



UPLIFT Newsletter

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

MAY 2022

Before the ancient philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle thought their great thoughts, Heraclitus of Ephesus wrote his treatise, "On Nature". While the scroll has been reduced to a pile of fragments, the documents most famous line has been preserved. "No man ever steps in the same river twice, for its not the same river and he's not the same man." And for the past 2,500 years, scholars have speculated on exactly what he meant. But while their interpretations differ, all would agree that the essence of his statement pointed to the reality of change, in the world, in our relationships and in our hearts.

A river that is stagnant is no more than a pool of water that eventually will evaporate or seep into the ground. It is for all purposes, dead. But a river that flows is alive, constantly changing its course, stirring that through which it passes, sustaining that which it carries. In that way, a river is never what it was, nor is it what it will be for as long as it moves it is alive and it brings new life to all around it.

As Jeremiah laments the waywardness of humanity, he declares the word of the Lord, "Be appalled, O heavens, at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water" (2:12-13). The prophet is berating us for taking that which brings life and allowing it to become lifeless. The whole notion of allowing God's blessing to slip through our fingers goes against the central belief of the Christian faith, resurrection. Like those who went to search for Jesus at the tomb, we are looking for the living in the midst of the dead. Looking for a sip of cold water in an arid desert.

Of all witnesses to the resurrection, its Peter who points us to life. The one who denied knowing Jesus is the one who speaks loudest in making him known. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3-4). He speaks of our rebirth, "being born anew through the living and enduring word of God (1:23). And he calls to "be like living stones, built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (2:4-5). The movement from denial to affirmation is at the heart of this Eastertide, and each account of what happened in those forty days after Jesus rose encourages us to be moved from death to life, from being cracked cisterns to becoming flowing streams, from stones that cover the entrance and entomb to stones that roll away and set the entombed free, from rocks that lay dormant on a pile to stones that are set one upon the other and make a spiritual house where God is glorified.

I have been encouraged by how many of you have taken stones from the baskets in the back of the sanctuary. We have more on back order, so please be patient. Those stones are a tactile reminder of life in Christ. Just as rough rocks are made smooth by rushing streams of water, so we are changed as the waters of baptism flow over us, polishing us so that our inner beauty is shown. And as we live out our life together, we become a household of faith. Jesus Christ is the cornerstone from which we build. The apostles are the foundation of the truth of God established for us. And generation by generation, the people of God have lived out the faith planted in them by the Holy Spirit. And the mighty deeds of God done long ago support the wonderful works of God being revealed today in anticipation of the glorious future already established for us.

Heraclitus was right, no man ever steps in the same river twice. The river flows on and being found in the risen Lord, we are changed daily. But we do not float aimlessly, for "soon we'll reach the shining river, soon our pilgrimage will cease, soon our happy hearts will quiver with the melody of peace. Yes, we'll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river, gather with the saints at the river that flows by the throne of God"

In Christ's love,

Pastor Jim

Scripture Texts for Worship

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

Sunday, May 1

Revelation 5:11-14

John 21:1-19

Sunday, May 8

Revelation 7:9-17

John 10:22-30

Sunday, May 15

Revelation 21:1-6

John 13:31-35

Sunday, May 22

Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

John 14:23-29

Sunday, May 29

Revelation 22:12-14,16-17,20-21

John 17:20-26

Sunday, June 5

John 14:8-17 (25-27)

Acts 2:1-21

June-July Newsletter

Articles to be published in the June-July edition of the UPLIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Sunday, May 15. Please call the office with any questions or concerns.

Blanket Offering

The Blanket Offering will be received Mother's Day, Sunday, May 8th during worship. The Blanket Offering gifts are sent to Church World Service to supply blankets to those in need. Blankets protect from the cold, comfort after a disaster and remind families that they're not alone. Each one costs only \$10 but can be a vital resource for someone needing a little support, warmth and encouragement. Please prayerfully consider your gift.

