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**The Pastor's Searchlight—October, 2024: "The Strikeout King" ([The One Year Book of Amazing Stories](#), R. Petterson)**



George struck out on the baseball field and in life. He grew up in a rough-and-tumble neighborhood called Pigtown. By age seven, he was already sneaking copious amounts of beer from the tap in his dad's saloon. Maybe that's why he got in so much trouble. He was sent to St. Mary's Industrial School for Boys, a combination orphanage and reformatory. After twelve years in that home for wayward boys, a defining word appears on his record: **incorrigible**. But George could hit a ball farther than any other kid. After he broke almost every window in the neighborhood, a priest encouraged him to play baseball. If it hadn't been for Brother Matthias, George might have ended up in prison or the gutter. Instead, he became one of the most recognizable names in sports history. To look at him, with his spindly legs and protruding beer belly, you would never guess that George was an athlete. You sure wouldn't know it from his lifestyle. Throughout his legendary career, he continually broke curfew—often showing up at game time hungover from drinking beer and downing a couple dozen hot dogs loaded with sauerkraut, mustard, and onions. If players today jack up their power with steroids, George diluted his with booze, women, and all-night poker games. Though he famously loved kids and performed outrageous acts of charity, his personal life was a mess of womanizing and debauchery. Yet no one ever hit the ball like George Herman Ruth. He did his amazing feats before steroids or elongated seasons that pad statistics. He did it half-drunk, bloated by gluttony, and slowed by carousing. Who can forget that game against the Cubs in the 1932 World Series when the Babe was down in the count? The Chicago fans were screaming insults when he calmly pointed to the center field fence. He hit the next pitch more than five hundred feet over that fence. His statistics are mind boggling. He held the record for home runs, with 60 in a single season, and 714 lifetime homers. In his amazing career he had 2,873 hits with 2,174 runs batted in. But what most folks don't know is that the Sultan of Swat also held the major league record for striking out. After he retired, his strikeouts off the field caught up with him too. He desperately wanted to manage a team, but his lifestyle was too toxic. Baseball owners' repeated refusals to hire him as a manager broke his heart. In 1948, this bigger-than-life hero was reduced to a shadow of his former self by cancer. When he died at age fifty-three, he was celebrated as the greatest hitter of all time. Few remembered how often he struck out at the plate and in life. What is true for the Babe goes for us, too. Either we will go for the fences or play it safe at the plate. Joe Sewell had the fewest strikeouts in a major league career, but who remembers Joe? You may strike out a lot if you go for the fences, but at least you'll hit a few home runs.

*No one ever achieved greatness by playing it safe.*

"God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline."  
(II Timothy 1:7)

*Hey all...please allow me to be very blunt...Belle Valley Church might have 3-5 years left before we need to close our doors. I don't say this to scare anyone, or inspire feelings of guilt, but rather the opposite...to inspire us with the reality that we are **FREE** to be, dare I say, reckless with our obedience to our mighty God, and reckless with our resources, to do all we can do to make an impact for the gospel of Jesus Christ in the time we have left. We are **FREE** to swing for a "homerun" in reaching others for Christ. We may occasionally strike out, but we may also swing for the stars and send it over the wall! Trying to be cautious to the point of pinching pennies in order to buy us a little more time is truly futile at this point. We are **FREE** to NOT play it safe! "God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity..." Though a lot of people these days want to manipulate us with fear, we don't have to follow those pathways of fear, for ... (God has given us a spirit of) "power, love, and self-discipline." God's plan includes our strikeouts and our homeruns, so let's throw caution to the wind and go down swinging!! God will not abandon us.*

**In Christ, Pastor Dave ([reved87@verizon.net](mailto:reved87@verizon.net))**

**All Are Welcome to Join Us for our Adult Study Group on Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Church in Corinth!** We meet on Tuesdays (10/8, 15, 22, 29) @ Grandview Manor Apartments in the Activity Room on the ground floor (Davison Avenue, near E. Grandview Ave.) @ 10:30am (refreshments & coffee are provided).

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**We celebrate in-person worship services on Sundays, but we will also continue to live-stream** our Sunday morning worship experiences (9:30am @ "ErieEAPC" & 11am @ "belle.church" and the pastor's personal page "Dave Edmunds") and our Wednesday Live! devotional experiences (6:30pm) on the pastor's personal Facebook page: "Dave Edmunds" on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays. Know that we are all praying daily for you, for our ministries, our mission, those who have been especially hit hard by this crisis, our Ghanaian Mission Partnership, and our world!



