
The Pastor's Searchlight—September, 2018: Dr. Tony Campolo, author, popular speaker, and college professor, shares the following story in his book, *Let Me Tell You a Story: One day, about the noon hour, I was walking down Chestnut Street when I noticed a bum walking toward me. He was covered with dirt and soot from head to toe. There was filthy stuff caked on his skin. But the most noticeable thing about him was his beard. It hung down almost to his waist and there was rotted food stuck in it. The man was holding a cup of McDonald's coffee and the lip of the cup was already smudged from his dirty mouth. As he staggered toward me, he seemed to be staring into his cup of coffee. Then, suddenly, he looked up and he yelled, "Hey, mister! Ya want some of my coffee?"*



I have to admit that I really didn't. But I knew that the right thing to do was to accept his generosity, and so I said, "I'll take a sip." As I handed the cup back to him I said, "You're getting pretty generous, aren't you, giving away your coffee? What's gotten into you today that's made you so generous?" The old derelict looked straight into my eyes and said, "Well...the coffee was especially delicious today, and I figure if God gives you something good, you ought to share it with people!"

I thought to myself, Oh man. He has really set me up. This is going to cost me five dollars. I asked him, "I suppose there's something I can do for you in return, isn't there?" The bum answered, "Yeah! You can give me a hug!" (To tell the truth, I was hoping for the five dollars.) He put his arms around me and I put my arms around him. Then suddenly I realized something. He wasn't going to let me go! People were passing us on the sidewalk. They were staring at me. There I was, dressed in establishment garb, hugging this dirty, filthy bum! I was embarrassed. I didn't know what to do.

Then, little by little, my embarrassment changed to awe and reverence. I heard a voice echoing down the corridors of time saying, "I was hungry; did you feed Me? I was naked; did you clothe Me? I was sick; did you care for Me? I was the bum you met on Chestnut Street...did you hug Me? For if you did it to the least of these, you did it unto Me."

I can guarantee you that as our Unglued Church Project Team prepares to enter the fall months and into next year, they will be doing so with a new sense of mission and purpose as they desire to be obedient to God's call in the neighborhoods around Belle Valley Church. They have listened to God's voice over the past 8 months and have felt a clear sense of Belle Valley's mission in this simple 8 word statement—so simple that we all could and should commit this mission statement to memory so that anyone off the street could ask us, "What is Belle Valley's mission?"...and our immediate response would be: **Connecting our neighbors** (both the congregation's neighbors, and each of our personal neighbors) **to God and one another!** They are currently researching and planning 5 ministry efforts that have grown out of this new mission statement (of which you will be hearing more in the very near future!).

God has blessed us with a great location on the edge of the city of Erie and the major traffic thoroughways of our region (I-90, I-79, Rt. 8), because God has entrusted us with the care of His children in its neighborhoods. God has blessed us with a wonderful facility and grounds to share with groups like the Girl Scouts, AA, and other area non-profits who will often ask to use our parking lot for an event. God has blessed Belle Valley with endowed financial resources so that we might be able to tackle larger projects like the new green metallic roof replacement back in 2016. Without this endowment, we would not have been able to touch that project without a loan. Those who left significant bequests in recent years did so because they saw the vision of what Belle Valley's ministries mean to this community, and trusted us to be good stewards of that vision. And that means we have to work harder to replace those funds over time through our sacrificial giving and tithing, and through creative fundraising projects, so that we can continue to maintain that vision, and be faithful to God. And that means we **ALL** have to do our part, give our best, surrender our **ALL!** *We want to hear Jesus say, "I was the outsider, the stranger who couldn't speak English, the poor and hungry one, the "weird-looking" one, the child, the senior adult, the forgotten adolescent or single adult, the struggling single parent family, the person of different color, ethnicity, culture, accent, religion, point of view, and sexuality...and when you hugged the least of these, you hugged me!"*

Upcoming Sermon Series:

- "Words You'll Never Hear God Say" (Aug. 26-Sept. 30)
- Rev. Ken Djotepe (Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana Ecumenical Director) will be our guest preacher as a group of our Ghanaian partners are here for the annual Ghana mission network mtg. & to spend time in our presbytery!
- "40 Days of Prayer" (Oct. 7-Nov. 18)
- Advent: "God With Us" (Dec. 2-24)

Yours In Christ, Pastor Dave (reved87@verizon.net)

Don't forget! The Deacons have special gold envelopes in the pew racks for those who wish to donate to their caring & assistance ministry on communion Sunday each month. **Please remember** that we have **children's activity bags** for any children who aren't interested in using the nursery or children's church programs during worship. These bags include crayons, coloring pages, story books, & snacks. These bags should be returned after worship for continued use, but the snack and coloring pages can be kept by the child.

Worship

Sept. 9: (Communion, Children's Bible Presentation) "Words You May Not Hear God Say: God Is in Control"

Sept. 16: (New Member Celebration) "Words You May Not Hear God Say: God Does Not Submit"

Sept. 23: (CROP Walk) Guest Preacher from our Ghanaian Delegation: Ken Djotepe (Ecumenical Director, Evangelical Presby. Church, Ghana)

Sept. 30: (Penny Sunday) "Words You May Not Hear God Say: God Is a Christian"

Praying for: (Please contact us with any changes to or removals from this list) The Sills Family, Esther Reynolds, Missy Tombaugh, Fred Marshall, Napierkowski family, Jason Walsh, Conway Family, Allan Jimerson, Dan Hitchcock, Julia Zukowski, Samantha Sayers & family (missing since 8/1), Rita Niemi, Rick Hess, Jean Moorhead, Aimee Gross, Justin Blanchard, Jimmy Bojarski, Herb Nupp, John Marzka, Joan Ragen, Pam & Danny Rapoza, Sandy McConahy, Jackie & Dave Phillips, Evangeline Boga, Cindy Murosky, Tony Ester, Teresa Brewer, Rich Hoover, Stephanie Warren, Bennett Testa, Jackie Roddy, Aubrey Macs, Kitty Holtz, Doris Feeney, James Demtsy, Mark Schaas, Camille Jimerson, Melissa Pepple, Ellie Poulson, Jim Glass, Mary Ann Lasko, Adam Muse, Kathy Feidler, Ralph Acker, Ruth Ridgeway,



Bev Hopkins, Rusty Kerr, Zach Napierkowski, Jeremiah Murosky; the victims of fire across the western US; the victims of senseless shootings around the US; Erie's growing epidemic of opioid addictions; Isis terrorism tragedies around the world; current military services personnel (*especially Jared Marzka*); the Ghana mission partnership (*We pray especially for the Chereponi District: 11 churches, 528 members, and District Pastor M. L. Agbovi*); Josh Heikkila (*our PCUSA W. Africa Liaison*); Ruth Brown (*new missionary to the Upper Northern Presbytery*); the Wapuli Health Clinic; the Bindati Family; **Presbytery prayers:** Revs. Rick Cepis, Jim Moelk, Rachel Johns, Jim Haas, Jim McCormack, Jeff Fowler, the Girard church.

Upcoming Events: Sunday Worship—11am

- ***Recycling:** drop-offs anytime (newspaper in west property trailer/aluminum cans) ***Communion**, 1st Sun. ***Penny Sunday**, Last Sun.
- ***Deacons**, 2nd Sun. ***Session**, 9/10, 6:30pm ***Adult Study Group**, 9/11, 18, 25, 10am @ BVPC office
- ***10 Great Dates**, Tuesdays @ 6pm ***BV AA group**, Tuesdays @ 10am in our fellowship hall
- ***CROP Walk**, 9/23, 2pm, Beach #1, Presque Isle State Park



Please Minister to Members Challenged by Chronic Health Issues (cards, calls, visits, and prayer):