Worship Assistants

May 1

Liturgist: Mary Gorslene

Flowers: Bill & Deb Lint

Streaming/

Proj/Audio: Olivia & Kristi Eckenroad

May 8-Mother's Day

Liturgist: Jean Heberling

Streaming/ Elizabeth, Abigail &

Proj/Audio: John Bruner

May 15

Liturgist: Lon Ferguson

Flowers: Steve & Joan Moran

Streaming/

Proj/Audio: Eli & Brylea Borbonus

May 22

Liturgist: Terry Brown

Streaming/

Proj/Audio: Olivia & Kristi Eckenroad

May 29

Liturgist: tba

Streaming/ Elizabeth, Abigail &

Proj/Audio: John Bruner

Offering Counters

Pat and Janeen Swope

Graduates

The Christian Education Committee is looking for the names of upcoming graduates from high school or schools of higher learning. It has been our tradition to recognize the accomplishments of our young people during a worship service. Please submit names of graduates to the church office.

This year, Sunday, June 5th at 10:00 a.m. has been set for graduate recognition. Please contact the church office with any questions or concerns.

BACCALAUREATE SERVICE

On behalf of the Students & the Community of Churches,

You are cordially invited to attend the

Baccalaureate Service

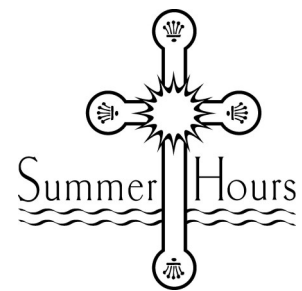
for the Class of 2022 of River Valley High School

The service will be held at

Hebron Lutheran Church

Wednesday, May 25th at 7:00 PM

(This is a cap & gown event and participating students should arrive at the church by 6:30 PM)



Summer Schedule

Begins

Sunday, June 5, 2022

Summer Worship Time

10:00 a.m.

Chancel Choir, Handbell Choir and Sunday School is in recess until Fall.

Guest Musicians

Our Chancel Choir will take a break for the summer months. Beginning in June, we will host guest musicians and have Special Music 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. Our choir will resume rehearsals in the Fall.

We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion Pentecost Sunday, June 5th during the 10:00 a.m. worship service. Please take time to prepare to receive and share the sacrament.

200th Anniversary Celebration Schedule of Activities

Saturday, August 13

Open House at our Church during the Knotweed Festival

Sunday, August 14

Church Picnic & Men with Mixers

Saturday, September 17

200th Anniversary Dinner & Presentation

Sunday, September 18

Bicentennial Worship and Soup & Salad Lunch

Wednesday, September 21

200th Anniversary Concert & Reception

Living Stones

"The church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually in a dwelling place for God"
(Ephesians 2:20-22)

Through this year, we are celebrating our bicentennial as a Presbyterian family of faith. Each of us, and each Christian who has borne witness to Jesus before us has been a living stone. Special stones are available to you in the sanctuary as part of our 200th anniversary celebration. You are encouraged to take one and to carry it with you as a reminder of your calling, the blessings of your heritage and your responsibility to live out with boldness the work entrusted to your care. We look forward to our celebration of God's presence in our midst.

Mrs. Rockefeller Studied In County

A dispatch from New York revealed today that Mrs. Martha Baird Allen Rockefeller, who married multi-millionaire John D. Rockefeller, Jr., yesterday is a graduate of the old Blairsville School for Girls.

The school was one of the rare women's educational institutions in this section of Pennsylvania at the time, founded in the 19th century and only recently honored in the memories of former students in a reunion at Blairsville.

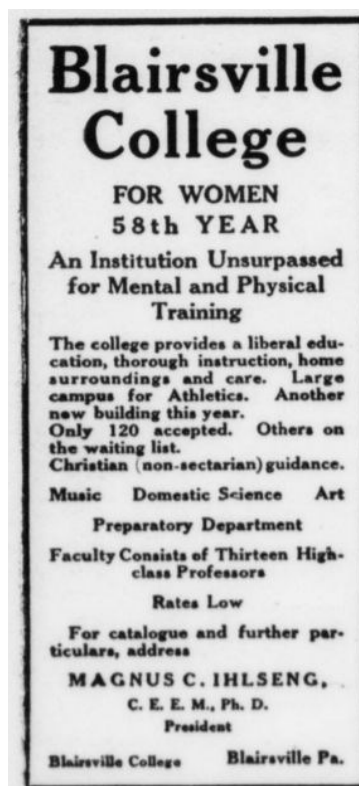
This newspaper clipping was found in a book entitled, Blairsville College, Catalogue for the College Year 1899-1900.