**BVPC PRAYER CONCERNS:** Derf Hopsecger, Mary Lee Swonger, Sarah Lepovsky, The Campbell's daughter [Maggie] & family, Jack Fischer, Walter Nunemaker Sr., Jerry Kennedy (hospice), Jack Larsen, Linda Wellsby, Camille Jimerson, Darwin Michielsen, Joe Helsley, Tony Vacanti, Jolene Carner & Family, Dotty Hoover (Leo's sister), Jeannette Komorek, Jane Clinger, Kim Wurzbach, Steve (cancer), Chelsie Belden, Janine Johnson, Sandra Sauder, Dixie Hartless (hospice), Leonie Degnan, The Campbells' daughter (Maggie) & family, Linda Jarzynka, Jack Donovan (Patty Smolinsky's brother-in-law), Char & Zach Napierkowski, Sandy McConahy, Fred Marshall, Jr., Dave Arens, Kim Potter, Diana Marie, Chipper Langdon, Bea & Dan Reese, Maria Hodapp & Lorelai, Jordan Kendzior &

112th Infantry Regiment, Becky Fuller, Dale Teribery, Missy Zimmer, Pam Crants, Sarah Richards (lung cancer), Tyco Swick, Timi Ricket & family, Sullivan Bruder (Rita's great-grandnephew), Rachel Fabrizzi, Patty Smolinsky's nephew (Adam), Albert Boorady's brothers (Andre, Tom, Roy), Jackie Roddy, Nohade Boorady. **BVPC Mission Efforts:** Girl Scouts, OLOMC Food Pantry, BVFD, BVES (including Angel Tree, backpack food prog. & teachers' supplies effort), 1<sup>st</sup> Covenant Sunday Suppers & The Upper Room Lunch efforts; Ukrainian & Middle Eastern warfare; Victims of Hurricane Helene; Systemic racial injustice; Senseless gun violence; The southern border refugee crisis; Current military services personnel; 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*); the Wapuli Health Clinic; The President, VP, Senate, House, Supreme Court—wisdom & justice; **Presbytery prayers:** Revs. Robin Cuneo, Rachel Johns, Jim Haas, Jim Rimmer, and Jim McCormack.

**BVPC October Birthdays:**

- Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> Corey Rice 2189 Foxboro Ct. Erie, PA 16510
- 11<sup>th</sup> Judy Blanchard 110 Lakemont Drive, Greer, SC 29651
- 13<sup>th</sup> Randy Swonger 1740 Perennial Way, Erie, PA 16510
- 14<sup>th</sup> Easton Glass 3790 Stone Quarry Road, Waterford, PA 16441
- 17<sup>th</sup> Doug Ebert 1731 Norcross Road, Erie, PA 16510
- 24<sup>th</sup> Dave Sickles 111 Afton Drive, Erie, PA 16509
- 27<sup>th</sup> Dixie Hartless 1403 East 32nd Street, Erie, PA 16504
- 29<sup>th</sup> Harry Krahnke 4210 Davison Ave. Apt. #504, Erie, PA 16504
- Matthew Ebert 230 Cortez Drive, Washington, PA 15301



**Please Minister to Members Challenged by Chronic Health Issues** (cards, calls, visits, and prayer): Dan & Diane Horton: 5 Little Pine Place, Franklin, PA, 16323 (814-657-2663); Harry Krahnke: 4210 Davison Ave., 16504 (#504, 814-315-8359); Paul (Doc) & Linda Wetzel: 10540 Sampson Rd., Waterford, PA. 16441 (814-825-2070); Ellie Logan: 819 W. 8<sup>th</sup> St., Apt. 211, Erie, PA 16502 (814-520-1190).

Please do your best to continue your regular giving, and for those able, please increase your giving to cover those who have been negatively impacted by this pandemic's financial hardships. **Financial Report YTD thru August, 2024: Operating Revenues YTD Received: \$71,226.11; Operating Expenses Paid Out: \$83,995.51; Leaving a shortfall of \$12,769.40. Please reach out to Albert Boorady** (treasurer, [bvp16510treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:bvp16510treasurer@gmail.com), 814-218-2544) if you'd like to learn how to set up BVPC as a regular payee with your bank automatically! And **be aware that you can always donate online at BVPC's website as well** (though there will be a small fee charged by the online donation service—something your bank won't do if you use them to set up BVPC as a regular payee). *Please continue to pray for BVPC's ministries and your financial giving! The next few years will be a real test of our faith, our obedience to God, and our endurance during very thin financial conditions!*

**"Per Capita" Giving:** For those who are able to pay their Per Capita for 2024 (**\$34 per member**), use a pew offering envelope. Your "Per Capita" giving supports many significant mission efforts throughout our presbytery and the world-wide Presbyterian Church. Pray about your gift to our larger church mission efforts!

