



UPLIFT Newsletter

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

DECEMBER 2022

When a friend of mine, Sam, received the title of “honorably retired”, he knew he wasn’t ready to settle into his easy chair with the TV remote in one hand and a box of chocolates on his lap. With a passion for ministry still burning in his soul, he followed God’s call to volunteer chaplaincy at Torrance. Each week he would show up on the grounds with his Bible and his guitar and a message in his heart. While many of the residents would doze off after having eaten their lunch, they were wide awake when he started to strum some chords. “What hymn would you like to sing?” he would ask. And like clockwork they would reply, “Because He Lives.” Be it Lent or Easter or the Fourth of July or Halloween, the chorus of that old Gaither standard stirred their soul.

Whether its being sung in a chapel on the grounds of a state hospital or in a cathedral in the heart of a major city, the words of that hymn bring a sense of hope, peace and joy. From the opening phrase, “God sent his Son” to the closing chorus, “because I know he holds the future” in our faith we are assured that we are in God’s care and therefore we need not fear no matter what our circumstance.

We are beginning the new liturgical year. The world’s calendar marks time from January to December. As Christians we mark time from Advent to Christ the King Sunday. We begin by looking back to the ancient promise of God that he would come and make himself known among us, his people. Each Lord’s Day in our worship we hear the words of the prophets foretelling the story of God’s gift of salvation, how the Lord will not forsake his children, but will come and abide with us. As each week the candles burn brighter, the darkness of life is pierced and our hope is renewed. As our hope is rekindled we rest assured in peace knowing without a doubt that God is in control. Even when we don’t know which end is up, God says “fear not for your name is written, engraved, in the palm of his hand” (Isaiah 49:16). While the things of this world may try to snatch us away, God’s grip is surer than those things that assail us. Therein such a peace, we can rest assured. And being found cradled in the arms of God there is joy, a joy that is more than a fleeting sense of happiness, it is a confidence that when all is said and done, God has the final word—and that word is “You are mine forever.” In that word we are refreshed with the knowledge of God’s love, a celebration that nothing will ever separate us from him (and if we are all in him, from one another).

“God sent his Son, they called him Jesus....How sweet to hold a newborn baby....And then one day I’ll cross the river....I’ll see the lights of glory and I’ll know he lives.” the watchwords of Advent are hope, peace, joy and love. They are given power because he lives, because he holds the future. Look back at the ways God has been true to his Word, in the annals of history but even more in the experiences of your life. At each twist and turn he has been there. Sense his presence in the circumstances you face today. The name, Emmanuel means “God with us”. As we walk through the shadows where vision is dimmed, as we stumble in the darkness of the unknown, we are not alone. Just because we do not always see God clearly doesn’t mean he is not there. And as he has been so he is. And as he is so shall he always be—faithful.

The Bible ends with the words, “Come, Lord Jesus.” And that desire is where our faith begins.

*Because he lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because he lives all fear is gone;
Because I know he holds the future,
And life is worth the living just because he lives.....*

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 4

Isaiah 11:1-10
Matthew 3:1-12

Sunday, December 11

Isaiah 35:1-10
James 5:7-10

Sunday, December 18

Isaiah 7:10-16
Matthew 1:18-25

Christmas Eve

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

Sunday, December 25

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

Sunday, January 1

Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

2023 Flower Chart

The Flower Chart is located on the bulletin board in the hallway by the church office. You may sign-up for your choice of dates. Gary's Floral provides our arrangements. After worship, you may take your flowers home or we ask that you pick up by the following Tuesday. Those remaining after Tuesday will be delivered to one of our home bound members. Dedications to be printed in the bulletin can be submitted to the church office or noted on the sign-up chart. Flower arrangements are \$20 each and checks can be made payable to the "Board of Deacons."

