
The Pastor's Searchlight—March, 2020: *The Forgotten Explorer*



The following story is from The One Year Book of Amazing Stories, by Robert Petterson: *When his parents died, Matt dropped out of school and became a dishwasher. He was only 12 when a Baltimore ship captain took him on as a cabin boy. That skipper was the closest thing Matt ever had to a father. The captain showed the orphan how to read, write, and navigate a ship. Matt learned skills that would take him where no man had ever ventured. When the ship's captain died, Matt was again on his own. He returned to Washington, D.C., where he met the second man who would change his life. Captain Robert E. Peary was sailing south to survey the feasibility of a canal across Nicaragua. When he met Matt, he was surprised that an eighteen-year-old knew so much about navigation. So he hired the teen as his personal valet. During their two years in Central America, Peary's vision to explore the Arctic Circle ignited a passion in Matt. Their shared dream would yoke them together for 20 years of history-making exploration. In 1895 they traveled to Greenland on a trip that turned to disaster. They barely survived the winter by eating their sled dogs. When they found refuge with an Inuit tribe, Matt became the first American to master their difficult language. He also learned how to build dogsleds, kayaks, and igloos, taking tips from the locals in surviving the harsh Arctic. Peary knew that his valet was the key to making it to the North Pole. After several failed attempts, in 1908 they began their final shot at reaching the northernmost point on the planet. The two mushed north with 49 Inuits, more than 200 dogs, seventy tons of whale blubber, and countless sleds full of supplies—slogging a trail through ice fields, across yawning crevices, and over towering glaciers. They did so in the face of howling winds, endless night, and temperatures that plunged to 65 degrees below zero. It was one of the most harrowing trips in history. As they finally came within sight of their goal, Captain Peary was exhausted, so Matt continued on, becoming the first man in history to stand at the North Pole. He then went back to get Peary. The captain was livid that his valet had planted the first flag, and forever after refused to speak to him. Matt later said that the North Pole was the place where his heart was broken. The party arrived home to a hero's welcome. In 1909, their feat was like landing a man on the moon. Proud Americans feted Captain Peary with parades and receptions, applauding him as the first man to stand at the North Pole. Nobody took notice of Matt. Yet today the world knows it was really Matthew Henson who was the first to reach the North Pole. Maybe if he hadn't been African-American or if he hadn't been Peary's valet, he'd have been recognized sooner. But some 35 years after the journey, Matt was finally awarded the Medal of Honor.*

Jesus went where no man has ever been before, or since! He stood on the cross that hung between the "No Man's Land" of human brokenness/lostness/rebellion and God's gracious, accepting embrace of healing. There where no one was able to accomplish what only Christ could accomplish on our behalf! And only Christ could do this because he was fully human (and able to represent us on the cross) and fully divine (and able to make this sacrifice once and for all, for all of history). He claimed that space and made it a bridge instead (over the chasm of our sin) between us and the Father!

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

P.S. A dear friend and member of BVPC has moved on in his faith journey back to his Catholic roots, as he felt God calling him to return to the faith experience that he'd known most of his life. Andy Estok has asked for his membership to be transferred to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel just up the street from us. He will continue to stay in touch and visit us from time to time. His phone # is 806-7732, and his address is 5264 Cider Mill Rd., 16509 (if you wish to drop him a note or card to let him know he will be missed).

Join Us During the Season of Lent!

Lenten Worship Series (Sundays, Mar 1-April 12): *By His Wounds We Are Healed*

Lenten Study Group Series (with a focus on the same themes as worship): Wednesdays @ 6:30pm
(Mar. 4, 11, 18 @ Belle Valley Church; Mar. 25, Apr. 1, 8 @ Elmwood Church)—lite refreshments served!

Worship

March 1: (Lent I; Communion) "By His Wounds We Are Healed" Series—The Wounds of Violating the Sabbath

March 8: (Lent II; Birthday Coffee Hour & Sunday Funday; Invite-a-Friend Sunday) "By His Wounds We Are Healed"

Series—*The Wounds of Dishonoring Authority*"

March 15: (Lent III) "By His Wounds We Are Healed" Series—The Wounds of Murder

March 22: (Lent IV) "By His Wounds We Are Healed" Series—The Wounds of Associating with Sinners

March 29: (Lent V; Penny Sunday) "By His Wounds We Are Healed" Series—The Wounds of False Witness and Coveting

Praying for: (Please contact us with any changes to or removals from this list) Jerome Marzka, Mrs. Clinger, Cathy Ghidui, Dick Postlewaite,



