



UPLIFT Newsletter

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

FEBRUARY 2022

Last year at this time, we found ourselves having experienced a year like none other. Sadly today we find ourselves in the same place and have resigned ourselves to the new normal. The new normal is that we will probably never live our daily lives as we once did. Hospitals and care facilities shield their patients at the expense of isolating them from family and friends. Costs of basic goods keep rising with the blame being put on the supply chain. Educators are hampered by the added demands of teaching virtually. Social relations are strained by the constant concern about rising numbers and newly discovered viral strains.

But what about the church, that ancient institution that has ordered society for millennia? To be sure, there is nothing in all of creation that can crumble the rock on which the church is built, but over the past two years the day-to-day life of the church has been shaken. Nationwide there has been a notable decline in in-person attendance at worship. Many Sunday School programs have all but shuttered their doors. Pastoral care has been offered by phone and letter. Fellowship opportunities have been limited to socially distanced gatherings. Yet according to the Pew Research Center, one fourth of American adults say their faith has grown through the pandemic. It will be interesting to see how that growth is manifested, albeit in the institutional church or in the wellbeing of society at large.

I can honestly say that forty years ago Princeton Theological Seminary did not offer courses on how to move the church through times like this. Then again, pastors and church officers do not have the power to make all things right. It is by the grace of the Holy Spirit that we are moved through what is into what will be. While not all have returned to in-person worship, we realize that some never will. Changing health has limited the participation of some. Some have found convenience in watching online as it meets their schedule. Some have found meaning in different spiritual fellowships. And some have realized that the traditional church no longer meets their needs. The question before us is how can we effectively minister to those who welcome the Good News we offer? What needs have arisen that beckon a response on our part? How have we grown as individuals and a family of faith through the new ways our faith has been enhanced? As this 200 year old fellowship celebrates all that has been, who will we discover we have become?

Every now and then, someone will say, "I guess this pandemic has given you preachers some time to sit back and relax." Quite the opposite is the case. 46% of pastors under the age of 45 have seriously considered resigning and seeking other work. About the same percent of pastors of retirement age have taken an early out because of health and stress. Please be praying for your spiritual leaders, that they would sense the peace and power of the Spirit's presence.

I want to thank you for your faithful support during these uncertain times. You have seen that we have the resources needed to carry out the mission at hand, and your encouragement has been a blessing. Please also pray for understanding and vision as we address our new learnings discovered through the recent congregational survey.

May God continue to bless you and use you.....

In Christ's love,

Pastor Jim

Scripture Texts for Worship

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

Sunday, February 6

Isaiah 6:1-8 (9-13)
Luke 5:1-11

Sunday, February 13

Jeremiah 17:5-10
Luke 6:17-26

Sunday, February 20

Genesis 45:3-11, 15
Luke 6:27-38

Sunday, February 27

Exodus 34:29-35
Luke 9:28-36 (37-43)

Ash Wednesday, March 2

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
Isaiah 58:1-12

Sunday, March 6

Deuteronomy 26:1-11
Luke 4:1-13

March Newsletter

Articles to be published in the March edition of the UPLIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Tuesday, February 15. Please call the office with any questions or concerns.

Handbell Choir

The Handbell Choir rehearses each Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. in the Bell Room. The choir is currently in need of 3 or 4 new ringers so it can ring the 3-octave music. We welcome any seasoned ringers and any new to handbell ringing. Contact Vicky Westley, director, for more information.

Worship Assistants

February 6

Liturgist: Mary Gorslone
Flowers: Nancy Boone
Streaming/ Olivia & Kristi
Proj/Audio: Eckenroad

February 13

Liturgist: Rick Shoemaker
Streaming/ Olivia & Kristi
Proj/Audio: Eckenroad

February 20

Liturgist: Jean Heberling
Streaming/
Proj/Audio: Eli & Brylea Borbonus

February 27

Liturgist: Bonni Dunlap
Streaming/ Elizabeth, Abigail & John
Proj/Audio: Bruner

Offering Counters

Elaine Jellison and Becky Bence



Souper Bowl of Caring

Since 1990, young people have been leading the charge and inspiring others to collect dollars and food around the time of the Super Bowl Game. Since then, more than \$170 million has been generated for local charities across the country through Souper Bowl of Caring. It has become a powerful movement that transforms the time around the Big Game into the nation's largest celebration of giving and caring for those in need. We will receive our Souper Bowl of Caring Offering Sunday, February 13th during morning worship. One hundred percent of these gifts will be sent to ICCAP in support of the Food Bank.

2022 Flower Chart

The 2022 Flower Chart is hanging in the hallway outside the church office. If you would like to order flowers for Sunday worship, please use the chart to sign-up for your choice of date. Flowers are \$20/Sunday and checks can be made payable to the **Board of Deacons**. We hope that those ordering flowers through the deacons would take the arrangement following worship or pick them up at the church by the following Tuesday. Flowers that remain at the church after Tuesday will be shared with homebound members of the congregation. Please contact the church office with any questions or concerns.

