



# UPLIFT Newsletter

The United  
Presbyterian Church  
of Blairsville, PA

JANUARY 2022

We all have rituals about beginning the New Year, some cultural, some traditional, some personal. Maybe its singing Auld Lang Syne and kissing someone dear. Maybe its raising a glass of sparklie or eating some pork and sauerkraut or eating twelve grapes (one for each month of the new year). Maybe its intentionally taking your first step with your right foot. One of mine is to write the new year on each check in the checkbook so I don't inadvertently put on the wrong date.

We're peculiar about marking time. This month is named in honor of the Roman god Janus whom the ancients deemed the god of transitions, gates, doorways, beginnings and endings. In mythology he is depicted with two faces, one looking at the past, the other peering into the future. No matter where in the world one lives, we have the need to mark time, to reflect on where we've been and to ponder on what is ahead.

In recent years, I've found myself saying "good riddance" to what has past instead of saying "Happy New Year" to welcome what will be. 2021 has been especially difficult—COVID, broken supply chains, politician upheaval, and natural disaster. Maybe its my age and cynicism that has tarnished my perspective—or maybe things really are coming off the rail. I find myself grateful that I was born when I was and grew up how I did and find myself where I am at this point of time. The psalmist David writes, "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom." The wisdom of which he speaks is not merely the fruit of the experiences we have been through. Wisdom is not only a foundation on which we build. Wisdom, like hope, is the assurance that we are in God's hand. What has been was, but what will be is yet to be made known. "It is what it is" is a defeated attitude, but "Behold, I am about to do a new thing" is God's promise of redemption.

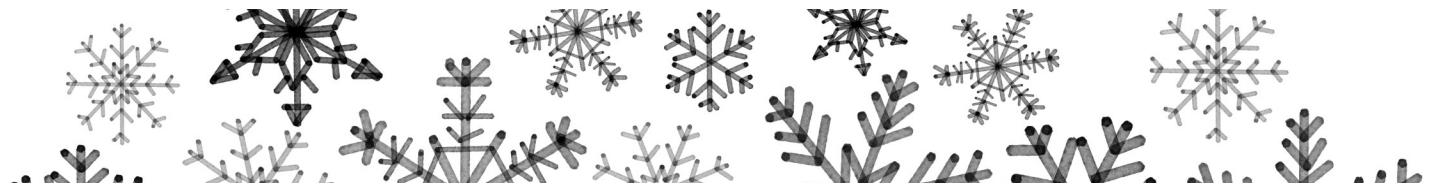
As humans we measure our days by what is referred to as *chronos*, a Greek word that focuses on dates and times. But as Christians we measure our days by what we call "*Kairos*", a Greek word that focuses on God's activity in our lives and throughout creation. Its what the preacher in Ecclesiastes 3 declares, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven, a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up what has been planted; a time to break down and a time to build up; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance...." In numbering our days, we count our blessings, remember the lessons we've learned in hardship, express gratitude for the ways God has brought good out of bad, and press on in the assurance when all is said and done God will have the final word, and it will be a word of life, forevermore.

Not one of us are in charge of the things in this world. Not one of us knows the details of God's plan for our days. In faith we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," trusting that God will be true to his promise. As the old gospel hymn says, "I don't know what tomorrow holds, but I know who holds tomorrow," and in the end that's the only thing I need to know for sure.

A prayer for the new year is: Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past we cannot change: open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image; through Jesus Christ, the light of the world." So be it, Amen.

In Christ's love,

*Pastor Jim*



## Scripture Texts for Worship

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

### Sunday, January 2

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

### Sunday, January 9

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22  
Isaiah 43:1-7

### Sunday, January 16

Isaiah 62:1-5  
John 2:1-11

### Saturday, January 23

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10  
Luke 4:14-21

### Saturday, January 30

Jeremiah 1:4-10  
Luke 4:21-30

### Sunday, February 6

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

## February Newsletter

Articles to be published in the February edition of the UP-LIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Sunday, January 16th. Please call the office with any questions or concerns.

## Offering Envelopes

2022 Offering Envelopes are available for pick-up in the back of the sanctuary. If you would like a box of envelopes, please contact the church office.