Bill Bullock: Elmwood Gardens, 2628 Elmwood Ave., #E-6, 16508; **Janet Crain:** 3662 Dog Leg Trail, Erie, 16510 (520-6176); **Rusty Kerr:** Sarah Reed Senior Living Ctr., RT-#226, 2214 Sassafras St., 16502 (878-2758); **Jean Moorhead:** 1023 Raspberry St., 16502 (459-9077); **Marge Parker:** Independence Court, 41 W. Gore Rd., #252, 16504 (864-4867); **Harold Keefe:** 4322 Pine Ave., 16504 (315-9594); **MaryAnn Stein:** 919 E. 8th St., Erie 16503 (520-5082); **Doris Feeney:** St. Mary's-East, 607 E. 26th St., #114, 16504 (528-0108); **Dan & Diane Horton:** 643 Elk St., Apt. 2, Franklin, PA, 16323 (860-9173, 282-9944), email: 2525@gmail.com. **Rick Hess:** temporarily at Presque Isle Rehab. and Nursing Facility (W. 38th & Schaper). **Ellie Logan:** temporarily at Walnut Creek Rehab. & Nursing Facility (Zuck & Interchange).

Financial Secretary Notes:

1. Anyone that wants tithing envelopes for 2018 please let Gwen Ebert know (825-2989 or 860-4477).
2. Anyone (member or non-member) that wants/needs a printed record of their giving to the church must have a number in order for their giving to be recorded. If you do not have a number and would like one please contact Gwen Ebert.



Any Church Family Needs... sickness, hospitalization, funeral reception after the loss of a loved one, financial need, etc. Please contact the Deacons thru Kim Ragen (392-5831)—confidentiality is maintained! **Are you or anyone you know in any kind of emotional crisis or grief over loss** (loved one, employment, mobility, independence, etc.)? We have access to trained Stephen Ministers: gifted listeners, free, and confidential. Call Pastor Dave (397-1861).

Food Collections: Please keep up all the good work of your ongoing support of canned goods and staples for the Mt. Carmel food pantry. There is also a list of suggested food staples that are most welcome at that receptacle (for example: peanut butter, spaghetti sauce, pasta, tuna, chicken, etc.). We also continue our City Mission food pantry collection. Both receptacles are in the foyer.



Belle Valley's Recycling Ministry Needs YOU! Unloading the newspaper trailer onto a delivery truck will take place (check w/ Charlie Blanchard first: 825-3925). **New recycling criteria** please take note: **only aluminum cans**, newspaper (*and old phone books*). **We also recycle printer ink cartridges** from your own personal computer systems—the collection bin is in the foyer (**we receive funds for this recycling!**). **We also recycle cell phones!!** We are asking you to donate any old cell phones, and those of family/friends. The collection bin is in the foyer.



We NEED Your Help with the BVPC Nursery Care* and Custodial Teams? If you're able to serve BVPC by participating in a rotation of volunteers who help serve the needs of younger families at worship, or to keep the facility clean from week to week, then contact Chris Tombaugh (882-8932). We will provide the training and answer any questions you have. **You need to have your PA clearances (but those can be obtained free of charge via the internet, and we can help you do that).*

Our Mission Partnership with the Upper Northern Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana:

We are excited as the final film pieces prepared by a professional filmmaker who traveled with us last year, will soon be ready. I look forward to the opportunities to share these pieces with you to inspire and inform. **As you pray for this partnership, our church has been partnered with a cluster of LEP churches in prayer for a district of churches in the Upper Northern Presbytery of EPC-Ghana:** Seeking to be faithful to God we encourage faithful prayer for each other. While it is good to pray for all churches, your Ghana Mission Team encourages prayer for specific groups of churches. You can certainly pray whenever you desire but you are especially encouraged to pray at least once a month for your sister congregations.