Worship Assistants

December 4—2nd Sunday of Advent

Liturgist: Mary Gorslene
Flowers: Pat & Janeen Swope
Readers: Lindsay Sharp &
Zach Barto
Ushers: Gene & Chery Artman

December 11—3rd Sunday of Advent

Liturgist: Dennis Gould
Flowers: Jim & Chris Antis
Readers: Elaine Jellison &
Jean Heberling

December 18—4th Sunday of Advent

Liturgist: Connie Bruner
Flowers: Christmas Poinsettias
Readers: The Bruner Family

Christmas Eve—7:00 PM

Readers: Todd & Stacy Faulk

Christmas Eve—11:00 PM

Readers: The Eckenroad Family

December 25

Merry Christmas!

Flowers: Poinsettias

Offering Counters

Tom & Janet Smith

Advent Devotionals

A variety of Advent Devotionals are available to you at the back of the sanctuary. These guides are meant to help you as you move through the season to the coming of the Christ Child.

Food Bank

The Blairsville Area Food Bank is held the second Tuesday of each month. Food bags are distributed to folks from our community between the hours of 10:30 a.m.—12:00 p.m. When residents sign up for the first time, proof of address in the Blairsville Borough is needed.

Christmas Schedule

Dec. 3 Holiday Cookie Sale
3:00-5:00 pm

Dec. 17 Cantata Rehearsal
10:00 am

Dec. 18 Christmas
Cantata 11:00 am

Dec. 24 Candlelight &
Communion Worship
7:00 pm & 11:00 pm

Dec. 25 Merry Christmas!



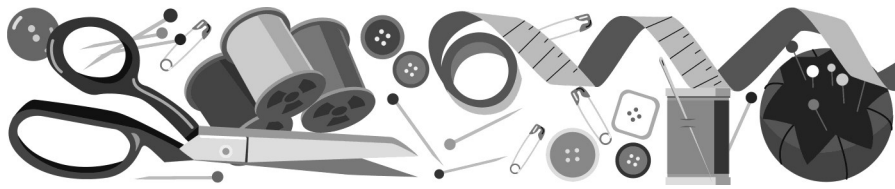
This year's CHRISTMAS CANTATA is entitled, "Jesus, the Advent of the Messiah" by Mary McDonald.

The cantata will be presented in worship Sunday, December 18th at 11:00 a.m. Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings following Chancel Choir from 7:30—9:00 p.m. A final rehearsal will be held Saturday, December 17th at 10:00 a.m. Anyone wishing to participate is welcome. If you would like more information, please see Cindy Borbonus.

Christmas Baskets

Our deacons will be assembling Christmas Boxes for families in need in our community. Each box will include menu items to prepare a Christmas dinner. Hams and potatoes will be provided by the deacons. Donations are being received and include: canned vegetables (no corn or green beans), canned fruit, Jello, boxed dessert mixes and canned sweet potatoes. If you are donating from your cupboard, please check expiration dates. A container is available at the back of the sanctuary to collect donations.

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.



Made in America, Blairsville to be exact

The Grannies sewing group has several handmade items available for your purchase. Funds raised through the sale of these items help to support our mission of providing a blanket to each person baptized in our church, quilts distributed to fire victims and Habitat for Humanity, stuffed bunnies, bears and ducks given to the Alice Paul House and Citizen’s Ambulance Service, dignity robes to the Indiana Hospital Women’s Imaging Center, lap robes for those in our church, hats to be given with the Coat Drive, and dining scarves for residents of St. Andrew’s Village. These are just some of the distribution points of our sewing projects.

As you consider your needs for the upcoming holiday gift-giving season, look to fill your stockings or gift bags with some of the following. Your generosity will help to support the sewing projects within our church and the community.