## Worship Assistants

### January 2

Liturgist: Bobbi Monroe  
Streaming: Olivia Eckenroad  
Proj/Audio: Kristi Eckenroad & Dennis Gould

### January 9—Communion

Liturgist: Rick Shoemaker  
Streaming: Eli Borbonus  
Proj/Audio: Brylea Borbonus

### January 16

Liturgist: Jean Heberling  
Streaming: John Bruner  
Proj/Audio: Elizabeth & Abigail Bruner

### January 23

Liturgist: Bonni Dunlap  
Flowers: Cindy Borbonus  
Streaming: Olivia Eckenroad  
Proj/Audio: Kristi Eckenroad & Dennis Gould

### January 30

Liturgist: Lon Ferguson  
Streaming: Eli Borbonus  
Proj/Audio: Brylea Borbonus

### Offering Counters

Pat & Janeen Swope

## 2022 Communion Dates

January 9—Baptism of Our Lord  
\*March 2—Ash Wednesday  
March 27—Lent  
\*April 14—Maundy Thursday  
June 5—Pentecost  
July 10  
September 11  
October 2—World Wide Communion  
November 20—Christ the King Sunday  
\*December 24—Christmas Eve  
(\* evening services)

## 2022 Per Capita Update

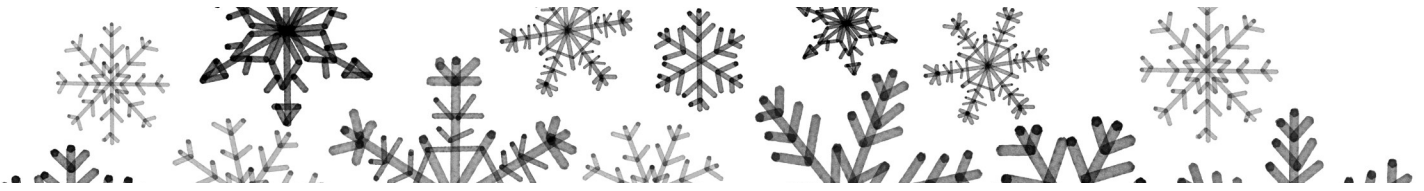
Per Capita, literally “per head”, is the amount requested from each member to cover the administrative expenses of the General Assembly, Synod and Presbytery. For 2022, that amount is \$34.38 per member on the active roll. That breaks down to: General Assembly—\$8.98, Synod—\$2.40, and Presbytery—\$23.00. The Session has taken action to withhold all per capita to General Assembly with the exception of contributions given with specific designation to it. Per Capita sent to support Synod and Presbytery is NOT used to support the General Assembly. For this reason, the session sees that those funds are paid unless you request that your share not be. A letter explaining your options with regards to your per capita was included in your offering envelopes and is included in this newsletter. If you have questions, please contact the church office or see Pastor Monroe. We want to honor your intentions for your gifts to the work of the church.

## 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.

*We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion Sunday, January 9th during the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Please take time to prepare to receive and share the sacrament.*



## Year End Giving Statements

Financial statements of your giving will be mailed to each household mid to late January. If you would like your statement earlier, contact the church office.

## Year End Reports

Committee chairs and treasurers are asked to submit a report to include in the annual report for the Congregational Meeting. Please have your report to the church office by Sunday, January 23rd. If you have any questions or need information from the office, contact Jill during office hours.

## 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.



To the Session and Congregation,  
We thank you for your ongoing support and encouragement to us throughout the year. 2021 was a difficult year for several of the staff. Thank you for your prayers, cards, gifts and friendships. We look forward to a blessed and happy New Year in 2022!

Cindy, Marilyn, Sandy, Jill and Peg

## Annual Congregational Meeting

The 2021 year in review Congregational Meeting will be held Sunday, January 30th. The meeting will be held following worship in the sanctuary and will be live streamed for those watching at home. Two phones will be available if those at home have a question or would like to make a comment. If you have any questions concerning the plans for the meeting, please call the church office.

## Souper Bowl of Caring Offering

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. The money and food collected then is given, 100%, to a local charity. More than \$110 million has been collected, changing the nation's largest weekend of football into the largest weekend of caring. We will receive our Souper Bowl of Caring Offering Sunday, February 6th during morning worship. One hundred percent of these gifts will be sent to ICCAP in support of the Food Bank.

## Our Elders and Deacons

We thank Mary Gorslene, Doug Clayton, Bob Cosharek and Kim McKinney for their faithful service on the Session. They have been instrumental in helping to set a vision as we move forward.

We rejoice as Jim Antis, Terry Brown, Jean Heberling and Mel Woodring begin their ministry as the Sessional Class of 2024.