Special Anniversary Fund

At the April meeting of the Session, it was moved to establish a 200th Anniversary Fund to receive donations which will be used to offset the expense of the anniversary dinner. If you would like to contribute to the cost of the dinner, please mark your gifts clearly "Anniversary Dinner."

200th Anniversary Meeting

The 200th Anniversary Committee continues to plan for the celebration this year. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 24th at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Additional ideas for recognizing our anniversary are welcomed. All those interested in participating with the planning is invited to attend the meeting.

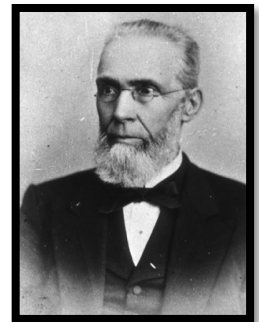


(Newspaper ad published around 1909)

Interesting back story on President Magnus C. Ihlseing: Ihlseing Cottage at Penn State University was constructed in 1898 as a faculty residence, and the first person to inhabit the cottage was Professor Magnus Ihlseing, the first Dean of the School of Mines. After Ihlseing resigned in 1900, he sold the cottage back to the College, and the residence continued to house successive Deans of the College of Mines until 1914. After several transitions, the cottage is still being used today and houses the Humanities Institute.

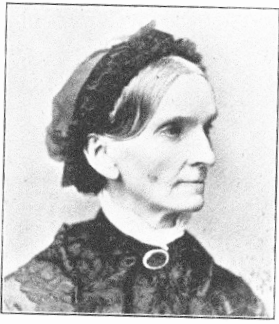


“The Blairsville Ladies’ Seminary owes its origin to the conviction which had been growing in the mind of the Rev. George Hill, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, that such an institution was greatly needed in this region, and that Blairsville was in many respects the most suitable and desirable location for it. This conviction began to take shape and bear fruit in the spring of 1851. In March of that year, a circular was issued, announcing the opening of the school on the first Tuesday of the following May. The felt need of such an institution is indicated by the fact that similar movements were talked of, and some action taken, in several neighboring villages about the same time. This was unknown to Mr. Hill when he issued his circular, but became generally known before his school opened. He was even visited by a committee from one of these villages, and urged to abandon his enterprise, on the ground that they were about to erect large buildings on the joint stock plan, and commence a Seminary on a liberal scale, which would surely eclipse, if not swallow up, the school in Blairsville. This he declined to do, and the joint stock enterprise came to an untimely end.

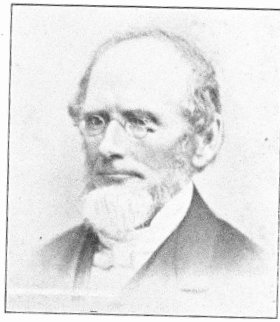


The school opened at the time named in the circular, with a good attendance of day scholars, and one boarder. This was a small beginning, but progress toward a vigorous and fruitful maturity was steady and rapid. As the buildings occupied were entirely inadequate to the demands of the increasing school, and as rented premises were incompatible with the idea of a permanent institution, measures were taken during the following winter to build in the summer of 1852, a house suitable to the wants of the school. Funds for this purpose were secured from a few liberal friends of education, all of them in the congregation or family of the Principal, except one. These funds were put into the hands of Mr. Hill, chiefly in sums of five hundred dollars each, without conditions or receipts being demanded by those who gave them. An arrangement was afterward, however, entered into, by which each subscriber was to have a tuition scholarship in proportion to the amount of his subscription. The lot on which the Seminary buildings now stand was secured, plans drawn out, a contract made, and material provided during the winter; and early in the spring the work commenced on the building which is at present the main edifice. This was completed and ready for occupancy at the beginning of the winter session, the first Tuesday of November, 1852.

As it had been from the first, the avowed intention of Mr. Hill to transfer the school to the hands of a competent person who could devote his whole time and energies to its management, he had been seeking for such a person during the summer; and simultaneously with the completion of the building, arrangements were consummated with the Rev. S.H. Shepley, then of Steubenville Seminary, to take charge of this institution. This he did at the beginning of the winter session, November, 1852.



