
The Pastor's Searchlight—December, 2024: "The Man Time Forgot" (The One Year Book of Amazing Stories, R. Petterson)

Some people are just lucky. Or maybe they deserve a second chance at life. Or better yet: God is the God of second chances. Just ask Cornealious "Mike" Anderson. He was unemployed and looking for an easy score when he and a buddy held up a Burger King manager making a night deposit. Mike was hiding out at his girlfriend's apartment when the police caught up with him. He was arrested and convicted of armed robbery. The judge gave him thirteen years in prison. But his attorney appealed the verdict, arguing that the evidence had been illegally seized. So Cornealious was out on a twenty-five-thousand-dollar bond. It took two years for the case to get to the Missouri Supreme Court, where judges unanimously agreed that his rights were not violated, and he had to serve his sentence. But because of a clerk's error at the Department of Corrections, Cornealious was never served with papers. He asked his attorney what he should do, and the lawyer told him that it was the responsibility of the state to arrest him. So he went on with his life. Only this time, he did it the right way: got married, started a family, built a successful business, became a model citizen and churchgoing man. He renewed his driver's license, registered his business, voted in elections, and listed his residence on documents. But it wasn't until thirteen years later, on the day he was scheduled to be released from prison, that a Department of Corrections computer revealed he had never been incarcerated. Cornealious was arrested by marshals at his home on July 23, 2013. The legal sparring went on for months. His lawyer argued that he should be released for time served. The attorney general responded, "The law is very clear: you don't get credit for time served when you are out on bail." When the national media picked up the story, people bombarded the attorney general's office with pleas for clemency. So the state bowed to public pressure and let Cornealious Anderson go free. The feel-good story of 2014 didn't last long. Six months later, he was arrested for second-degree robbery when a woman accused him of snatching her purse. Those who had championed his cause were heartbroken. But a thorough investigation discovered that he had an airtight alibi. It also found that police had used questionable procedures. The St. Louis circuit attorney's office publicly apologized for their shoddy handling of the case. For the third time in fourteen years, Cornealious "Mike" Anderson walked away from jail a free man. One might argue that his first time was luck. His second was because of a life well lived. His third was a case of mistaken identity. Or we could say that this is another story of amazing grace. Folks often complain that life isn't fair. The truth is that if God gave us what we really deserved, we would all be in big trouble. But God is the God of second, third, and a gazillion more chances. Cornealious might say amen to this truth:



God is never fair. Instead, God goes beyond fair to mercy.

"He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve."
(Psalm 103:10)

The amazing glory of our upcoming Advent/Christmas celebration is that God steps down from His heavenly throne to become a human infant...gurgling, cooing, crying, drool and messy "diapers," colic and spit-up...surrounded by the humble and plain setting of a manger with it's pastoral animals and all their barnyard odors and the chill of the night air. This is profound evidence of God's grace, mercy, and compassion for us, God's creation. We will be traveling through an Advent series entitled "The Word Made Flesh" beginning on Dec. 1. So please plan to join us as we begin that moving season together. We will also be doing the "Hanging of the Greens" after worship that Sunday! Please plan to help decorate! **In the meantime, Have a very Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!!**

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

All Are Welcome to Join Us for our Adult Study Group on the book of Acts! We meet on Tuesdays (12/3 @ Bob Evans) 12/10, 17 (none on 12/24 or 31) @ Grandview Manor Apartments in the Activity Room on the ground floor (Davison Avenue, near E. Grandview Ave.) @ 10:30am (refreshments & coffee are provided).



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 2nd & 4th 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: Sam Romano, Diane & Frank Wetzel, Rebecca Stallard, MaryAnn Mallory, Maciolek & Marzka Families, Courtney Tate, Cheryl Schultz, Noah Brower, Roseanne Bliss, Samantha Pendzich, Ken Bliss, Crystal Gardner, Harlan Magers, Denny Clemens, Becky DeMarte, Anna Anderson, Sarah Lepovsky, Walter Nunemaker Sr., Jerry Kennedy, Camille Jimerson, Joe Helsley, Jeanette Komorek, Dotty Hoover, Sandy McConahy, Tony Vacanti, Dixie Hartless, Fred Marshall Jr., Dawn & Bob Trojanovich, Jolene Carner & family, Jane Clinger, Kim Wurzbach, Sandra Sauder, Rebecca Stallard, Leonie Degnan, Jack Larsen, Chelsie Belden, Linda Jarzynka, Janine Johnson, Jack Donovan, Char & Zach Napierkowski, Diana Marie, Bea & Dan Reese, Becky Fuller,

Dale Teribery, Missy Zimmer, Pam Crants, Sarah Richards, Tim Grant, Tyco Swick, Sullivan Bruder, Rachel Fabrizzi, Patty Smolinsky's nephew, Andre Boorady, Jackie Roddy, Nohade Boorady. **BVPC Mission Efforts:** Girl Scouts, OLOMC Food Pantry, BVFD, BVES (including Angel Tree, backpack food prog. & teachers' supplies effort), 1st 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 December Birthdays:

- December 4th Jerry Seamans 46697 Breannes Lane, Lexington, MD 20653
- 11th Rachel (Edmunds) Catt 1 Columbia Ave. Apt. A9, Hartsdale, NY 10530
- 14th Kelly Royer 330 Rosebay Dr., Erie, PA 16509
- 15th Steele Glass 3790 Stone Quarry Road, Waterford, PA 16441
- 22nd Blake Glass 3790 Stone Quarry Road, Waterford, PA 16441
- 30th Leslie Sickles 111 Afton Dr., Erie, PA 16509



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. 8th 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 October, 2024: Operating Revenues YTD Received: \$96,734.16; Operating Expenses Paid Out: \$101,135.54; Leaving a shortfall of \$4,401.38.** Please reach out to **Albert Boorady** (treasurer, 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!

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

Schedule Your Children for Lead Screening Today! Erie County has the 10th highest number of children poisoned by lead in all PA counties. And only 21% of Erie County children are screened for lead! Lead can cause damage to the brain/nervous system, slow growth/development, learning/behavioral problems, hearing/speech problems. Call your family doctor or the EC Dept. of Health (814-451-6549) to get more info or schedule a screening.

Don't forget to get your Advent devotional materials! There are adult, teen, and children's devotional materials on the table in the foyer; there are also Daily Bible Reading flyers available to take!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Dec. 1, 1st Sunday of Advent:** "Hanging of the Greens" after worship (decorating the church for the Advent/Christmas season).
- **Dec. 2 (Mon.): Volunteering at "Our Neighbor's Place" overflow shelter** (serving the homeless), 6:30-10pm, 450 E. 16th St. (16th & Wallace)
- **Dec. 8, Congregational Mtg.** after worship to elect 2025 slate of officers, and our **December coffee hour!**
- **Dec. 8, Blue Christmas Svc.:** 6pm, New Hope Church (If you'd like to add the name(s) of any loved ones lost in the past year to the service memorializing them, please call Clay @ 814-431-4475).
- **Dec. 21 (Sat.), Caroling to our Senior Adults:** mtg. @ 9am to pack the cookie containers, and then we'll leave for our rounds at 9:30ish. All who would like to join us in caroling can meet then. All who are unable to join us, but who can donate homemade cookies for our seniors, can drop off your donated items between 9 and 9:30am on that Sat.
- **Dec. 24 (Tues.), Christmas Eve Candlelight Svc.:** 7:30pm. Special music, the Nativity story, a special message, and the candle-lighting ceremony.

The Deacons would like to be told if any of our members are turning 80 or older. Membership and Fellowship committee likes to honor these folks with a special coffee hour. Please let Kim know (814-392-5831).

Thanks to all of our newspaper recycling crew! Mike & John Campbell, Doug Ebert, Jim Blanchard, Rob Brandt, Tom Gaadt. We appreciate your teamwork!! Reminder to all: the trailer is for newspaper only (and phone books)...no cardboard or magazines. Thx to Our Neighbor's Place Overflow Shelter team who took the lead on 11/30 & 12/2!



"Hanging of the Greens"

Dec. 1st after worship! Plan to stick around and help us decorate the church for the Advent/Christmas season! We'll have lots of fun putting out the decorations and working together in fellowship, as we listen to Christmas music.

Dec. 8, Blue Christmas Svc.: 6pm, New Hope Church (If you'd like to add the name(s) of any loved ones lost in the past year to the service memorializing them, please call Clay @ 814-431-4475).



Dec. 21 (Sat.), Caroling to our Senior Adults: mtg. @ 9am to pack the cookie containers, and then we'll leave for our rounds at 9:30ish. All who would like to join us in caroling can meet then. All who are unable to join us, but who can donate homemade cookies for our seniors, can drop off your donated items between 9 and 9:30am on that Sat.

Dec. 24 (Tues.), Christmas Eve Candlelight Svc. @ 7:30pm. Special music, the Nativity story, a special message, and the candle-lighting ceremony.



Help for Heating Costs! LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) offers heating assistance grants from Nov. 4, 2025 through April 4, 2025. These grants range in amounts from \$200-\$1,000. Who qualifies? **Household Size:** 1 w/annual income of \$22,590, 2 w/annual income of \$30,660, 3 w/annual income of \$38,730, 4 w/annual income of \$46,800, 5 w/annual income of \$54,870, 6 w/annual income of \$62,940 (each additional member, add \$8,070). How apply? Online @ www.LIHEAPhelps.com, or call the LIHEAP hotline, 1-866-857-7095.



Congratulations To Our Newest Confirmands! Megan Kavala, Blake & Easton Glass! These young adults were received into full membership at Belle Valley Presbyterian Church on Sunday, November 24! We are so proud of you!