We thank Erica Ash, Susie Cotti, Jean Heberling and Marilyn Neal for their faithful service as deacons. We rejoice as Chris Antis and Linda Neal begin their ministry as the Diaconal Class of 2024.

## Property & Maintenance Concerns

If you notice something around the church property that needs repaired, please refer the matter to the church office. The secretary will forward the concern to the chair of the Property Committee. Please be very specific as to what the problem is, so that the issue can be handled. Thank you.

## Nominating Committee

The work of the Nominating Committee is some of the most important in the life of the church. Those serving have the responsibility to bring before the congregation the names of members who will potentially serve as elders and deacons. Members of this committee should have:

- \* An understanding of the nature, ministry and mission of the church
- \* An awareness of the spiritual nature of the offices of elder and deacon
- \* A knowledge of the impending challenges before the church
- \* A familiarity with the members of the congregation and the potential gifts and abilities they bring to service
- \* A spirit of prayer as they approach this work

If you, or someone you know would do well at the discernment of nominations, and would like to be considered for service on this committee, please write the name and place it in the offering plate or drop it off to the church office by January 16th.

## Happy 200th Anniversary!

In the New Year we will recognize our congregation's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Plans are beginning to be made for our celebration, to be held later in the year. If you are interested in being a part of the planning process, a meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Bring your ideas to the meeting or share them with Pastor Monroe or one of the elders. All are invited.

## Many Thanks

Pastor Tim and Bobbi would like to thank you for your many expressions of sympathy in the death of Tim's father. Your kind words and heartfelt prayers provided much encouragement. While he will be missed, we know without doubt that it is well with his soul and he rests secure in the loving arms of our Redeemer.

## Update on Egg Cartons

The past few months we have been collecting empty egg cartons. A family outside town has chickens who were producing fifteen dozen eggs a day. These eggs were donated to be distributed through the local food bank. Because its winter, many of the chickens have been put in cold storage, never to lay another egg again—if you know what I mean. Thanks to those who have helped by bringing cartons. We may be collecting them again in the Spring, but have nowhere to store them until then.

## The Session

### Class of 2022

Gene Artman  
Lisa Hainaut  
Bruce Highberger  
Rick Shoemaker

### Class of 2023

Jeff Lewis  
Lon Ferguson  
Joan Moran  
Pat Swope

### Class of 2024

Jim Antis  
Terry Brown  
Jean Heberling  
Mel Woodring

## Board of Deacons

### Class of 2022

Elizabeth Bruner  
Jamie McKinney  
Vicky Doty  
Vicky Westley

### Class of 2023

Bobbi Monroe  
Steve Moran  
Janet Smith  
Judy Trimble

### Class of 2024

Chris Antis  
Linda Neal

*Please encourage the leaders of our church through your prayers in the New Year.*

## Consider Taking Part

The Session Committees for 2022 are looking for interested members to be active participants. Chairs for the committees will be 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

Mission – Benevolences, special offerings, global & local mission and missionaries

Christian Education – Sunday school programs, curriculum, adult education, youth work, leadership education

Finance – Finances, special funds, and annual budget

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

Property & Maintenance – Construction, maintenance, repairs, housekeeping, safety, security, yard work, inventory

Congregational Fellowship – Suppers, Dinner Theater, picnics, outings, trips, camping

Evangelism – New member recruitment and assimilation, outreach, publicity



During the second week of January, you should be receiving in the mail a Congregational Survey from the Church Elders. The purpose of this survey is to identify ways the church can better meet the needs of the congregation, the community, and ways to improve weekly church attendance. Your participation in the survey is voluntary and your responses will remain confidential and anonymous. This survey includes eleven multiple choice questions some of which ask for explanations related to your response. When responding to the open-ended questions, please be specific and avoid generalities that make analysis difficult. Data collected from this survey will be analyzed and a report developed to summarize the findings. These findings will be shared with the congregation and be used by the elders to help the church better meet its mission. Please return your completed survey(s) in the postage paid envelope by January 25th. We ask that you please take the 10 minutes necessary to complete and return the surveys. Response rates for most surveys are typically 30% and we are really hoping we can get a much higher percentage returned. If you did not receive a survey but would like to participate, contact the church office and one will be mailed to you. Thank you for providing your input on how we can help the church better meet its mission, God Bless!