Dave Postlewaite, Leo Marzka, Jolene Carner, The Scharrer Family, Leslie Sickles, Cliften Bemis, The Gaadt Family, Mary Lou Wieczorek, Chris Grelak, Artem Trosoko, Carrie Langdon, Scott Jones, infants w/ RSV, Kim Glasser-Seybolt, Tom Martin, Derrick Feidler, Jack Donovan, Angelo Meyers, Cathy Stumpo, Harry Krahnke, Sarah Nicosia, Joy Kirk, Mary Stuk-bauer, Ismael Torres, Kelly Royer, Deana Lasher, Kathy Frantz, Jean Moorhead, The Kristin Smit Family, Karrie Anderson, Joyce Moore, Brian Cook, Linda Lamb, Sandy Knight, Jeannette Komorek, Adam Muse, James & Mark Schaas, George Poulson, Jim Fuller, Cheryl Tobin, Traci Marzka, Fred Marshall, Dennis Melquist, Clark Leasure, Joyce Miller, Jack Weir, Stephanie Garcia, Joe Cauley, Joy Kirk, Genny Cosco, Barb Voystante, Mary Lou Joyce, Julia Zukowski, Tyson Copeland, Jason Walsh, Samantha Sayers & Family, Aimee Gross, Jimmy Bojarski, John Marzka, Evangeline Boga, Teresa Brewer, Rich Hoover, Stephanie Warren, Bennett Testa, Jackie Roddy, Aubrey Macs, James Demtsy, Ellie Poulson, Jim Glass, Mary Ann Lasko, Adam Muse, Kathy Fiedler, Bev Hopkins, Jeremiah Murosky; The victims of the coronavirus outbreak; Peace w/Iraq/Iraq/Syria; The victims of Australia's wildfires; the victims of senseless shootings in the US (most recently in Milwaukee, WI—20 mass shootings so far across the US in Feb. alone); the epidemic of opioid addictions; Isis terrorism tragedies around the world; current military services personnel (*especially Jared Marzka & Jake Gressler*); the Ghana mission partnership (*We pray especially for the Chereponi District: 11 churches, 528 members, & District Pastor M. L. Agbovi*); Josh Heikkila (*our PCUSA W. Africa Liaison*); Ruth Brown (*missionary to the Upper Northern Presbytery*); the Wapuli Health Clinic (& 3 add'l. clinics in northern Ghana); Rev. Seth Agidi (EPC,G Moderator); **Presbytery prayers:** Revs. Rick Cepris, Jim Moelk, Rachel Johns, Jim Haas, Jim McCormack.

Upcoming Events: Regular Sunday Worship schedule—11am

***Recycling:** drop-offs anytime (newspaper in west property trailer/aluminum cans) ***Communion, 2/2** ***Penny Sunday, 3/29**

***Study Group, 3/3** @ 10:30am @ Harborcreek Perkins (3/10, 17, 24 @ 10am in fellowship hall) ***Deacons Mtg., 3/1** after worship

***Session, 3/9, 6:30pm** ***Girl Scouts (2 Troops), 1st & 3rd Sun. @ 4pm; 2nd & 4th Fridays @ 5pm**

***Pub Theology, 3/30 @ 7pm, Coach's Sports Bar (W. 38th & Elmwood)** ***DST, March 7** (turn your clocks ahead 1 hour)

***Invite-a-Friend Sunday, 3/8** (special music, liturgical dance ensemble from Mercyhurst University)

***Lenten Study Group, 6:30pm,** Mar. 4, 11, 18 @ BVPC; Mar. 25, Apr. 1, 8 @ Elmwood (lite refreshments)

***Choir Practice,** Sundays, 10:15am (2/09 - 4/12) for the Easter season. All are welcome!!!

Any Church Family Needs... sickness, hospitalization, funeral reception after the loss of a loved one, financial need, etc. Please contact the Deacons thru **Bonnie Renaud (315-415-0843)** (*Bonnie is the 2019 Deacon Moderator*)—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).



