



UPLIFT Newsletter

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2023

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

The poet T. S. Eliot wrote, "For last year's words belong to last year's language, and next year's words await another voice. And to make an end is to make a beginning." Our month January, is named for the Roman god Janus who was seen as the diety of all beginnings, gates, transitions, doorways, passages and endings. He was depicted with two faces, each one gazing in the opposite direction of the other. As we enter a new year that is sort of where we are. We cannot ignore what has been because that has in part informed who we are. At the same time we realize that life involves a constant sense of becoming. One of our bulletin boards reads, "We look back thanking God, we look forward trusting God." Our words of yesterday were spoken out of our experience of yesterday while what is stirred in our hearts and passes through our lips today and tomorrow will be a whole new language, because we have been changed.

In I Corinthians 13, Paul writes, "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known...." The process of spiritual growth moved Paul through the years. Each testimony of faith he heard encouraged him in his faith journey. Each miracle he witnessed broadened his sense of wonder in the power of God. Each burden he bore with a fellow believer the more sensitive he became to the Spirit's touch. His language changed because his understanding was deepened. That is why the Psalmist calls us to sing a new song to the Lord for he has done marvelous things.

As Paul comes to the dusk of life in this world, he writes another letter to the Corinthians in which he reflects, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new" (II Corinthians 5:17) Baptism in the early church was a dramatic celebration of change. As a believer approached the waters he/she removed their old clothing as a visible way of saying my old ways are no longer a part of who I am. Freed from what they once held onto, they entered the pool and were baptized. Upon exiting the waters they were immediately covered with a new white robe symbolic of their new way of life. Many times at a funeral you see a pall, a white cloth, draped over the casket to remind us of our loved one's baptism.

In Colossians 3, Paul counsels believers "to put to death (to take off) whatever in us that is earthly." He then offers a long list of those things that have no place in a Christian's life styles. Once we have been "stripped down" we are "dressed up." "As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience...." (Colossians 3:12ff). There comes a point when we have to be brave enough to say goodbye to those things that no longer are consistent with what we want to become because it is only then we are free to say hello and fully claim who Christ is calling us to be. The second Sunday of the new year we celebrate Jesus' baptism and therein are reminded of our baptism, the sign and seal of God's covenant promise made to us, the assurance that in Christ nothing can separate us from God.

Overwhelmed in the joy of his redemption, a fellow prayed, "Lord, I thank you I'm not the man I once was and I praise you that I'm not yet the fullness of the man you're recreating me to be." What the new year brings to you will depend a great deal on what attitude you bring to the new year. We are called to be resolute-purposeful, determined, unwavering. Jesus puts it more plainly, "Let your 'yes' be 'yes' and your 'no' be 'no' anything beyond that comes from the evil one" (Matthew 5:37).

God's blessing on you as you venture into this new year. Press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward calling.....

In Christ's love,

Pastor Jim

Scripture Texts for Worship

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

Sunday, January 1

Hebrews 2:10-18

Matthew 2:13-23

Sunday, January 8

Isaiah 42:1-9

Matthew 3:13-17

Sunday, January 15

Isaiah 49:1-7

John 1:29-42

Sunday, January 22

Isaiah 9:1-4

Matthew 4:12-23

Sunday, January 29

Matthew 5:1-12

Micah 6:1-8

Sunday, February 5

I Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)

Matthew 5:13-20

Sunday, February 12

I Corinthians 3:1-9

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Sunday, February 19

II Peter 1:16-21

Matthew 17:1-9

Ash Wednesday, February 22

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Isaiah 58:1-12

Sunday, February 26

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Matthew 4:1-11

Sunday, March 5

Genesis 12:1-4a

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

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. Proof of address in the Blairsville Borough is needed when signing up.

2023 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 2023, that amount is \$36.25 per member on the active roll. That breaks down to: General Assembly—\$9.85, Synod—\$2.40, and Presbytery—\$24.00. 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. 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.

Coupon Update

The total for the coupons received in the five years we have participated is \$501,634.97! A big thank you to everyone that has helped in accomplishing this amount.

Congregational Meeting

The 2022 year in review Congregational Meeting will be held Sunday, January 29, 2023. A soup luncheon will be served in Fellowship Hall after worship followed by the meeting. We hope you will plan to attend. The luncheon menu is soup, salads and desserts. If you would be willing to provide a pot of soup, a salad, a dessert or are willing to help in the kitchen or cleanup, please contact Joan Moran. Many hands make light work! Thank you.

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.”

End of the Year Reports

Committee chairs are asked to submit an 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.

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.