## Week of Christian Unity

Throughout the centuries, the church has used lectionaries in its worship and study. A lectionary is a collection of scriptural texts that focus on different dimensions of faith and spiritual themes. For each day of the year, there is an Old Testament text, a Psalm selection, a Gospel lesson and an Epistle reading. Some twenty denominations in the United States use the lectionary (in addition to dozens of churches in Canada, United Kingdom, Philippines, Australia, Italy and Hong Kong). Some of the denominations in the United States that use the lectionary as a guide include, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Methodist Church, Disciples of Christ, Reformed Church in America, United Reformed Church, the Church of England, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran Church, the United Church of Christ, and the Free Methodist Church. That means that on any given day, thousands upon thousands of congregations around the world are focusing on the same Biblical message. What a gift of Christian unity that is. The lectionary is organized in three cycles (A, B & C). Each cycle begins the new liturgical year on the First Sunday of Advent. Each of the cycles focuses on a different Gospel. As we began cycle C at the end of November, 2021 we began to use the Gospel of Luke and will continue that Gospel throughout 2022. On Sunday, January 16th at 3:00 PM in the sanctuary of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, the Blairsville community will join as one body to celebrate the Week of Christian Unity. You are welcome to attend this time of worship.

## 4th Annual Community Lenten Devotional

The Blairsville Area Ministerium will once again assemble a community Lenten devotional. Scripture texts have been distributed to the participating churches and individuals are writing their devotions to share. By the beginning of February, the devotions should all be submitted and assembly of the booklets will begin. Many copies will be published and they should be made available to you by Sunday, February 27th.

Our church was given five days, March 21—March 25. Below are the scriptures. If you feel led to share thoughts for the booklet, please contact Pastor Monroe.

**March 21**—unavailable

**March 22**—Psalm 34; 146; 25; 91; Genesis 45:1-15; I Corinthians 7:32-40; Mark 6:1-13

**March 23**—Psalm 5; 147:1-11; 27; 51; Genesis 45:16-28; I Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 6:13-29

**March 24**—Psalm 27; 147:12-20; 126; 102; Genesis 46:1-7, 28-34; I Corinthians 9:1-15; Mark 6:30-46

**March 25**—unavailable

## Pastoral Care

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.



## Bible Trivia

### How Well Do You Know Your Bible?

1. What was God's sign to Noah that he would never destroy the earth again by a flood?
2. Where did God give Moses the Ten Commandments?
3. How did God make people spread out across the earth?
4. Who did God call out of Ur to move to Canaan?
5. Name the two Old Testament people who appeared when Jesus was transfigured?

#### BIBLE TRIVIA ANSWERS FROM DECEMBER

1. Where did Adam and Eve live at the beginning of the world?  
*Answer:* The Garden of Eden. (Genesis 2:15-23)
2. How many plagues did God send on Egypt?  
*Answer:* 10—water to blood, frogs, gnats, flies, livestock pestilence, boils, hail, locust, darkness, death of firstborn. (Exodus 7:14-12:36)
3. In what language was most of the Old Testament given?  
*Answer:* The first human author to write down the biblical record was Moses. He was commanded by God to take on this task, for Exodus 34:27 records God's words to Moses. He wrote in his native language, called **Hebrew**.
4. In what language was most of the New Testament given?  
*Answer:* Most of the **New Testament**, was written in **Greek**. Greek was the language of scholarship during the years of the composition of the New Testament from 50 to 100 AD. Many Jews could not read Hebrew anymore, and this disturbed the Jewish leaders. A translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek was undertaken, and it was completed around 200 BC. Gradually the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, was widely accepted and was even used in many synagogues.
5. Who conquered Judah and took Daniel to their country?  
*Answer:* King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians (2 Kings 24:1-9 )

### Food for Family Thought

1. As best as you can remember, what has been the most exciting moment in your life to this point?  
**\*\*Your child will go through many challenging moments in life. You won't be there for all of them—but God will. Remind your child of Jesus' words to his disciples: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of time."**
2. If you could carve four new faces into the side of Mt. Rushmore, whose faces would they be? Why do you believe your choices deserve such a place of honor?  
**\*\*Tell your child about your favorite apostle, holy person, or hero from the Bible. Let your child know what traits you admire in that person.**
3. If you had to describe your personality in terms of a form of transportation, which one would you choose? (airplane, bicycle, cab, camel, hot-air balloon, sailboat, skateboard, train, truck, etc.)  
**\*\*A major gift we give our children is appreciation of their individuality. Pray that you can nurture the gifts your child embodies for the good of the world**