MRS. S. H. SHEPLEY



REV. S. H. SHEPLEY

It is proper now that we direct our attention to the Principals who were to assume control. Rev. S.H. Shepley had been associated for some time with Dr. Beatty, in the conduct of the Ladies' Seminary, Steubenville, OH. His wife who was to share equally in the honor and responsibility of this work, was a lady of eminent intellectual attainments and Christian culture. Both were teachers of long experience and rare endowments. An arrangement had been made with the former Principal, by which Mr. Shepley was to rent the building and conduct operations on his own

plan. On the 14th of October, 1852, just two weeks before the fall session was to open, the family consisting of the Principals, their two children, a music teacher and one domestic, arrived at the Blairsville Intersection. It was eight o'clock in the evening of a cold rainy day, when they first set foot upon the soil where was henceforth to be their home. Here they were met with the intelligence that no train would run into Blairsville that night, the engine having been so injured by an accident during the day, as to be unfit for service. This was far from exhilarating; but on looking around for a place to spend the night, their dismay was redoubled, to learn that the nearest place of shelter was not less than a mile distant. The sympathizing conductor, touched probably by the forlorn condition of our travelers, and being a man fertile in expedients, came to their relief with a proposition to have a car moved by hand across the railroad bridge, which would leave them within easy walking distance of the town. This scheme was speedily carried into effect, and in a short time they arrived at the designated spot. Peering with outstretched necks into the surrounding gloom, a solitary lantern their guiding star, this advance guard of education took up its line of march for Blairsville. It might tax a lively imagination to have recognized in this little column struggling along in the darkness and rain, the germs of that mighty power which was to revolutionize the neighborhood. In due time the party reached the depot in safety, and here their troubles for that night, at least, were at an end; for a carriage was in waiting to convey them to the hotel.

The next day being Sunday, they had opportunity to refresh and prepare themselves for the work in hand. What were their first impressions of the field they had come to cultivate, history does not inform us; but they were not long left in doubt as to the character of the people among whom they had come; for early on Monday morning, one of the citizens, Mr. James Speer, called at the hotel and kindly tendered them the hospitality of his house until the Seminary should be ready for their reception. This offer was gratefully accepted, and proved to be only the forerunner of many similar acts of friendship of which the Seminary was the recipient. Later in the day, when Mr. and Mrs. Shepley made their first tour of the property, the condition of affairs could hardly be called encouraging. The building had but just passed out of the contractor's hands. The front door was barricaded by a huge pile of shavings, the scent of lime and fresh paint filled all the apartments, the halls were encumbered with furniture loose and in boxes, which had arrived from Pittsburgh and New York; and with all the help they could command, it was not till the next Sabbath morning that the family was enabled to take the first breakfast under its own vine and fig-tree.

The work of preparation now went rapidly forward. The ladies of Blairsville helped with untiring energy; and the gentlemen, too, lent willing hands to their assistance; and by the close of the following week, fourteen rooms were in readiness for occupation. It might seem invidious to designate individuals where all had done so nobly; but the history of that period makes special mention of the brilliant services rendered by Rev. George Hill and Judge Cunningham upon that occasion. The second hall, with the exception of the guest chamber and the music teacher's apartment, was occupied entirely as school and recitation-rooms. The present dining-room did duty as a kitchen; the dining-room proper being on the opposite side of the hall, which then extended the whole length of the building.

On Friday evening two teachers arrived; Miss Sherrard, from Ohio, now Principal of the Ladies' Seminary, Washington, Pa., and Miss Hawes, from Boston, Mass., who later brought to the quaint old town here household gods and erected her household altar. The next day two boarding-pupils made their appearance; Miss Susan Bradley, from Meadville, and Miss Mary Benney, from Pittsburgh. Thus opened the fall session of 1852. The number of days scholars during the winter was forty, the boarders having increased to twenty-six. The first month witnessed the erection of the stable and fences, and the removal of the old school-room to its present location, to be fitted up as a temporary but very useful attachment to the main building."

(Excerpts from History of the Blairsville Ladies' Seminary prepared for the First Alumnae Reunion, June, 1876, written by Miss Melissa R. Mendell, Class of 1856)

In 1922, the First Presbyterian Church of Blairsville, PA was featured on the front page of The Presbyterian Banner. Page 26 of the publication offered a full page article dedicated to the church.

