



# UPLIFT Newsletter

The United Presbyterian  
Church of Blairsville, PA

FEBRUARY 2024

The season of Lent is a time of prayer, fasting and self-examination in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord at Easter. It is a period of 40 days — like the flood of Genesis, Moses' sojourn at Mount Sinai, Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb, Jonah's call to Ninevah to repent and Jesus' time of testing in the wilderness. (The Sundays in Lent are not counted in this reckoning of the time between Ash Wednesday and Easter, as every Lord's Day is a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.)

In the early church, Lent was a time of preparation for the celebration of baptism at the Easter Vigil. In many communities of faith it remains a time to equip and nurture candidates for baptism and confirmation and to reflect deeply on the theme of baptismal discipleship.

## **The Paschal Mystery**

(An excerpt from the *Companion to the Book of Common Worship* (Geneva Press, 2003 110-111))

What we hear during Lent is the power and possibility of the paschal mystery, and that the way of the cross, the way to Easter, is through death. To appropriate the new life that is beyond the power of death means we must die with Christ who was raised for us. To live for Christ, we must die with him. New life requires a daily surrendering of the old life, letting go of the present order, so that we may embrace the new humanity. "I die every day!" asserts Paul (1 Corinthians 15:31). Resurrection necessitates death as a preceding act. The church's peculiar Lenten claim is that in dying we live, that all who are baptized into Christ are baptized into his death. To be raised with Christ means one must also die with Christ. In order to embrace the resurrection, we must experience the passion of Jesus. The way of the cross, the way to Easter, is through death of the "old self." In dying, we live.

Therefore, at the beginning of Lent, we are reminded that our possessions, our rulers, our empires, our projects, our families and even our lives do not last forever. "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). The liturgies throughout Lent try to pry loose our fingers, one by one, from presumed securities and plunge us into unknown baptismal waters, waters that turn out to be not only our death tomb but surprisingly our womb of life. Rather than falling back into nothingness, we fall back on everlasting arms. Death? How can we fear what we have already undergone in baptism?

It is the power of the resurrection on the horizon ahead that draws us into repentance toward the cross and tomb. Through the intervention of God's gracious resurrection, lifelong changes in our values and behavior become possible. By turning from the end of the "old self" in us, Lenten repentance makes it possible for us to affirm joyfully, "Death is no more!" and to aim toward the landscape of the new age. Faithfully adhering to the Lenten journey of "prayer, fasting and almsgiving" leads to the destination of Easter.

During the final week, Holy Week, we hear the fullness of Christ's passion, his death, and resurrection. From Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and on to the Triduum (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday), all of Holy Week focuses on the passion. As his followers, we travel Christ's path of servanthood through the Lord's Supper and the suffering of the cross toward the glory of Easter, all of which underscores the inseparable link between the death and resurrection of Jesus.

*Reprinted from the PCUSA Mission Agency*

## Worship Leaders

### February 4

Speaker Rev. Greenfield  
Liturgist Todd Faulk  
Property Mgr. Gene Artman

### February 11—Scout Sunday

Speaker Mrs. Donna Yarnal  
Liturgist Mary Anzelone  
Property Mgr. Bob Cosharek

### February 14—Ash Wednesday

Speaker Mr. Randy Stear  
Ashes Gene Artman

### February 18

Speaker Mrs. Donna Kanyan  
Liturgist Jean Heberling  
Property Mgr. Terry Brown

### February 25

Speaker Mr. Clark Bruner  
Liturgist Dennis Gould  
Property Mgr. Kim McKinney

### Offering Counters

Tom & Janet Smith

## Boy Scouts Soup & Chili Cook Off

Boy Scout Troop 4 will hold their Annual Soup and Chili Cook Off, Sunday, February 18th 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.

## March Newsletter

All articles to be published in the March 2024 edition of the UPLIFT newsletter are due to the church office by Thursday, February 15th.

**Volunteers** are needed for ushering, helping with the sound, projector and streaming and serving as liturgist. Please call the church office if you are interested in helping in any of these areas.

## 2024 Per Capita

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 2024, that amount is **\$37.40 per member** (*not household*) on the active roll. That breaks down to: General Assembly—10.00, Synod—\$2.40, and Presbytery—\$25.00. 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. If you have questions, please contact the church office or see an elder. We want to honor your intentions for your gifts to the work of the church.