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:** Pleasant Ridge Manor, Unit C-#218, 8300 W. Ridge Rd., Fairview, 16415 (474-5521, ask for the C-unit nurse); **Jean Moorhead:** 1023 Raspberry St., 16502 (459-9077); **Harold Keefe:** 4322 Pine Ave., 16504 (315-9594); **Doris Feeney:** St. Mary's-East, 607 E. 26th St., #162, 16504 (528-0130); **Dan & Diane Horton:** 5 W. 6th St., Oil City, 16301 (860-9173, 282-9944); **Rick Hess:** Walnut Creek Nursing Facility (4850 Zuck Rd.; Area 2, rm. #205A); **Fred Marshall:** Grandview Manor, 4210 Davison Ave., Apt. #529, 16504 (384-4931); **Harry Krahnke:** Grandview Manor, 4210 Davison Ave., Apt. #504, 16504 (315-8359); **Cathy Stumpo:** Grandview Manor, 4210 Davison Ave., Apt. #215, 16504 (825-3637).

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE... Alert the office so we can inform Pastor Dave when you or someone close to you is heading into the hospital. Pastor Dave desires to be available to you for brief, confidential prayer visits whenever you head into hospital care, rehab care, or nursing care!

THANKS!! ...to all volunteers and dessert donors who helped serve a luncheon to the homeless at the Upper Room Drop-In Center (St. Paul's UCC @ 11th and Peach) on Sunday, Feb. 23 @ 1:30pm. We had a wonderful crew of volunteers (16) between BVPC & Elmwood Churches. Thanks to Becky Nottingham for coordinating the luncheon from BVPC, and Lisa Buffalari from EPC. Lots of desserts were donated from many at both as well!!

We Are Starting Two New Collections for the Needs of the Community of Caring (*community shelter and pantry ministries*): paper products – paper plates, napkins, paper towels, disposable drinking cups & coffee cups, disposable soup bowls; **and For Our Church Kitchen:** foil, window cleaner, all-purpose cleaner, Swiffer & supplies, Clorox wipes, dish soap, hand soap. The collection receptacles are located in the foyer!

Financial Secretary Notes: 1) Anyone that wants tithing envelopes for 2020, 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, also contact Gwen Ebert.

Food Collections: Please keep up all the GREAT work of your ongoing support of canned goods and staples for the Mt. Carmel food pantry. There is always a need for basic food staples: peanut butter, spaghetti sauce, pasta, canned tuna & chicken, etc. Receptacles are in the foyer. Thank you all for your generosity!! We are continually amazed that the food collection containers fill up at least every 2 weeks!! The organizers of the Mt. Carmel Food Pantry have continually been showing their appreciation for our support of their pantry ministry!



Sunshine Group Support: The Sunshine Group is collecting Children's items (coloring books, fun books, socks, slippers, stuffed animals, dolls, rulers, cars & trucks, children's jewelry and kids' purses). Please call Patty Smolinsky (454-8005) for more info. (Collection bin is in the foyer on the coat rack.)



Belle Valley's Recycling Ministry Needs YOU! Unloading the newspaper trailer onto a delivery truck will take place soon (check w/ Rick Leasure first: 881-1269). **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 
VOLUNTEERS

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 have a custodial volunteer who recently had a cancer diagnosis and will need to take an indefinite break from her responsibilities while she undergoes treatments. Would you be willing to pair up with an existing volunteer to do the custodial work in rotation about once every 6 weeks or so? 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).* **We Are Asking Your Help!** Whenever you use the facility, please plan to clean up after yourselves (this includes all hospitality teams, nursery volunteers, study groups, leadership gatherings, and groups hosting fundraising dinners/events, fellowship events, etc.). If you can clean up after yourselves in the fellowship hall and/or nursery (including sweeping carpeting, mopping tile floors, wiping off tables, washing/drying any dishes used, and cleaning the stove surfaces), then the custodial volunteers' role is more manageable as they do the usual cleaning of the facility each week. Thank you!!



Adult Study Group: We join in fellowship and study opportunities each week. Our first week (1st Tuesday of month, **10:30am—3/3**) we meet at Harborcreek Perkins Restaurant. We are reading the book *The Smileys*. We will get back to our weekly study, March 10 @ 10am in the fellowship Hall. **All Are Welcome!**

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!

Become a Member



Be Aware: that 2 troops of girl scouts are using our fellowship hall on the 1st & 3rd Sundays of each month from 4-6pm, and the 2nd & 4th Fridays each month @ 5pm. For any info or to register your daughter, contact: Mariah DiPlacido—Sundays (814-602-7400) or Melissa Enders—Fridays (814-384-3836).

Interested in an Online Bible Study Devotional? ...hosted through YouVersion's Bible.com website app? These daily studies are completed on your schedule in the privacy of your home with an area available for daily commenting if you choose to. It is also okay if you miss a day here and there. You can just pick up the next day you are available. If this is something you would be interested in please contact Stacey Simons (814-881-1323 or email stacey.simons111@gmail.com) or search Facebook Groups for "Be the Light Study Group" with the profile picture of a light-bulb saying this little light of mine...and request to join!