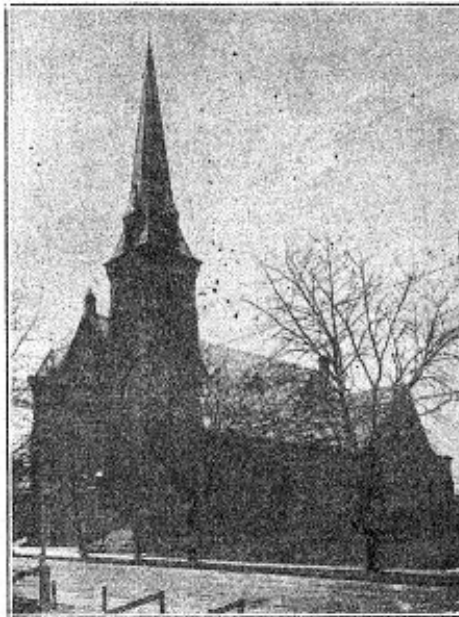
THE PRESBYTERIAN BANNER

FOUNDED 1814

Blairsville Pres. Church

Centennial 1922

P. 26



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
BLAIRSVILLE, PA.
Which Celebrated Its Centennial October 1-6.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1922

Centennial of First Presbyterian Church OF BLAIRSVILLE, PA.

THE First Presbyterian Church of Blairsville, Pa., celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of its organization October 1-6. It was a Home Coming Week for former members and friends of the old church. The auditorium was well filled at all the meetings, and on two evenings it was with difficulty that late comers were able to find standing room.

The program of the week began on Sunday morning with the Historical Sermon by the pastor, Rev. J. Norman Hunter. At the evening service, Rev. Hermann M. Hosack of Newell, W. Va., a son of the church and grandson of the second pastor of the church, preached a forceful sermon on "The Sovereignty of Jesus." The Home Coming Social on Monday evening was in charge of the Ladies' Social Club of the church. The address of welcome was given by Mr. Coulter Wiggins, the senior elder of the church, and the response was given by Mrs. Martha Hunter of New Castle, Pa. Interesting reminiscence talks were given by Mrs. A. Christy Brown, Rev. Hermann M. Hosack, Mrs. Mary W. Bell, Miss Ruth Sloan, Mr. J. P. Lightner, and Mr. T. D. Marshall. The social hour following ended in the church dining room, where refreshments were served by a committee of the ladies.

Tuesday evening was in charge of the three missionary organizations, the Woman's Missionary Society, the Jubilee Mission Circle, and the Abigail Hill Chapter of the Westminster Guild. The first part of the evening was devoted to a reception for the ladies held in the chapel. The second part of the evening's program was the giving of the missionary playlet, "The Pill Bottle," in the auditorium, and the reading of the history of the missionary societies by Mrs. H. P. Scully.

The Wednesday evening program was also in two parts. The first part was taken in presenting a series of historic tableaux, "The Spinner," "A Quilting Bee," "Our Buds of Promise," "The First Missionary Meeting," "1861 and 1917," and "The Spirit of Religion," were impressively presented and merited the hearty praise that was given. The tableaux were followed by "Ye Olde Folkes Greate Concerte," given by the church choir. The members of the choir appeared in the quaint costumes of days gone by, and sang the old songs that brought back many memories in the minds of the older people present, and the vigorous applause of all.

At six o'clock on Thursday evening the men sat down to a sumptuous dinner in the dining room of the church. The dinner was served by the ladies of the church. At eight o'clock an evening of historical pictures was conducted by Mrs. S. W. Miller, a great grand daughter of the first pastor of the church, Rev. Thomas Davis. Over a hundred slides showing the pictures of individuals and groups connected with the history of the church were shown and descriptions given by Mrs. Miller. In connection with



The First Church—1828

this program a quartet of former choir members sang two numbers.

Friday afternoon was given over to greetings and reminiscences. Addresses were made by Dr. John A. Marquis, General Secretary of the Board of Home Missions; Dr. W. R. Craig, Moderator of the Synod of Pennsylvania; Rev. H. J. Baumgartle, Moderator of the Presbytery of Blairsville; Dr. R. E. McClure, President of the Blairsville Ministers' Association; Dr. S. B. Linhart, of the University of Pittsburgh; Dr. M. M. McDivitt, and John Cunningham, Esq., of Pittsburgh. At this service a bronze tablet erected by the congregation in honor of the pastors who served the church during the century was unveiled, Dr. Marquis making the address and the veil being drawn by Robert Payson Hill, a grandson of Dr. George Hill. The tablet bears the following inscription:

THE PASTORS OF A CENTURY. 1822-1922

Thomas Davis—1822-1848
George Hill, D.D.—1842-1895
Joseph W. Crisswell—1888-1904
William L. Barrett—1905-1910
Michael M. McDivitt—1911-1919
J. Norman Hunter—1919.



