



# UPLIFT Newsletter

The United  
Presbyterian Church  
of Blairsville, PA

DECEMBER 2021

It was a dark and stormy night, and with each bolt of lightning and crash of thunder, little Johnny grew more and more frightened. By about 1:00, he had mustered all the courage he had, but it wasn't enough. Jumping out of bed he ran down the hall to his parents' room. "Momma, this storm makes me scared." "Now, now Johnny, there's no need to be afraid, God is right there with you in your bed." "That's what you always tell me Momma, but I would feel a lot better if God had skin on."

Faith is somehow easier when God can be seen with the eye or heard with the ear or felt with a strong embrace. The Old Testament is filled with mighty images of God in heaven, grand and glorious, high and lifted up. While we can worship God in all his grandeur, we can not always relate to him. He is always there, but what brings us comfort is the knowledge that God is here. We seek to be in relationship with one who steps off his throne and into our daily lives. We want to know that God understands what its like in our humanity, because it is only such a God who understands me.

We call it the incarnation, God coming to us in the flesh, God feeling what we feel, God facing what we face. God hovering in the heavens inspires awe, but God choosing to come into our midst, becoming vulnerable, fills us with assurance and hope in the knowledge we are not and never will be left alone. It is the presence of God in the midst of the storm that brings courage and peace. It is the promise that we are in God's everlasting care that brings us joy, knowing that we have a secure future. It is in the act of God coming to us, taking the initiative to welcome us into relationship that assures us we are loved.

This Season of Advent is a time of hearing the ancient words that foretell of God promising to do a new thing in the world. It is a time of remembering how he came into our midst, not loudly and earth shatteringly, but rather humbly with a whisper. Yet ever so quietly Jesus sowed the seeds of his kingdom, not only telling us who God the Father is, but showing us who he is by loving us into someone new.

But Advent does not merely look back to what has been, it also broadens our vision of his return and the fruition of the fulness of his kingdom and all it holds for us. We celebrate the good news that Jesus will come again and in his Lordship stake his claim over us for all eternity. And in that promise we are ever mindful of the covenant into which we have been called and in which we live, that he will be our God and we will be his people and nothing in all creation can separate us from him or him from us.

The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it. No matter how stormy the night, know that a new day is dawning therefore we need not fear. God is not far off. God is as near as the beat of our heart, the tear in our eye, the sigh that passes our lip. O come, O come, Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel. Come, Lord Jesus, come and give us peace.

In Christ's Love,

*Pastor Jim*

## Scripture Texts for Worship

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

### Sunday, December 5

Malachi 3:1-4  
Luke 3:1-6

### Sunday, December 12

Zephaniah 3:14-20  
Luke 3:7-18

### Sunday, December 19

Micah 5:2-5  
Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

### Sunday, December 24

Isaiah 9:2-7  
Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

### Sunday, December 26

Isaiah 52:7-10  
John 1:1-14

### Sunday, January 2

Jeremiah 31:7-14  
Ephesians 1:3-14

## 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 at or the church office, 724-459-7991.

## Food Bank

The ICCAP Food Bank distribution is held the second Tuesday of each month from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. When signing up for the first time, proof of residency in Blairsville borough is needed.

## January Newsletter

Articles to be published in the January edition of the UPLIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Wednesday, December 15th.

## Worship Assistants

### December 5—2nd of Advent

Liturgist: Mary Gorslene  
Readers: Becky Bence & Mary Gorslene  
Flowers: Pat & Janeen Swope  
Streaming: Chase Stuchal  
Proj/Audio: Austin & Andrew Baker  
Ushers: Barri Stuchal & Alan Lowman

### December 12—3rd of Advent

Liturgist: Lon Ferguson  
Readers: Sheila Borbonus & Karen Kerin  
Flowers: Jim & Chris Antis  
Streaming: Eli Borbonus  
Proj/Audio: Brylea Borbonus

### December 19—4th of Advent

Liturgist: Terry Brown  
Readers: Terry & Barb Brown  
Flowers: Christmas Poinsettias  
Streaming: John Bruner

Proj/Audio: Elizabeth & Abigail Bruner

### December 24—Communion

Worship: 7:00 & 11:00 p.m.

### December 26

Worship: Lessons & Carols  
Music: Blairsville Brass  
Streaming: Doug Clayton  
Proj/Audio: Jonathan Clayton

### Offering Counters

Charlotte & Bob Cosharek

## What Do You Think?

The elders have been discussing our church, the needs of the congregation and the needs of our community. They have put together a questionnaire which you will be receiving in the mail. They would like your input and ask that you take the time to honestly answer the questions and return it to the church in the envelope provided. These findings will be used by the elders to help us better meet our mission.

## Bible Study

Bible Study will continue to meet this month through the 15th. We will break for the holiday and resume in January. As we gather, we will follow CDC guidelines. Please call the church office with any questions or concerns.



