



UPLIFT Newsletter

The United Presbyterian
Church of Blairsville, PA

AUGUST 2023

Everyone of my generation remembers the iconic film clip of the young postulant Maria Rainer (aka Julie Andrews) spinning joyfully in a meadow outside the Austrian city of Werfer in the shadow of Untersberg mountain singing, “The hills are alive with the sound of music... the hills fill my heart with the sound of music... I go to the hills when my heart is lonely, I know I will hear what I’ve heard before.” We all have those hills that represent a sense of nostalgia, stability, encouragement in life. Sometimes those hills are topographical, a part of the landscape. Sometimes those hills take the form of challenges that have shaped who we have become. And sometimes those hills are people who have led us forward in pursuit of fulfilling our God given call.

In researching the story of our life as a congregation there is one name that appears again and again. The Rev. Dr. George Hill was a graduate of Jefferson College in 1837 and Western Theological Seminary in 1840. Having briefly served with our first pastor, Rev. Thomas Davis, he took the reins of leadership following the pastor’s death. As a young man directly out of seminary he poured himself into the work the Holy Spirit laid before him. Not only did his ministry within the local congregation prosper, but within his first decade of service he was instrumental in establishing the Blairsville Women’s Seminary (1851). As a churchman, his reputation was impeccable having represented Blairsville Presbytery no less than six times. In the dark days of the Civil War, “his voice resounded on the side of loyalty and patriotism.” On lifestyle issues he was an ardent advocate of temperance. As a citizen he was an outspoken enemy of political and social corruption and a soldier in the crusade for moral reform. With faithfulness, he served this newly founded congregation for fifty-four years. For that reason his portrait hangs with honor on the wall of our church office. The reason it doesn’t hang in the pastor’s study is because no pastor in his or her right mind wants to be reminded daily that no matter how much of ourselves we give, we will always be in his shadow.

A few months ago I received a telephone call, “Is this the pastor of the Blairsville Presbyterian Church?” “It is” I replied. “Does the name George Hill mean anything to you?” I thought a moment and said, “That was the name of our second pastor who served in the mid to late 1800’s.” She replied, “Then you’re the church I’m looking for (there is a Presbyterian Church in Blairsville, Georgia).” She introduced herself as Angela Purdy of Miami (pronounced MI am uh), Oklahoma. She shared that she and her husband enjoy picking up discarded “treasures” they find on the curbside and going to auctions and buying those boxes of junk that sometimes go for a dollar. It was in unpacking one of those boxes that they discovered a silver coffee urn, severely tarnished but structurally sound. Upon closer examination, they saw an engraved message. “Presented to Rev. Dr. and Mrs. A.H. Hill by the ladies of the Blairsville Presbyterian Church with their affectionate regards on the 30th anniversary of his pastorate June 21, 1871.” In searching our archives, I found an account of the festivities that day. “Wednesday, June 21st at 10 AM a special train on the Indiana Branch brought the members of the congregation, the guests, and many other strangers, to Tamarack Farm, the residence of the Pastor, two miles from town. There the forenoon was spent in most delightful social and Christian intercourse—many old friendships being renewed, and many new ones formed. The day was one of the most beautiful of nature’s favorites, and the grateful shade, and fragrant flowers of the ample grounds, made full amends for the limited room within the hospitable doors. At noon, the welcome call to dinner brought all around well-laden tables, which had been provided and spread by the ladies of the congregation, under the friendly branches of the Pippin, the Rambo, the Bellflower, and the Russet (all trees in the local apple orchard). After invoking the divine blessing, Thomas D. Davis, M.D. (grandson of the first pastor) proceeded to present Dr. Hill and his wife (we don’t know her name) a chaste and elegant silver table-service, consisting of nine pieces.”

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Scripture Texts for Worship

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

August 6

Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21

August 13

Romans 10:5-15
Matthew 14:22-33

August 20

Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32
Matthew 15:(10-20) 21-28

August 27

Romans 12:1-8
Matthew 16:13-20

September 3

Exodus 3:1-15
Matthew 16:21-28

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.

ICCAP Food Bank

The Blairsville Area Food Bank is held the second Tuesday of each month. Food bags are distributed to folks from the Blairsville Borough between the hours of 10:30 a.m.—12:00 p.m. Proof of address in the Blairsville Borough is needed when signing up.

September Newsletter

Articles to be published in the September edition of the UPLIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Tuesday, August 15th.

Worship Assistants

August 6

Liturgist Mary Anzelone
Special Music Angela Lyons
Property Mgr. Pat Swope

August 13

Liturgist Barb Brown
Flowers Gene & Chery Artman
Special Music Matthew Cyphert
Property Mgr. Terry Brown

August 20

Liturgist Bobbi Monroe
Flowers Linda George
Flowers Lee & Bunny Ednie
Special Music Blairsville Brass
Property Mgr. Dennis Gould

August 27

Liturgist Jean Heberling
Special Music Organ & Piano Duet
Property Mgr. Kim McKinney

August Offering Counters

Tom & Janet Smith

Anniversary Ornaments

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 call the church office.

