



And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

LUKE 2:10-11, ESV



THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BLAIRSVILLE

*"a community of believers, called by God, led by the Holy Spirit
to know Christ and to make Christ known"*

Rev. Timothy R. Monroe

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THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BLAIRSVILLE

December 31, 2023 ~ 11:00 a.m.

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

Words of Greeting

Rick Shoemaker, Liturgist

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Sharing of Opportunities, Joys and Concerns

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Prelude

“Gaudete! Christus est natus”

By T. Marchand

The Blairsville Brass

Introit

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

#218

**Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.**

Call to Worship

Leader: Lord, you have been our dwelling place
in all generations.

**People: Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**

Leader: Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,

**People: So that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us
and prosper for us the work of our hands.**

Leader: O prosper the work of our hands!

All: Let us worship God!

*Hymn # 191 “It Came upon the Midnight Clear”

***Prayer of Confession**

Gracious and loving God, as we stand on the threshold of a new year, we look back and recognize the many ways we have fallen short of your glory: missed opportunities to share your love; times when we were silent when we could have spoken up for what was right; indifference to your claim on our whole lives through Jesus Christ; and a lack of gratitude for your amazing grace by which you save us and call us to be your people. Lord, forgive us. As we look ahead to a new year, free us from thinking we can save ourselves. Help us to follow where you lead. Show us how to be your children and your heirs, forgiven and freed to live for our God and for one another in love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

***Gloria Patri**

***Sharing of the Peace**

Special Music

“Sinfonia and Chorus”

Arr. D. Kuite

“The Real 12 Days of Christmas”

Cindy Borbonus

Based on the book by Helen Haidle

Song

“The Twelve Days of Christmas”

(the congregation sings)

***Affirmation of Faith**

Jesus, the long-expected Savior, came into the world as a child, descended from David, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of Mary, a virgin. He lived as a Jew among Jews. He announced to his people the coming of God’s kingdom of justice and peace on earth. We affirm that Jesus was born of woman as is every child, yet born of God’s power as was no other child. In the person and work of Jesus, God himself and a human life are united but not confused, distinguished but not separated. The coming of Jesus was itself the coming of God’s promised rule. Through his birth,

life, death, and resurrection, he brings about the relationship between God and humanity that God always intended. Jesus is Lord! He has been Lord from the beginning. He will be Lord at the end. Even now he is Lord. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Hymn # 185 “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”

Prayers of the People & the Lord’s Prayer (*debt...and debtors...*)

Ministry of Giving in Response to the Word

Offertory “Away in a Manger” Arr. T. Marchand

*Doxology

*Prayer of Dedication

*Hymn # 179 “Joy to the World!”

*Benediction

*Postlude “Lift Up Your Heads” Arr. J. Gilbert

*(*All who are able, please stand)*

PLEASE JOIN us in the ritual of friendship by signing the attendance pads that are at one end of each of the pews. If you are here for the first time, we would appreciate it if you would give us your local telephone number. Please help yourself to a copy of our newsletter, *Uplift* available at the back of the church. We thank you for joining your voice to ours in sacred worship.

THE WORSHIP ASSISTANTS for this morning’s service are Liturgist, Rick Shoemaker; Director of Music, Cindy Borbonus; Organist, Pam Irwin; Special Music, the Blairsville Brass; Usher, Alan Lowman; and Property Manager, Dennis Gould.

ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION of officers is scheduled for Sunday, January 7th during morning worship. Those elected as elders and deacons to the Class of 2026 will be ordained and/or installed by our moderator Rev. Don Wilson.

A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING is scheduled for Sunday, January 7th following worship to review the report of the Nominating Committee. The report will include the names of those selected to serve on the Pastoral Nominating Committee.

THE 2023 ECCLESIASTICAL/CORPORATE MEETING will be held Sunday, January 28th immediately following worship. This meeting is an annual review of the work of the church. We hope you will plan to attend.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS are asked to have year-end reports for the Annual Ecclesiastical/Corporate Meeting to the church office by Sunday, January 21st. The meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 28th. For more information, please contact the church office.

THE BOARD OF DEACONS will meet Tuesday, January 2nd at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. This will be a planning meeting. All deacons are asked to attend.

OUR CHANCEL CHOIR will rehearse Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. We are looking for new voices to join our choir. The only requirement is to enjoy singing. Please see Cindy for more information.

OUR HANDBELL CHOIR will resume rehearsals next Wednesday, January 10th at 6:00 p.m. in the Bell Room. Our bell choir is also looking for new ringers. If you would like to try ringing a bell, contact Vicky Westley for more information.

CUSTOM KEEPSAKE 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 for an ornament or for more information.

We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion next Sunday during worship. Please take time this week to prepare to receive and share the sacrament.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Monday, Wednesday - Closed

OFFERING ENVELOPES for the New Year are available for you to pick up at the back of the sanctuary. Please look for your name as we have condensed the number of boxes and your box number may have changed. If you do not have church offering envelopes and would like a box set, please drop a note in the offering plate or contact the church office at 724-459-7991.

THE 2024 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.

AN USHER SIGN-UP 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.

VOLUNTEERS are needed to run the audio/visual equipment in the balcony each Sunday morning. Those interested will be trained. Please see Doug Clayton.

THE PRAYER CHAIN is coordinated by the Adult Sunday School Class. If you have a prayer request or know of someone's need for prayer, please contact Linda George or the church office. All requests are kept confidential.

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.

A COMMUNITY UNITY SERVICE will be held at 3:00 p.m. Sunday, January 21st at Summit Church in Blairsville. Area choirs, musical groups and musicians will share their talents and scripture will be read. This service is sponsored by the Blairsville Area Ministerium. All are welcome.

A COMMUNITY LENTEN DEVOTIONAL for 2024 is planned. If you feel led to share, please contact the church office and let us know of your willingness and which day you choose. Send devotions to the church office email, upchurch@r-church.com or drop off a hard copy **by Sunday, January 21st**. If you have questions, please call the office.

Thursday, March 7—Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9; Jeremiah 7:23-28;
Luke 11:14-23

Friday, March 8—Psalm 81:6-11, 14, 17; Hosea 14:2-10;
Mark 12:28-34

Saturday, March 9—Psalm 51:3-4, 18-21; Hosea 6:1-6;
Luke 18:9-14

REGULAR SCHEDULE:

Sunday	10:15 a.m.	Cookies and Coffee in Fellowship Hall
	11:00 a.m.	The Real 12 Days of Christmas with guest musicians the Blairsville Brass
Monday		New Year's Day! - Office Closed
Tuesday	6:00 p.m.	Board of Deacons Meeting
Wednesday	7:00 p.m.	Chancel Choir Rehearsal
Thursday	2:00 p.m.	Stitching Group
Sunday	10:15 a.m.	Cookies and Coffee in Fellowship Hall
	11:00 a.m.	Worship with Graham Smith Ordination & Installation of Officers
	12:00 p.m.	Congregational Meeting

THE SESSION COMMITTEES FOR 2024

Each year the committees of session seek to have volunteers become active participants. Please review the committees and their responsibilities and consider serving. In this year of transition we need volunteers to be active participants. Please review the list below and consider where you fit in. If you would like more information or have questions, please see an elder or call the church office. Chairs will be determined at the January Session meeting.

Worship – Worship services, sacraments, music, funerals, weddings

Mission – Benevolences, special offerings, global & local missions 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