber Shop, a Business Agent for local 459 Penelec, Blairsville Community Director, and Maintenance Tech for WyoTech. Mel seeks to continue growing in his faith with help from the church and Pastor Tim. He sees himself as an active participant in the ministries of the church and is willing to assist in any way he can to help the church grow and prosper.

Communion Servers

The Worship Committee would like to assemble a list of elders and deacons who are comfortable serving communion. If you would be willing to volunteer to serve the sacrament, please contact Gene Artman.

Summer Special Music

We are scheduling special music for summer worship services. If you sing, play an instrument, sign or have another musical gift, consider sharing that gift with us in worship. Please contact Cindy Borbonus or the church office, 724-459-7991, for more information.

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, 724-459-7991.

Worship in PA Parks & Campgrounds

Chaplains are a friendly presence in the parks and campgrounds, and a witness to the love of God. They welcome you and care about you; feel free to ask for them from any of the park or campground employees. For more information or to see which parks or campgrounds are served by a chaplain, visit www.pachurches.org/ministry/campground-ministry.



How Well Do You Know Your Bible? BIBLE TRIVIA

1. To whom did David say, "I have sinned against the Lord"?
2. Who does the Bible describe as, "In all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance"?
3. How many of David's mighty men broke through the Philistine line to get David a drink from the Well of Bethlehem?

(HINT: All of these answers can be found in the book of II Samuel.)

Answers will be shared in the June 13 bulletin and next newsletter

Compassion's Work in Rwanda and COVID-19

An in-depth look at the coronavirus pandemic in Rwanda

Last Updated: 05/14/2021

Rwanda is reporting 98 new cases of COVID-19 per day as of May 2, down from 170 recorded on April 6. So far, enough COVID-19 vaccines have been administered to vaccinate around 1.4% of its population of 12.7 million people. The government continues to mandate precautionary health measures, including frequent hand-washing and social distancing. Face masks must be worn not only in public but also in multifamily compounds. Schools and universities have reopened. The government announced a plan to more than triple its Economic Recovery Fund to support businesses that have been impacted by the pandemic.

Child development centers in Rwanda are open only for small group meetings of children and youths. Staff are careful to take COVID-19 prevention measures and follow local guidelines. **They have been able to deliver over 84,500 food packs and almost 534,000 hygiene kits to children and families.** Additionally, they have helped over 55,000 individuals obtain medical support.

Food for Family Thought—

Question: If you could personally see the biggest, the tallest, or the longest of anything in the world, what would you want to see most of all?

Thought: Help your child figure out what he or she is meant to do in life by offering these 3 criteria for a good vocation: In what work will you be *happy*? In what work will you be *holy*? In what work will you be *effective*? Happy, holy, and effective—a great way to spend a life.