**Rummage Sale:** Thanks to everyone who gave of their time, rummage sale donations, and baked sale goods to make our 2024 rummage sale such a success! We earned approximately \$2,650.00.

**Erie Gives Day:** Thx to all who donated to Belle Valley Church ministry on Erie Gives Day. We received a total of \$9,543.33 in that effort (which was more than last year's effort), which includes a pro-rated gift from the Foundation!

## **2024 Slate of Officers:**

**Elders:** Dave Sickles, Sandy McConahy, Leslie Sickles, Doug Ebert, Stacey Simons, Chris Tombaugh; *Clerk: Kim Ragen, Treasurer: Albert Boorady*

**Deacons:** Kathy Simons, Joann Barber, Maryann & Corey Rice, Becky Cousins, Kim Ragen

**Audit Committee:** Stacey Simons, Rita Postlewaite, Chris Tombaugh

**Memorial Committee:** Bonnie Renaud, Bonnie Marshall, Melody Lewis

**At-Large Nominating Committee:** Bonnie Marshall, Chris Tombaugh, Leslie Sickles, Becky Cousins

## **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- **Joint Women's Fellowship:** 10/15 @ Ricardo's Restaurant (East Lake Rd.) @ 6pm. Their Annual Christmas Party will be 12/3 @ the Shrine Club @ 6pm. Call Kim Ragen, 814-392-5831 to RSVP.
- **II Corinthians Study Group,** 10/8, 15, 22, 29 @ Grandview Manor Apartments (Davison Ave.), Activity Lounge
- **Joint Confirmation Classes:** Sundays, Oct. 13<sup>th</sup> @ 4pm @ BVPC, 27<sup>th</sup> @ 2:45 @ BVPC—we will carpool to 1<sup>st</sup> Covenant Church downtown to serve the homeless at Sunday Suppers (we will return to BVPC @ approximately 6:30).
- **BVPC Session,** 10/14 @ 6:30pm.
- **Harvest-Fest,** 10/13 from 12:15-2:30pm (after worship). Smith's Hot Dog luncheon; costume judging (with prizes), games, The Balloon Lady, the BVFD ladder truck, and a hayride!!! It is always a fun time together! We hope you'll invite your kids, grandkids, neighbor kids, co-worker's kids, etc. It is a FREE event!!
- **1<sup>st</sup> Covenant Sunday Suppers:** 10/27 @ 1<sup>st</sup> Covenant Church (W. 7<sup>th</sup> & Myrtle Sts.); we will meet at 3pm and finish any meal preparations, then we'll start serving at 4pm. We are usually done w/the meal and clean-up by 6 and home by 6:30pm.



**Harvest-Fest 2024!!** Come and join us Oct. 13<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) from 12:15-2:30pm. Immediately following worship. We will start with a Smith's Hot Dog luncheon; then costume judging (with prizes), games, The Balloon Lady, the BVFD ladder truck, and a hayride!!! It is always a fun time together! We hope you'll invite your kids, grandkids, neighbor kids, co-worker's kids, etc. It is a FREE event!!

### **Joint Women's Fellowship Events** (from both Belle Valley & Elmwood Ave, Churches):

- Oct. 15 @ Ricardo's Restaurant (East Lake Rd.) @ 6pm
- Annual Christmas Party, December 3<sup>rd</sup> @ the Shrine Club @ 6pm



**Call Kim Ragen to RSVP, 814-392-5831** (or sign up in the foyer).

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!! 1<sup>st</sup> Covenant Sunday Suppers:** 10/27 @ 1<sup>st</sup> Covenant Church (W. 7<sup>th</sup> & Myrtle Sts.); we will meet at 3pm and finish any meal preparations, then we'll start serving at 4pm. We are usually done w/the meal and clean-up by 6 and home by 6:30pm. We will need volunteers and dessert donations!! Please sign up in the foyer on Sundays before worship.



**THANKS** to All Volunteers (Tom & Judy Gaadt, Dave & Leslie Sickles, JoAnn Barber, Sandy McConahy, Rita Postlewaite, Nancy Marzka, Kathy Simons and Pastor Dave) who helped with the Appreciation Dinner for the BVFD on Oct. 2. We thank you for all the donated desserts for the dinner. We had such a good time serving our heroes, and working together!