2023 Communion Dates

January 8—Baptism of Our Lord
*February 22—Ash Wednesday
March 12—Lent
*April 6—Maundy Thursday
April 9—Easter Day
May 28—Pentecost
July 9—Communion
September 10—Communion
October 1—World Wide Communion
November 26—Christ the King Sunday
*December 24—Christmas Eve
(* evening services)

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.

Many Thanks

To the Session and Congregation, A BIG thank you to many of you for your ongoing support and encouragement to us throughout the years. Thank you also for your prayers, cards, gifts and most of all your friendships. We look forward to a blessed and happy New Year in 2023!

Cindy, Sandy, Jill, Peg and Pam

Thank You

I would like to thank all my family and friends in the congregation for your support, prayers and many cards over the year. I appreciate you all very much and miss being with you.

Marilyn Neal

March Newsletter

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

Consider Taking Part

The Session Committees for 2023 are looking for interested members to be active participants. Chairs for the committees are listed. Please review the committees and responsibilities of the committees and contact the chair if you are interested in serving.

Worship – *co-chairs, Jean Heberling and Doug Clayton*—Worship services, sacraments, music, funerals, weddings

Mission – *chair, Gene Artman*—Benevolences, special offerings, global & local mission and missionaries

Christian Education – *co-chairs, Jim Antis and Gene Artman*—Sunday school programs, curriculum, adult education, youth work, leadership education

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

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

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

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

Evangelism – *chair, Kim McKinney*—New member recruitment and assimilation, outreach, publicity

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 12th during morning worship. One hundred percent of these gifts will be sent to ICCAP in support of the Food Bank.

LEADERSHIP FOR THE NEW YEAR

The Session

CLASS OF 2023
Jeff Lewis
Joan Moran
Pat Swope

CLASS OF 2024
Jim Antis
Terry Brown
Jean Heberling
Mel Woodring

CLASS OF 2025
Gene Artman
Doug Clayton
Bruce Highberger
Kim McKinney

The Board of Deacons

CLASS OF 2023
Steve Moran
Judy Trimble
Bobbi Monroe
Janet Smith

CLASS OF 2024
Chris Antis
Linda Neal
Brylea Borbonus

CLASS OF 2025
Susie Cotti
Mary Gorslene
Pam Irwin
Vicky Westley

Confirmation Class Unites

On Sunday, December 18, 2022, four young men united with the congregation after completing several weeks of confirmation classes. Below are their statements of faith of these young men.

1—"As Christians, we are called to do many things. We are called to keep God's commandments, live as Jesus did, not to sin, and keep a strong relationship with God. Even though we will never live a spotless, sinless life like Jesus, we can try to get as close as we can. In my walk of faith, I haven't been perfect, but there have been many influential people who have strengthened my relationship with God. One person who has been influential is my great, grandma Doak. When she was alive on earth, she kept God's commandments, was thoughtful, and even if she needed help, she helped others. Just being around her has inspired me to become a better Christian and a better person. Another person who has been influential is my great aunt Alice. She was always at church and is also very thoughtful. She helped anyone even if something was going on. She made me a better Christian as well. The final two people who have helped me through my walk of faith are my parents, Dana and Adam Doak. They were the ones who introduced me to Christ and decided to get me baptized. Without them, I may not even know Christ, so I thank them for that. I am excited to get confirmed, and proud to become a faithful member of the church. I will try to keep God's word and his commandments. Thank you."

2—"Throughout my life I have been raised as a Christian and brought to church. I have learned lots about Christianity, my family, and myself. There have been times where I'm frustrated and I seek guidance from my parents who are there for me, but I also know that my good judgement is led by the Holy Spirit, with Jesus as my moral compass. Who is Jesus? A question I have found myself thinking about many times. I believe Jesus is the son of God, the reason I am who I am, and the light in the darkness. Jesus has done so much for me, he has guided me through hard times, been by my side as I made decisions, and most importantly took our sins to the cross. I feel closest to God in the woods. There is something about nature—maybe it's being without other people or distractions that gives me time to appreciate him. Since God and Jesus have done so much for me, I try to help others in different ways. Including praying for others,

informing people about Christianity and my church, or just doing simple things like being kind. For me, wearing my cross necklace also guides me to make better choices and assures me that he is watching over me. I'm grateful my parents have baptized me, and now I'm prepared to affirm my faith and join the church on my own."

3—"I believe that God is the almighty Father. I believe he created everything including heaven and earth. I believe Jesus is his son who was sent to earth as a sacrifice for our sins. I believe the Holy Spirit is the presence of God in our lives. I believe that scripture is God's holy word and teaching sent to us to live by. I believe that the church is not only a building, but a people and congregation of believers. The church is where God is most felt and prevalent to us. The church is also where we go to hear the message of faith and fellowship among other believers. We the church are God's workers. The church is called to spread the good word of God through missions, outreach, and prayer. I am called to follow the teaching of God and follow his scripture. I can also spread his word locally and abroad through many forms."