## Christmas Eve

Candlelight and Communion  
Worship

7:00 & 11:00 p.m.

All are welcome!

*\*The 7:00 service will be live streamed and can be accessed on our facebook page or through our website [www.r-church.com](http://www.r-church.com)*

## Advent Devotionals

A variety of Advent Devotionals are available for you. 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 or contact the church office and one can be mailed to you.

## Year End Reports

Committee chairs are asked to begin thinking about year end reports for the Annual Ecclesiastical/Corporate Meeting. Reports are due to the church office by Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup>.



## Getting to Know You

Let us introduce you to another currently serving elder:

### **Mary (Anzelone) Gorslone —Class of 2021**

I was born and raised in Blairsville and attended Sts. Simon and Jude Church. I moved to Pittsburgh to pursue a career in Healthcare Administration. While in Pittsburgh I began attending Protestant services. I returned to Blairsville in 2005. I am married, have 2 sons and 1 grandson. I have six sisters and fortunately 4 of us and my mother still live in Blairsville. I recently retired so am now able to travel more. I also enjoy doing all things outdoors, cooking, reading and singing in our church choir. I enjoy being an Elder as I learn how interesting and important it is to make decisions that affect our everyday church life. My hope is that our church will continue to grow and serve our community. We live in a small community so it is very important that not only our congregation, but the entire community sees how by serving them, we are serving God.

## Pastoral Concerns

As you are well aware, concern about the spread of COVID is still very high. Indiana County is currently experiencing one of the most severe infection rates in the Commonwealth with all area hospitals filled. Visitation at hospitals and care facilities is limited, if allowed at all. Indiana Hospital no longer informs clergy of admission. The only way Pastor Monroe would know of health concerns is if you inform him or the church office. Because of the safety of the health environment, the pastor only provides home visits to those who take the initiative to invite him.

## Coats-For-Kids Drive

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Coats-For-Kids Drive is being held. We are receiving monetary donations for the purchase of specific size coats for kids in need. Please mark your donation clearly for "Coat Drive" and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church. If you know of a family with children who may need a winter coat, please contact Janet Smith.

## 2022 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for the New Year are available for you to pick up at the back of the sanctuary. Please look for your name as envelope numbers have been changed. If you do not have church offering envelopes and would like a box set, please contact the church office at 724-459-7991.

## Financial Statements

End of the year financial statements will be mailed early to mid-January. If you would like your statement earlier, contact the church office at 724-459-7991.

## At Home Worship Resources

We continue to pass on faith building resources to use at home via email. The Presbyterian Outlook has been making available "Faith Formation at Home" and "Christian Education at Home." The first resource is focused more on family worship. The second is to assist parents in teaching Bible lessons to their children. The Christian Education Committee of our church has also invested in "Children's Bulletins." Each week, along with the "Christian Education at Home" resource, Children's Bulletins are sent via email for the children of our church. They include activities that reinforce the message of that Sunday. If you are interested in receiving either or all of these resources, please contact the church office at 724-459-7991 to be added to the email list. If email is not an option, a paper copy can be mailed to you.

## 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.



*We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion at our Christmas Eve Candlelight Services at 7:00 and 11:00 p.m. Please take time to prepare to receive and share the sacrament.*



## How Well Do You Know Your Bible?

### BIBLE TRIVIA

1. Where did Adam and Eve live at the beginning of the world?
2. How many plagues did God send on Egypt?
3. In what language was most of the Old Testament given?
4. In what language was most of the New Testament given?
5. Who conquered Judah and took Daniel to their country?

*Answers in the next newsletter*

### BIBLE TRIVIA ANSWERS FROM NOVEMBER

1. What catastrophe did Joseph predict by interpreting Pharaoh's dream?  
Answer: A severe, seven-year famine. (Genesis 41:14-30)
2. Who were Noah's three sons?  
Answer: Shem, Ham, Japheth. (Genesis 10:1)
3. Who were the only two Israelites allowed to go into the Promised Land after many years?  
Answer: Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 32:11-12)
4. Who was Bathsheba's husband?  
Answer: Uriah (II Samuel 11:3)
5. What famous queen visited Solomon?  
Answer: Queen of Sheba (I Kings 10:1)

### Food for Family Thought—

**Question:** If you could personally hear or see the loudest, the strongest, or the fastest of anything in the world, what would you choose to hear or see?

**Thought:** Just for dads: Kids long for their father's blessing. Yet too often dads remain silent about what they feel inside. Sometime this week, set aside an hour to write a letter to each of your children describing in detail something unique that you appreciate about him or her. Write from the heart and give this gift that will last a lifetime.

**Question:** If you had to rearrange the letters in your first name to come up with a brand-new first name for yourself, what would be your new name? (you must use all the letters from your current first name and no additional letters.)

**Thought:** Children crave a sense that they are special in their parent's eyes. Tell your child how you chose his or her name, why it's special to you, and how it means even more now that it belongs to your child.