Worship Assistants

Volunteers to assist during the worship service are always needed. There are a variety of ways you can become involved as an assistant. Call the office if interested.

Greeter—welcome those coming in for worship and hand them a bulletin; answer questions like, “Can I sit anywhere?”

Liturgist—assist the minister, from the pulpit, by leading the Call to Worship, Prayer of Confession and reading the first scripture

Audio-Visual Tech—after training, take your turn in rotation to run the sound and slides from the balcony during worship, and live-stream the service for those at home.

Our Regular Schedule

begins Sunday, September 10th

The worship hour will begin at 11:00 a.m. and our Chancel Choir will be back with us. Our plans for Sunday School continue to be discussed. Please watch your weekly bulletins for updates.

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

Our Chancel Choir will begin Wednesday rehearsals on September 6th from 7:00-8:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. We would love to have new voices join the choir! Many of our seasoned members are no longer with us. If you are interested in singing in the choir, please see Cindy Borbonus. All are welcome!

Summer Special Music Schedule

August 6 Angela Lyons
August 13 Matthew Cyphert
August 20 Blsv. Brass
August 27 Piano & Organ

Graduate Thank You

Thank you so much for the Study Bible and for recognizing me. I really appreciated it.

Cole Stuchal

“Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.”

(Continued from page 1)

Angela and Scott Purdy write, “We proudly gift back this very special urn. It has traveled 152 years and ended up in Miami, OK, which is 954 miles from Blairsville, PA. Who knows where it has been between there and here. We are excited that we found you and are happy to send it back home, where it belongs.”

There are enough metaphors in this story to keep a preacher going for years—or at least it would seem like years. The session will decide on next steps with this returned treasure. We are truly grateful to the Purdy’s for their kindness, foresight and energy in guiding the urn back to its home. We will keep you informed on what happens next....

In Christ’s love,

Pastor Jim



Kiskiminetas Presbytery News

TEAM HOPE has been meeting for the last eighteen months, discerning and dreaming together about a path forward for Kiskiminetas Presbytery. They have developed a plan and structure for the Presbytery that will meet the needs of congregations and make sure not to put undue stress on pastors. You are invited to attend one of the cluster gatherings to ask questions, get more information about the plan, and help the Team with your feedback. Members of Team Hope will be present at each gathering. Anyone who is a member of the congregation is invited to attend. Dates and locations of the gatherings are listed. Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m.

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| Thursday, August 3 | Shelocta Church |
| Monday, August 7 | Beechwoods Church |
| Tuesday, August 8 | First Church, Clarion |
| Wednesday, August 9 | Appleby Manor Church |
| Monday, August 14 | Punxsutawney Church |

Please RSVP to the Presbytery Office via email at kiski@kiskipby.org or via phone at 724-783-7196.

TEL-A-STORY

Tel-a-story telephone number is 1-888-878-8660. After listening to the recorded message, a child is given the opportunity to press “1” to talk to a real person and hear more about believing in Jesus. What a great way to reach more children! Please be sure to share this number with the children you know. Call today!





How Well Do You Know Your Bible

Bible Trivia

Answers in the next newsletter

1. What is the first book of the Bible? What is the last book of the Bible?
2. What did Jacob give Joseph that sparked jealousy in his siblings?
3. What did God say from the sky when Jesus was baptized?
4. Before Jesus started preaching, what was his job?
5. Who went up yearly to worship God at Shiloh, and one year prayed to God for a baby?

BIBLE TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. How many days and nights did it rain when Noah was on the ark?
Answer: 40 (Genesis 7:17)
2. How many books of the Bible have the name John in them?
Answer: 4 The gospel of John, I John, II John, III John
3. How many sling-throws did it take David to hit Goliath?
Answer: 1 (I Samuel 17:48-49)
4. How many books in the Bible? In the Old Testament? New Testament?
Answer: Bible has a total of 66 books; 39 Old Testament and 27 New Testament
5. How many kings did Israel have? How many kings did Judah have?
Answer: The combined kingdom had 3 kings; then Israel had 19 kings and Judah had 20 kings:

COMBINED KINGDOM—King Saul, King David, King Solomon

ISRAEL

Jeroboam
Nadab
Baasha
Elah
Zimri
Omri
Ahab
Ahaziah
Joram
Jehu
Jehoahaz
Joash
Jeroboam II
Zachariah
Shallum
Menhahem
Pekahiah
Pekah
Hoshea

JUDAH

Rehoboam
Abijah
Asa
Jehoshaphat
Jehoram
Ahaziah
Athaliah
Joash
Amaziah
Uzziah
Jotham
Ahaz
Hezekiah
Manasseh
Amon
Josiah
Jehoahaz
Jehoiakim
Jehoiachin
Zedekiah