## Handbell Choir News

Handbell Choir rehearsal begins at 6:00 p.m. each Wednesday evening. We need more ringers to complete our choir. If you have ever thought of giving handbells a try, please contact Vicky Westley. We can plan a time to meet so you can “test it out” before committing to ringing with the Bell Choir. We would love to have you join us!

## Chancel Choir Update

Our Chancel Choir rehearsals are held each Wednesday evening from 7:00-8:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. We invite new voices join the choir! Many of our seasoned members are no longer with us. If you like to sing and are interested in being a part of the choir, please see Cindy Borbonus. All are welcome!

## ASH WEDNESDAY worship

We will gather for worship at 7:00 p.m. on Ash Wednesday, February 14th. There will be the imposition of ashes for those who wish to receive them. Our guest speaker will be Mr. Randy Stear. This service of worship will be your first step into the Lenten season. (*Communion will not be celebrated as previously announced.*)



## 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. Since then, more than \$170 million has been generated for local charities across the country through Souper Bowl of Caring. It has become a powerful movement that transforms the time around the Big Game into the nation's largest celebration of giving and caring for those in need. We will receive our Souper Bowl of Caring Offering Sunday, February 13th during morning worship. One hundred percent of these gifts will be sent to ICCAP in support of the Food Bank.

## The Session Committees for 2024

### *Consider taking part as an active committee member!*

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 were determined at the January Session meeting.

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

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

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

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

**Stewardship** – Stewardship education and programs, challenges the congregation in its faithful use of the many different resources entrusted to our care—**co-chairs, Bonni Dunlap & Todd Faulk**

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

**Congregational Fellowship** – Suppers, picnics, outings, trips, camping—**tdb**

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

## Community Lenten Devotionals

Lenten Devotional Booklets will be available to you Sunday, February 11th. The booklets include a Daily Lenten Reflection for each day through Lent and concludes on Easter Day. It was a community effort again this year with devotions written by friends in area churches. We would like to thank those from our church who participated by writing a devotion. We hope you pick one up and use it through the season.

## Community Lenten Services and Lunches

The Blairsville Area Ministerium will again offer 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.

February 14 .....	Crossroads Church .....	Pastor Harold Hicks
February 21 .....	Hopewell Church .....	Pastor Susan O'Shaughnessy
February 28 .....	C&MA Church .....	Pastor Bill Heberling
March 6 .....	Hebron Lutheran Church .....	Pastor Fred Craig
March 13 .....	United Presbyterian Church .....	Father Dino Laude
March 20 .....	Black Lick Methodist .....	Pastor Jim Kendall
March 27 .....	SS Simon & Jude Church .....	Pastor Jenn Krishart
March 29 .....	Blairsville Methodist Church .....	Pastor Mark Ferlin

Good Friday at 7:00 p.m.

## Coat Drive Update

Thank you to all those who gave toward our Coats for Kids Coat Drive. This year Janet was able to give out a total of 53 coats to kids in need in our community. Thanks to the Men with Mixers this year and generous donations from many in the church, we raised a total of \$1,535 to support the coat ministry. A BIG thank you to Janet Smith for all her hard work and dedication in purchasing the coats and getting them to the families. Thank you to Nancy Boone and the grannies for supplying hats and scarves to give out with the coats.



## How Well Do You Know Your Bible

### Bible Trivia

*Answers in the next newsletter*

1. Who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at the time of Jesus' death?
2. Who gave Jesus a crown made of thorns?
3. What happened when Jesus went into the wilderness?
4. What four books tell about Jesus' life on earth?
5. How many people did Jesus feed with fish and bread?

### BIBLE TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. How did Esther get to talk with the king?  
**Answer:** Went in to talk without being summoned first  
(Esther 4:11-5:3)
2. True or False: John the Baptist wore clothes made of goat hair.  
**Answer:** False. It was camel hair (Matthew 3:1-6)
3. What was another name for the apostle Paul?  
**Answer:** Saul of Tarsus (Acts 13:1-12)
4. Who was the last king Daniel served under in the Bible?  
**Answer:** King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 1:1-21)
5. Where did David spare King Saul's life the first time?  
**Answer:** In a cave (1 Samuel 24:1-15)

### Church News Email

In addition to emailing members of the congregation information weekly about upcoming Sunday services and other special events, we are considering emailing the monthly newsletter to interested individuals. Please let us know if you would prefer a digital copy of the newsletter or if you would like to continue receiving a printed format.

[upchurch@r-church.com](mailto:upchurch@r-church.com)