4—"Although I haven't been alive for very long, I have always been part of this church. Twelve years ago, my parents baptized me here and have brought me to church to be part of a Christian family. Being in church makes me feel closer to God. I believe he is the almighty and that he created everything. I've learned a lot about Christianity in Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, and confirmation classes. I believe that God's only son is the world's savior. I think that Jesus has promised us a place in heaven. Since we can't be sinless, he has taken humanities' sins upon himself and went to the cross. The stories about him in the New Testament have taught me how Jesus expects us to love God and one another. I say thank you to Jesus by treating others the way I want to be treated, by trying to forgive people, and by asking myself what would Jesus want me to do. I say thank you to God by praying and by the way I live my life. To me, being a part of this church means that I have a supportive family in faith. It also means that I need to help that family with the talents God has given me. Since my baptism, people have been guiding me to be a person of faith. My mom, Pastor Tim, and my Grammy have helped me see what God has given us and how I should live. My mom always talks to me and my brothers about how we should love God and Jesus. She tells us to listen to the Holy Spirit that helps us choose right over wrong. I feel God is with me all the time because he's everywhere, but I feel him closest when I'm praying. Next Sunday on my 13th birthday, I would like to join this church because I believe Jesus and God are our creators and will guide me throughout my entire life."

Community Lenten Lunches Resume

The Blairsville Area Ministerium has made the decision to resume the community Lenten services and lunches this year. Each Wednesday through the season of Lent, beginning at 12:00 noon, a Lenten service is held followed by a soup and sandwich luncheon. A schedule of dates, places, and pastors are listed below.

Ash Wednesday, February 22..... Crossroads Church..... Pastor John Buchmann
 Wednesday, March 1..... Hopewell Methodist ChurchPastor Fred Craig
 Wednesday, March 8..... C&MA Church.....Pastor Harold Hicks
 Wednesday, March 15 Hebron Lutheran Church.....Pastor Timothy Monroe
 Wednesday, March 22..... First United Methodist Church..... Pastor Linda Corle
 Wednesday, March 29..... United Presbyterian Church Pastor Joe Baird
 Wednesday, April 5 SS Simon & Jude Church.....Pastor John Smaligo
 Good Friday, April 7 at 7:00 p.m..... St. Peter’s Episcopal Church.....Pastor Brianna Lehman



We will gather for worship at 7:00 p.m. on Ash Wednesday, February 22nd. There will be the imposition of ashes for those who wish to receive them and the Lord’s Supper will be celebrated. The service will be live streamed for those at home. This service of worship will be your first step into the Lenten season.

Boy Scouts Soup & Chili Cook Off

Boy Scout Troop 4 will hold their Annual Soup and Chili Cook Off, Sunday, February 5th in the Fellowship Hall. Cost is \$10.00 per person. They will have 12 different soups and chili’s to enjoy, plus bread and delicious desserts. This is a Boy Scout fundraiser to help cover expenses incurred in camping and other activities throughout the year. Thanks for your support.

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.

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—reserved		
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—reserved		



How Well Do You Know Your Bible

Bible Trivia

Answers in the next newsletter

1. Name the place where Jesus walked on water.
2. Who bought Joseph as a slave?
3. What did Esau receive in exchange for his birthright?
4. Who were Daniel's three friends? (Babylonian names)
5. Which apostle shared the gospel with an Ethiopian official on the road to Gaza?

BIBLE TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. What was the name of the man who requested Jesus' body for burial?
Answer: Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-54; John 19:38-42)
2. Which angel told Daniel the meaning of his vision of the ram and the goat?
Answer: Gabriel (Daniel 8)
3. Where in the Bible can you find the Lord's Prayer?
Answer: Matthew 6
4. Who went with Paul on his early mission trips?
Answer: Barnabas (Acts 13)
5. What was another name for the Apostle Paul?
Answer: Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9)

A Lenten Activity

Pretzels were first baked during Lent because they can be made with only water, flour, and salt. The shape came from a posture of prayer, with arms crossed and hands on opposite shoulders. A monk made dough into this criss-crossed shape, and the pretzel was born!

Lenten Pretzel Recipe Ingredients:

- 1 package yeast (.25 oz)
- 1 1/2 cups warm water
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups flour
- 1 egg
- extra salt for the tops- large salt works best!

Mix your yeast, water, sugar, and salt in a large bowl. Stir in the flour, and knead until the dough is smooth. Shape into the form of arms crossed in prayer and place it on a baking sheet. Brush the dough with a beaten egg to give it a shiny finish. Sprinkle the top with salt, and bake in an oven preheated to 425 degrees for 15 minutes.