



UPLIFT Newsletter

The United
Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville, PA

SEPTEMBER 2022

It's been said that history repeats itself, which is a good thing because most people don't listen the first time. Indeed, history really does repeat itself in that when we ignore it we keep making the same mistakes. On the other hand, when we heed its lessons we face the future more informed. That's true in our personal experience as well as in our family, our community and our church lives.

These recent months have been filled with all sorts of revelations about our congregation: how we've lived out our life together, why we do things the way we do them, what practices have enhanced us in a positive way, what behaviors have led us down a dead end path. In studying what has been we come to a deeper understanding of who we are. And in coming to terms with who we are we gain perspective on what we must do to become someone more. In studying the past we appreciate the richness of our heritage and therein realize our responsibility to be faithful stewards of it. Because we've been blessed, we have the duty to become a blessing.

As King David ponders the way God has been at work in his life, his praise and gratitude takes the form of a song, Psalm 16:

*The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.
The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.
I keep the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices.
You show me the path of life.
In your presence there is fullness of joy;
in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

An image that has guided us in our 200th anniversary is that of being living stones. Peter (the rock) speaks of Isaiah's image of the Messiah being the cornerstone established by God. From that stone, the foundation has been set by the prophets and the apostles. And then generation upon generation, God's people have lived out their faith—one lifetime built upon another's lifetime. Just as runners pass the baton to the one ahead of them, so the race is run toward the prize. As Christians, we are but a part of a greater whole, yet without each of us, the larger body would be less than it could be.

Our watchword throughout this celebration has been "like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house.....you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. For once you were no people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received it" (1 Peter 2:5, 9-10). As the church, as a congregation, we have been chosen, gathered for a purpose—to know Christ and to make Christ known. By what we say and what we do, by the way we, in faith, trust God and point others to Him, by the grace we treasure in our hearts and in turn express in our lives all creation comes to know not only who we are, but more intimately whose we are.

A goodly heritage is by definition a goodly heritage, and a goodly heritage is by definition lived out with gratitude and praise. From God all blessings flow and through God's people they are shared with the world. As a congregation we are proud of the dozens of men and women who have been ordained to teach and preach and serve around the world. But that call echoes just as strongly in each of us as we brighten the corner where we are. Above the door that the congregation passed to exit the sanctuary there was a placard that read, "You are now entering the ministry."

We stand upon the witness of billions of believers, but we don't stand idle. We are living stones who give of what we have received from the breath of the Holy Spirit. We've come a long way in our 200 years here in Blairsville, but in the perspective of eternity, we've only just begun.....

In Christ's love,

Pastor Jim



Scripture Texts for Worship

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

Sunday, September 4

Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Luke 14:25-33

Sunday, September 11

I Timothy 1:12-17
Luke 15:1-10

Sunday, September 18

I Timothy 2:1-7
Luke 16:1-13

Sunday, September 25

I Timothy 6:6-19
Luke 16:19-31

Sunday, October 2

II Timothy 1:1-14
Luke 17:5-10

October Newsletter

Articles to be published in the October edition of the UPLIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Friday, September 16th. Consider sharing church news through the monthly newsletter. Please call the church office with any questions or concerns.

Food Bank

The ICCAP Food Bank distribution is held the second Tuesday of each month from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. When signing up for the first time, proof of residency in the Blairsville borough is needed.

Worship Assistants

SUMMER SCHEDULE ENDS

September 4—10:00 AM

Liturgist: Mary Gorslene
Flowers: Nancy Boone
Sp Music: The Kerin Family
Audio/Visual: Brylea Borbonus & Doug Clayton

REGULAR SCHEDULE BEGINS

September 11—11:00 AM

Liturgist: Bobbi Monroe
Audio/Visual: Brylea & Eli Borbonus

September 18—Communion—11:00 AM

Liturgist: Rick Shoemaker
Flowers: Shirley Monroe
Special Music: Blairsville Brass
Audio/Visual: Kristi & Olivia Eckenroad

September 25

Liturgist: Jean Heberling
Flowers: Jeff Lewis & Pam Irwin
Audio/Visual: Karen & John Kerin

Offering Counters

Linda George and Jean Heberling

Our Regular Schedule

BEGINS

Sunday, September 11th

Worship—11:00 AM

Chancel Choir will be back with us. Our plans for Sunday School continue to be discussed. Please watch your weekly bulletins for updates.