2020 Slate of officers:

Elders: Chris Tombaugh, Becky Nottingham, Stacey Simons, Carla Leasure, Sandy McConahy, Clay Woodring; *Clerk:* Mike Campbell

Deacons: Anne Campbell, Bonnie Renaud, Mary Ann Rice, Becky Cousins, Darlene Leasure, Kim Ragen

Audit Committee: Carla Leasure, Debbie Szpara, Cheryl Kendzior

Memorial Committee: Bonnie Marshall, Kathy Simons, Melody Lewis

At-Large Nominating Committee: Doug Ebert, Mary Ann Rice, Kim Ragen



Our next mission event will be serving the homeless at Sunday Suppers, 1st Covenant Church (downtown) @ 3:30pm on May 17. Please join us in volunteering to prepare, serve and clean-up after the meal. If you are able to help, please contact Becky Nottingham (573-5476). We may also need volunteers to prep and donate desserts, if you can't volunteer, so stay tuned for more details. **DON'T FORGET:** Your 2nd mile giving to our Presbytery's 2019 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 "Belle Valley Presbyterian Church" and mark the memo line—"Per Capita gift." **"Labors of Love":** To commemorate the 50th Anniversary in 2019 of medical missions and service, CHOSEN is partnering with the Presbytery of Lake Erie and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana in a new endeavor called "Labors of Love". The goal of "Labors of Love" was to raise \$50,000 that will be invested in the four Health Clinics to increase and improve



healthcare services to the women, children, and communities that they serve in the upper north where hospitals are few and far in travel distance over rough terrain. Each of the Health Clinics has specific needs for getting to the next level of development. These include building construction, renovations, equipment, supplies, infrastructure, potable water, sanitation, staff training and support. **Labors of Love Update:** The presbytery has received **\$25,551.73** for the four Health Clinics in Ghana. Please keep up your faithful giving. To make a donation, contact the Presbytery office for more details: 868-4891.

Our Mission Partnership with the Upper Northern Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana: As you pray for this partnership, know that 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. Also keep Rev. Josh Heikkila and Ruth Brown in your prayers as they are PC(USA) missionaries on the ground in the Upper North.

Chereponi District

11 churches
126 male members;
183 female members;
219 children
District Pastor:
Rev. M. L. Agbovi

Lake Erie Presbytery

Ripley, NY
North East
Harborcreek
Erie, Eastminster
Erie, Emmanuel

Erie, New Hope
Erie, First Covenant
Erie, Elmwood Avenue
Erie, Belle Valley



The Big Event 2020! Where's the Light? Saturday, Mar. 28, 9am – 1:30pm; First Presbyterian Church of The Covenant, 250 W. 7th St. How is the church called to reframe her ministry in light of the change of society's perspective on religion? This Big Event calls on the perspective of speakers from several denominations and ministries. Come to a day of learning and worship. Cost? \$15 (includes lunch). Keynote Speaker: L. Roger Owens, PhD (Assoc. Professor of Christian Spirituality/Ministry at Pgh. Theological Seminary)—"Leadership in the Dark Night of the Church." There will be a panel of 4 community/church leaders to kick off the day (incl. Erie Mayor Joe Schember, Marcus Atkinson of ServErie, Josh Botts of 2nd Presby.-Oil City, Sr. Anne McCarthy of Benetvision). There will also be an exciting array of 7 workshops to choose from!!

Childcare services will be available as well. Registration for this event can be done online @ www.pbylakeerie.org or contact Melinda in the LEP office by March 10!



January, 2020 Financial Report: Operating Revenues Received: **\$8,883.98**; Operating Expenses Paid Out: **\$10,362.16**; **Leaving a shortfall of \$-1,478.18.** Please continue to pray for BVPC's financial future and our individual commitment to answering God's call to ministry!

Lenten Study Group Series (with a focus on the same themes as worship): Let's join together in wrestling with our faith and God's Word as we journey to the cross! Wednesdays @ 6:30pm (Mar. 4, 11, 18 @ Belle Valley Church; Mar. 25, Apr. 1, 8 @ Elmwood Church)—lite refreshments served!



Invite-A-Friend Sunday: March 8, 11am Worship Service. Get involved in sharing your pride in our faith family at Belle Valley Church! Remember to bring them to the fellowship and refreshments time after worship! Use the special invitational cards we've provided to share with your friends, co-workers, neighbors, and family!