ITEMS AVAILABLE YEARROUND—SPECIAL ORDERS TAKEN

CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE-724.459.7991

Animals, stuffed	\$10
Aprons	\$5
Bags	\$3
**Casserole Cover	\$3, special order
Coasters, quilted	4/\$5
Dish Cloths, knitted	medium \$3, large \$4
Hats	\$5
Hot Pads, quilted	medium \$5, large \$6
Hot Pads, knitted/crocheted	medium \$3, large \$4
Place Mats, Steelers	\$5
Place Mats, Christmas	\$4 or 4/\$15
**Plastic Bag Holder	\$3, special order
Runners, quilted	\$15
Runners	medium \$10, large \$12
Scrubby, netting	\$3
Swiffer Cover	\$5
Walker Bib	\$3
Towels	\$5

*(**Please place an order for either of these items.*

All prices for special orders will depend on the cost of materials.)

Congregational Meeting

The 2022 year in review Congregational Meeting will be held Sunday, January 29, 2023 immediately following worship.

End of the Year Reports

Committee chairs are asked to begin thinking about end of the year reports for the Annual Ecclesiastical/Corporate Meeting. Reports are due to the church office by Sunday, January 22nd.

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.

2023 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for the New Year are available for you to pick up at the back of the sanctuary. If you do not have church offering envelopes and would like a box set, please drop a note in the offering plate or contact Jill in the church office at 724-459-7991.

Home Communion

If you are not able to come to worship and would like to receive communion in your home, please call the church office at 724-459-7991 and arrangements can be made for the sacrament to be shared with you.

January Newsletter

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

Keepsake Ornaments

Ornaments of the church from Wendall August Forge are available to purchase at a cost of \$12.00 each. Checks can be made payable to the church. Please see Linda George or contact the church office.

Our Leadership

We thank Lisa Hainaut and Rick Shoemaker, elders and Elizabeth Bruner, Vicky Doty, and Jamie McKinney, deacons for their leadership and service. Those elected to leadership positions at our September meeting include: Gene Artman, Doug Clayton, Bruce Highberger and Kim McKinney, elders; Susie Cotti, Mary Gorslene, Pam Irwin, Brylea Borbonus and Vicky Westley, deacons.

Food Ministry to the Community

We have been blessed to provide a ministry of food to the community and we are fortunate to do so in partnership with others. For the past several years we have received resources from the Indiana Turkeython (United Way and WCCS 1160 Radio). This year they gave \$400 to help folks in Blairsville. We also have some families who donate financially and food items during the year. We are grateful for the way our community works together to make a positive difference. Thank you for your partnership.

New Members

On Sunday, December 18th, several adults and young people will unite with the congregation. New member orientations are being held before worship at 10:00 a.m. Sundays, December 4 and 11. A confirmation class will be concluding on Sunday, December 11th as the confirmands meet with the elders after worship. If you are interested in becoming a member of the church, please speak with Pastor Monroe or contact the church office, 724-459-7991.

Cards for the Holidays

A card is a nice way to brighten someone's day at this time of year. Remember our homebound members and friends or those you haven't seen in a while when you're sending your holiday greetings. You can check with the church office if you need a mailing address.

Thanks for All the Help

Thank you to all who helped make our Church Family Thanksgiving Dinner a success again this year. Those who stepped up to help the committee, those who prepared food, set up and cleaned up, those who contributed monetarily, the worship speakers and especially all the kitchen help, it was much appreciated. Thank you to all who stayed and enjoyed the meal and fellowship. We are so thankful for our church family!



Bell Choir

Our Handbell Choir rehearses Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. in the Bell Room. We are looking for additional ringers to complete our choir. No experience is necessary just a willingness to learn. If you are interested in more information about the bell choir, please see Vicky Westley. You are also welcome to come to rehearsal to experience the fun.