Confirmation Class

A confirmation class will be held this fall. Parents, if you are interested in your child taking part, please contact the church office or talk with Pastor Monroe. Watch your weekly bulletin for more information.

Bible Study to Begin

Beginning September 7th, we will gather in Fellowship Hall, and by ZOOM for Bible Study each Wednesday morning at 10:00 a.m. Our study will finish the gospel of John and then move on to the book of Revelation. If you would like more information, please call the church office at 724-459-7991.

Board of Deacons

After a break for the summer months, our Board of Deacons will begin gathering for monthly meetings starting in September. The next meeting will be held Tuesday, September 6th at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.



Chancel Choir Update

Do you like to sing? Can you make a joyful noise? Then we want you!

Choir rehearsals begin Wednesday, September 7th at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. New voices are always welcome! If singing with others, who like to sing, sounds like a whole lot of fun, you're welcome to join the choir. Please see Cindy Borbonus if you have any questions or would like more information.

Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer concern or know of someone who needs prayer, please contact Linda George or the church office. Requests are not shared outside the chain unless permitted.



We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion Sunday, September 18th during the 11:00 a.m. special anniversary worship service. Please take time to prepare to receive and share the sacrament.



200TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

CATERED DINNER & PRESENTATION

Saturday, September 17 ~ 5:00 & 6:15 PM

A catered dinner will be served for a nominal fee followed by a presentation on our first 200 years in ministry. Dinner by reservation only.

BICENTENNIAL WORSHIP & LUNCHEON

Sunday, September 18 ~ 11:00 AM

A special bicentennial worship service will be held including communion, bagpipes, special music and the Blairsville Brass Ensemble. Following the service, a soup, sandwich and salad luncheon will be served in Fellowship Hall.

ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

Wednesday, September 21 ~ 7:00 PM

A variety of musicians who have shared their talents with us in worship have been invited to be with us again at our 200th Anniversary Concert. It will be a wonderful evening of praise to our God for all he's done through the years and for what he has yet to do!



Anniversary Keepsake Ornaments

The Anniversary Committee has ordered custom keepsake ornaments of the church from Wendall August Forge. The ornament is in a gift box and includes a card with a brief history of the church. These will be 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 for more information.

“Like Living Stones”

1 Peter 2:5 calls us to be “like living stones, built into a spiritual house....” That image of the church has been a watchword as we have moved closer to our 200th anniversary, and beyond. Many of you have been carrying stones in your pocket or purse as a reminder of Christ’s presence with you and purpose for you. At the same time, our celebration calls us to consider who we are together.

We are asking each of you to bring a stone from your home to church on Sunday, September 18th. The stone should be about three inches in diameter. Once we have collected the stones, they will be arranged artistically. Jim Antis will use his creative gifts in making an “objet d’art” (French for art object) to be placed in the prayer garden. This is symbolic of our spiritual identity as a community of living stones. We don’t know yet what it will look like—a mosaic or something three dimensional? Jim is quite artistic, so we’ll see where the Spirit leads him. Texture, shape and color don’t matter, but we do ask that the size be about three inches or less across. You can bring one from each person in your household or one to represent the whole family.

Our 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 those who will potentially serve as elders and deacons. Please be in prayer for them as they discern God’s will for our church’s leadership. Also be in prayer for those individuals who will be asked to serve.

The Nominating Committee includes:

Rick Shoemaker-chair, Gene Artman-elder, Vicky Westley-deacon, Elaine Jellison, Barb Brown, Pam Irwin, Linda George and Pastor Monroe. Tammy Ritchie and Janeen Swope are the alternates.

Congregational Meeting

A Congregational Meeting will be held immediately following worship **Sunday, September 25th** to accept the report of the Nominating Committee and the 2023 Pastoral Terms of Call.

Budget Planning Begins

The Finance Committee will soon begin to review information for the 2023 church budget. Committee chairs are asked to begin planning for next year and consider your financial needs. If you have any questions or would like additional information that would help your planning process, please contact the church office.

Back to school blessing for the 2022-23 school year

A prayer by Teri McDowell Ott. *As printed in the Presbyterian Outlook*

Maddie's grinning to show off her missing front tooth.