Rev. J. Norman Hunter
The Present Pastor

History of the Church

The church was organized as the West Union Congregation September 21, 1822, by the Rev. Francis Herron, afterwards the venerable Dr. Herron of Pittsburgh. The first church was located at "The Forks of the Conemaugh," as it was then known, about a mile and a half northeast of town. In 1828 steps were taken to erect a Presbyterian Meeting House in the town, and in 1831 the building was completed, the services of the church transferred to this place and the name of the organization changed from West Union to Blairsville. The building remained in use until 1882, when the present building was occupied. The church has had but six pastors in its century of history. Rev. Thomas Davis was called to be pastor twenty days after the organization of the church. He continued in the church jointly with Salem until his death in 1848. For almost seven years preceding his death Rev. George Hill had been associated in the work as co-pastor. Dr. Hill spent his entire ministerial life in this pastorate. In 1888 Rev. Joseph W. Crisswell became associated with him as co-pastor. The death of the senior pastor occurred in 1895 and Rev. Mr. Crisswell took full charge of the work until his own ill health compelled him to give it up in 1904. It was at this date that the congregation had its first experience of being without a pastor. Eighty-two years without a vacancy in the pulpit is a unique record in the history of churches. Rev. William L. Barrett, who is now pastor of the Montevieu Boulevard Church of Denver, Colorado, was the next pastor. He began his work in 1905 and remained five years, when he accepted a call to Bellefontaine, Ohio. Rev. Michael M. McDivitt was installed pastor in 1911 and served the church until 1919, when he left to become pastor of the Knoxville Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. The present pastor was installed in December, 1919.

The history of the church has been one of service and steady progress. In a century there were received as members on profession of faith 1,504 and by certificate from other churches 1,429, making a total of 2,933 members received. The present membership of the church is 676. The record of the faithful service on the part of both ministers and people is a cause of grateful thanksgiving on the part of the church today and should be an inspiration to future service.

DR. BROWN RECOVERING FROM OPERATION

Dr. Arthur J. Brown, Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, is making a good recovery from the operation for a lesion in his throat which was recently performed at the Jefferson Hospital, in Philadelphia.

When answering advertisers, please mention The Presbyterian Banner.



Bible Trivia

How Well Do You Know Your Bible?

Answers in the next newsletter

1. How many disciples did Jesus choose?
2. What is the shortest verse in the Bible?
3. Who was King David's son that started a rebellion against him?
4. What happened to Bathsheba and David's first child?
5. Who was Bathsheba and David's child that became king?

BIBLE TRIVIA ANSWERS FROM APRIL

1. Who anointed Saul as king?
Answer: Samuel (I Samuel 10:1-27)
2. Which books of the Bible record David's time as king?
Answer: I & II Samuel
3. Which member of the Jewish ruling council came to ask Jesus questions at night?
Answer: Nicodemus (John 3:1-2)
4. How many days was Lazarus dead before Jesus visited?
Answer: Four days (John 11:17)
5. How many people saw Jesus after his resurrection?
Answer: More than 500 (I Corinthians 15:3-8)

Food for Family Thought

1. **For kids:** What aspect of being an adult are you looking forward to the most?
For adults: What aspect of being a kid do you miss the most?

****As a parent you have many responsibilities. But don't forget how much fun it is to play. Set aside one night a week as family fun night. Play board games, sing songs, play charades. Let your inner child come out to play. You will connect more with your child and you'll live a more balanced life.**

2. Suppose that, whenever you talked, it wouldn't be your voice that people heard—it would be the sound of a particular animal. Which animal's sound would you choose for your voice?

****Eating meals together regularly as a family has many benefits. When children are heard and responded to during mealtime conversations, they discover their own voice. They gain the confidence and security that assures them they belong.**

3. If you could permanently eliminate any one part of your daily routine, what would it be?

****True enlightenment comes in discovering that even our mundane moments are charged with the grandeur of God's presence and love. Pay attention and you will see the ways that God is present in both the high points and low points of each and every day.**