Chereponi District

11 churches
126 male members;
183 female members;
219 children
District Pastor:
Rev. Joshua Nabuer

Lake Erie Presbytery

Ripley, NY
North East
Harborcreek
Erie, Eastminster
Erie, Emmanuel
Erie, Belle Valley
Erie, New Hope
Erie, First Covenant
Erie, Elmwood Avenue

***Hear from our Lake Erie Ghana Partner:** Rev. Josh Heikkila, our PCUSA world mission co-worker in Ghana, will be visiting our presbytery, 9/17 (Monday). All are welcome to meet with him and hear first-hand how your mission support is having an impact! Come to 1st Covenant, 5:30-7pm, dinner included (250 W. 7th St.; 456-4243). RSVP to Donna Cammarata (873-4860, donna.cammm@gmail.com).

Having Trouble Controlling the Way You Eat? Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous is based on the 12 Steps of AA. It is a fellowship of women and men who are recovering from the disease of food addiction. There are no dues, fees, or weigh-ins. Weekly mtgs. take place at: Erie Church of Christ, 2317 W. Grandview Blvd. (Tuesdays, 6:30-8pm); St. Augustine of Canterbury Episcopal Church, 427 Plum St., Edinboro (Thursdays, 6:30-8pm). Visit our website at: "foodaddicts.org."

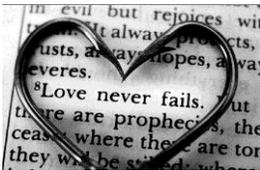


Attention All Youth Ministry Volunteers (nursery, VBS, children's church, etc.): We are still in need of receiving a copy of PA clearances for a few of you to have on file in our office. This is a new mandate by the state of PA. The good news is that for volunteers the process of securing those clearances is easy and free! Please contact Kim Ragen for more info (881-1323 or 392-5831 respectively); or **if you have no internet access.**



Adult Study Group: We join in fellowship and study opportunities each week. Our first week (1st Tuesday of month, 10:30am) we meet at Harborcreek Perkins Restaurant, and then we gather each week afterwards on Tuesdays at 10am at the church office. We always have coffee and donuts, a time of prayer and then a discussion of a recent Christian fiction book or book of the Bible. We are about to begin a discussion of the prophet Daniel. Come explore this fascinating Old Testament story and its implications for our faith!

***"10 Great Dates"**—a creative enrichment event for couples of all ages (married or not). Come together for a brief video segment to introduce each week's discussion topic, and then be sent out for your own private date (10 weeks consecutively). This will be facilitated by Clay & Kristin Woodring, 15+ years of marriage so far (both pursuing the commissioned lay pastor status in our presbytery). Childcare is provided free of charge. Come whenever you are able, even if you can only join in once or twice!! It is held each week on Tuesdays @ 6pm. It will conclude on October 23.



Interested in Exploring Membership? What exactly does it mean to become a member of Belle Valley Presbyterian Church? Why would I want to take that step of commitment? What do I need to know about this congregation (its history, design, and vision) to help me decide? If you'd be interested in further discussion (no strings attached!), or if you know someone who is currently unchurched and would be interested in the conversation, please contact Pastor Dave to get more info (397-1861). I hear he likes to treat folk to coffee at Panera's, his home away from home!



DON'T FORGET: Your 2nd mile giving to our Presbytery's 2018 per capita fund—this is a gift (\$31.50) asked from every member of Presbyterian churches in our presbytery to be used for larger mission efforts sponsored by the PC(USA) in our region!! If you haven't yet contributed, please do so now, making out your checks to "Elmwood Avenue Presbyterian Church" and mark the memo line—"Per Capita gift."



CROP Hunger Walk – What are you doing **Sept. 23**? Would you like a way to visit with friends, make new friends, enjoy the outdoors, get exercise AND help change the world? Come walk with us in the CROP Hunger Walk to raise funds to fight hunger in our community and around the world. We'll start and end at **Beach #1, Presque Isle State Park**. Registration starts at **1pm** and the Walk starts at **2pm**. See **Pastor Dave** for more information (397-1861). Walker donation envelopes can be signed out from the foyer, and donors can sign up to promise their gifts in the foyer also!