Volunteers Needed

- * Volunteers are needed to run the audio/visual equipment in the balcony each Sunday morning. Those interested will be trained. Please see Jean Heberling or Doug Clayton if interested.
- * Volunteers are needed to usher. An usher signup sheet is located on the table in the back of the sanctuary. If you would like to participate in worship as an usher/greeter, please sign-up. There are dates available. Our deacons thank you.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

All gifts received are sent to be used:

- 50% for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges
- 50% to assist current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs

2023 Community Lenten Devotional

The ministerium has decided to compile and publish another Community Lenten Devotional in 2023. There are several scriptures to choose from each day through Lent. Those who volunteer to submit a devotion will list the scripture lesson, a devotional message of about 400 words, and a one or two sentence prayer. You can sign your name, or remain anonymous. All submissions will be gathered and will be compiled into booklet form, duplicated, then distributed to area churches for use during the Lenten Season (*which begins Ash Wednesday, February 22*). Our congregation has been assigned 6 days. There are several texts per day. Volunteers are needed to write devotional thoughts for these days. If you feel led to share with your brothers and sisters in Blairsville, please let Pastor Monroe know of your willingness as soon as possible.

March 20		
Psalm 146	Isaiah 59:9-19	Acts 9:1-20
March 21		
Psalm 146	Isaiah 42:14-21	Colossians 1:9-14
March 22		
Psalm 146	Isaiah 60:17-22	Matthew 9:27-34
March 23		
Psalms 130	Ezekiel 1:1-3, 2:8-3:3	Revelation 10:1-11
March 24		
Psalm 130	Ezekiel 33:10-16	Revelation 11:15-19
March 25		
Psalms 130	Ezekiel 36:8-15	Luke 24:44-53



How Well Do You Know Your Bible

Bible Trivia

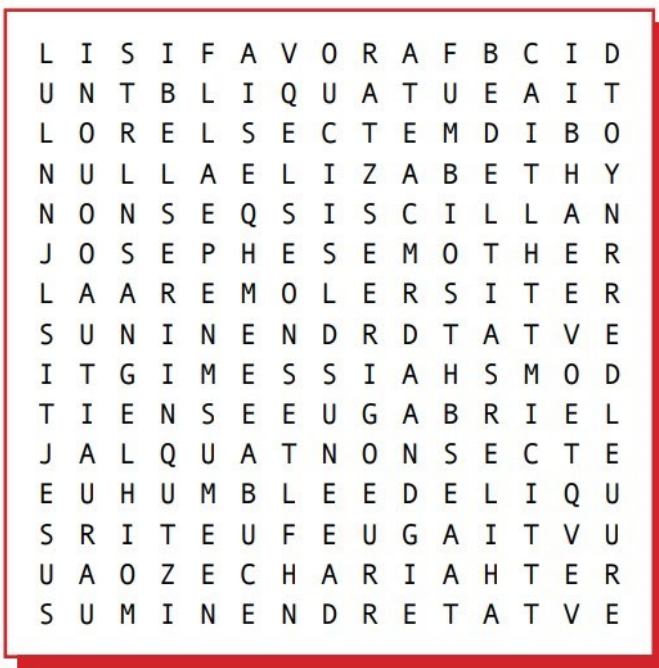
Answers in the next newsletter

1. What was the name of the man who requested Jesus' body for burial?
2. Which angel told Daniel the meaning of his vision of the ram and the goat?
3. Where in the Bible can you find the Lord's Prayer?
4. Who went with Paul on his early mission trips?
5. What was another name for the Apostle Paul?

BIBLE TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. What was the name of Abraham's nephew?
Answer: Lot (Genesis 12:4-5)
2. What happened to King Nebuchadnezzar before being restored as king?
Answer: He went mad and lived as a beast (Daniel 4:28-34)
3. True or False, Peter raised a woman named Dorcas from the dead.
Answer: True (Acts 9:36-43)
4. What was the name of the demon Jesus cast out in the region of the Gerasenes?
Answer: Legion (Mark 5:1-20)
5. How many wives did Solomon have?
Answer: 700 (I Kings 11:1-3)

Mary's Story Word Search



WORD LIST

ANGEL
 BABY
 BLESSED
 ELIZABETH
 FAVOR
 GABRIEL
 HUMBLE
 JESUS
 JOSEPH
 MESSIAH
 MOTHER
 ZECHARIAH



Thank you to the Board of Deacons
 for once again giving the
 congregation opportunity to order
 poinsettias for Christmas.