Jared's too antsy to stand still on the stoop.

Brianna's proud of her fresh braids for this first day.

Juan's too cool to hold Mom's hand-painted poster.

God, bless these children, and the parents who make them pose for pictures before the first day of school.

Bless all our children,
climbing on school buses,
backpacks heavy with hope,
anxious for acceptance,
needy for nurturing.

Bless our children, who aren't as innocent as we'd like;
our children for whom active shooter drills are routine and
thoughts and prayers aren't enough.

God, bless our parents, who have
laughed, played, traveled, mediated, intervened, fed and nurtured
all ... summer ... long
parents who are ready
and not-so ready
for summer days to end and school to resume.

Bless our parents who
pack backpacks, make lunches, create schedules and to-do lists
for toddlers and teenagers difficult to get out the morning door.

Bless them with patience –
grace for themselves and their children.

Bless them with long memories of
these days
that pass too quickly
when not noticed.

God, bless our teachers, school administrators and support staff –those to whom we entrust our children all year long.

Bless them with appreciation for their invaluable work.

Bless them with needed supplies they don't have to pay for out of pocket.

Bless them with new year excitement, toothy grins, and students who love to learn.

Bless them with the kind of joy that comes when you know you are meeting society's needs through your chosen profession.

Gather us, O God, around our children, parents, teachers and school staff as this new school year begins. Anoint us with your grace, fill us with your love, inspire us for your service.

Bless us as a community, guided by your Spirit, called to care for and nurture the young, for the sake of their future, and ours. Amen.



Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes

Samaritans Purse Operation Christmas Child is a program that provides boxes of goodies to children at Christmas. Those who wish to participate fill a shoebox with age-appropriate items and can also choose to prepare the box for a girl or a boy. For those wishing to participate, we will collect filled boxes at the church. They should be brought in by October 15th. Information on how to pack a box and what type of items to include, for a girl or a boy of a certain age group, are available on the table in the back of the sanctuary. Labels are also available to place on your box. If you have any questions or would like more information, please call the church office. You can also check out their website at www.samaritanspurse.org/occ.

Camera Reflections

Those Old Photographs

This is a picture of "Rev. Hunter's Band" in 1920 according to Mary Henry Cook of Blairsville who sent along this fine old photo.
Snapped on the sidewalk bordering the First United Presbyterian Church in Blairsville, the photo shows Rev. Hunter in the back row, fifth from the right.
This is one of a group of photos Mrs. Cook loaned Family Leisure many months ago.





How Well Do You Know Your Bible

Bible Trivia

Answers in the next newsletter

1. Who was the first man?
2. What did Moses say God commanded the Pharaoh to do?
3. True or False, Jesus turned water into Pepsi?
4. With what did Samson kill 1,000 Philistines?
5. Which books of the Bible did Solomon write?

BIBLE TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. How many days did God take to create the world?
Answer: 6 days, but he also created the 7th day as a day of rest. (Genesis 2:1-3)
2. Who baptized Jesus? **Answer:** John the Baptist (Matt. 3:13-17)
3. How many people were saved on the Ark? **Answer:** Eight, Noah, his wife, Ham, his wife, Shem, his wife, Japheth, and his wife. (Gen. 7:13)
4. Who was the woman judge who led Israel to victory?
Answer: Deborah, she was a prophet and judge (Judges 4)
5. How many requests are in the Lord's Prayer? **Answer:** Seven:
-Hallowed be your name, -Your kingdom come, -Your will be done,
-Give us our daily bread, -Forgive our debts, -Don't lead us into temptation, -Deliver us from evil

Food for Family Thought

1. Imagine yourself twenty years from now. Where do you think you'll be living? What do you think you'll be doing? How will you have changed? How will you have stayed the same?
**One of the best ways to prepare your child for a successful future is to eat meals together regularly. Research shows that children whose families ate meals together regularly during the week did better in school and avoided such social pitfalls as smoking, drug use, and premature sexual activity.
2. If you could be the tallest tree for many miles around, where in the world would you want to be planted so you could have an awesome view of everything below you?
**God has planted a seed of faith in each child. You have a major influential role in how well that seed of faith is nurtured. Pray that you can respond to the opportunities to nurture tender faith each day.