Bible Study

Wednesday morning Bible Study meets at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Pastor Monroe uses the sound system so as to be heard clearly. For those who would like to participate from home, we are set up to offer Bible Study via Zoom. If you are interested, please call the church office for more details.

Chancel Choir

The Chancel Choir gathers for rehearsal each Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. If you are interested in joining the choir or if you would like more information, please contact Cindy Borbonus. We also invite those who would like to share their musical gifts during worship to contact Cindy for more information.

Thank You

Dear members of Blairsville P.C., The church has always been important to Don. Your gift to Kreutz Creek P.C. is appreciated. Thanks for the kindness you show to Pastor Tim. Blessings, Shirley Monroe & family

Happy 200th Anniversary!

The 200TH Anniversary Committee met and has started planning our celebration. The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 8th at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. All those interested in joining the planning process are welcome.

Consider Taking Part

The Session Committees for 2022 are looking for interested members to be active participants. Chairs for the committees were determined at the January Session meeting. Please review the committees and responsibilities of the committees and consider serving.

Worship – Worship services, sacraments, music, funerals, weddings—Jean Heberling, chair

Mission – Benevolences, special offerings, global & local mission and missionaries—Lon Ferguson, chair

Christian Education – Sunday school programs, curriculum, adult education, youth work, leadership education—Jim Antis, chair

Finance – Finances, special funds, and annual budget—Rick Shoemaker, chair

Stewardship – Stewardship education and programs, challenges the congregation in its faithful use of the many different resources entrusted to our care—Lon Ferguson, chair

Property & Maintenance – Construction, maintenance, repairs, housekeeping, safety, security, yard work, inventory—Pat Swope, chair

Congregational Fellowship – Suppers, Dinner Theater, picnics, outings, trips, camping—Joan Moran, chair

Evangelism – New member recruitment and assimilation, outreach, publicity—Gene Artman, chair

Compassion Update

Dear friends,

I greet in the name of Jesus Christ. My family and I are doing well, thanks to God. How are you and your family doing? In Rwanda they started giving people COVID-19 vaccines. How are you doing over there? Here we look forward to celebrating Christmas and New Year. How are you and your family prepared for Christmas and New Year? Here we are eating beans and maize. What did you grow over there? May God protect us all. I thank you for the letter you sent to me. It pleased me so much. I thank you for the wonderful words you told me. I can not finish thanking you. I pray that God will keep blessing you. The letter you sent to me had a wonderful message. Thank you. Keep writing to me. I will be happy for that.

Samuel, from Rwanda

Congratulations

Jonathan Clayton recently graduated from Penn State Behrend with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering with two areas of specialization. His senior project was a computer program to test how a bearing would perform in a computer design part. It gives the engineer all of the data needed to understand how it performs under varying conditions (i.e. temperature, speed, vibrations, etc.) It takes what was a month of testing to minutes. His program allows the engineer to find and use the best bearing before building and mechanically testing the part. The program design and testing took almost a year to do with 3 other students. The company he wrote the program for was SKF Bearings. After the program was finished and SKF looked at the potential for it, Jonathan was offered a summer internship to change a few things and get it ready for company wide distribution. This led to a job after graduation and a move. Jonathan is now living outside of Dearborne and working in Plymouth, Michigan as a project engineer. Part of his job is to use the program He wrote.



Bible Trivia

How Well Do You Know Your Bible?

Answers in the next newsletter

1. Who was the first appointed king of Israel?
2. What was the giant's name that David killed?
3. What did God change Jacob's name to before his meeting with Esau?
4. Who was the king of Israel anointed by Samuel after Saul?
5. What Israelite saved her people from being murdered and was a wife of a king?

BIBLE TRIVIA ANSWERS FROM JANUARY

1. What was God's sign to Noah that he would never destroy the earth again by a flood?
Answer: a rainbow (Genesis 9:13)
2. Where did God give Moses the Ten Commandments?
Answer: Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:23-20:17)
3. How did God make people spread out across the earth?
Answer: He confused their language (Genesis 11:1-9)
4. Who did God call out of Ur to move to Canaan?
Answer: Abram (Genesis 11:31-12:4)
5. Name the two Old Testament people who appeared when Jesus was transfigured?
Answer: Moses and Elijah (Luke 9:28-30)



Food for Family Thought

1. If you could transport yourself back in time and experience first-hand any story in the Bible, which one would it be?
**The story of our salvation that is recounted in the Bible continues in our own lives today. Right now, look for one way that God is active in the life of your family. At dinner or before bedtime, be sure to share your observations with your child.
2. If an ice cream company asked you to come up with a brand new flavor or ice cream, what flavor would it be and what creative name would you give it?
**We each have great gifts to give a troubled world. Discovering our likes and preferences can help us discover the true nature and flavor of our most valuable gifts. Help your child taste a wide array of experiences to help him or her discover those favorites that might point the way to a life of fulfillment.
3. If you could have one hundred of anything right now, what would you choose?
**One task of parents is to help their children develop the skills of discernment—that is, to make wise choices. This is better taught through example and by establishing wise limits than by coercion and criticism.