
The Pastor's Searchlight—February, 2025: "The Greatest Gift of All" (The One Year Book of Amazing Stories, R. Petterson)



Few people remember this Filipino kid from the slums. He wanted to get an education, but poverty forced him to work as a day laborer. Like all of us, he longed to do something significant with his life, but he would probably live out his days as a manual laborer on construction jobs. Then tropical storm Ketsana roared across the Philippines, bringing more rain than the islands had seen in forty years. Within hours, killer floods were rampaging across the nation, wiping out villages and sweeping whole families to their deaths. Almost a million people were left homeless in the wake of that monster storm.

When the floodwaters churned through his village, Muelmar tied a long rope around his waist. One by one, he got his mother and family to safety on higher ground. Then he went back to save others. He dove into the torrent and swam from rooftop to rooftop, rescuing mothers and their children. As he pulled them to safety, he was growing progressively weaker. No one knows how many times he dove into those deadly currents, but he managed to get thirty people to safety. The exhausted teen finally collapsed on dry ground, shivering with hypothermia. That's when he heard the frantic screams of Menchie. This young mother was being swept down the river as she clung desperately to a Styrofoam box with her six-month-old daughter in her arms. Muelmar ignored the warnings of his family and his dog-tired body to dive into the raging waters once again. No one knows how he managed to pull Menchie and her baby girl to safety. But even heroes finally give out. Those on the shores watched in horror as Muelmar was swept downriver. They found the teen's battered body a few days later. As those he rescued gathered around his makeshift grave, his mother Maria wept uncontrollably, His father, Samuel, said to reporters from nearby Manila, "He always had a good heart. It was typical of him to have given his life for others." Menchie held on tight to her little one and said, "He gave his life for me and my baby, and I'll never forget his sacrifice." It's been a decade since Muelmar Magallanes gave his life to save those thirty people from certain death. In those September floods that came to the Philippines, he wrote the Christmas story all over again. God's Son dove into a raging flood of sin and misery, giving his life to rescue us. This is as good a time as any to remember the amazing story of a day laborer from the poor side of Manila. Say his name out loud: Muelmar Magallanes. Then go out and dive in somewhere to grab hold of someone who is being swept away. Grab on to them for dear life, just like Muelmar and Jesus.

***In rescuing others from an unnecessary death,
we rescue ourselves from a meaningless life.***

Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter.
If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?
(Proverbs 24:11-12, NIV)

In this day and age...in this nation, RIGHT NOW...we are enslaved by greed, corruption, power-hungry oligarchs and self-serving narcissists. And yet, here is the story of a young man who sacrificed everything to save as many folk as possible, with no promise at all that he would ever get anything out of it. A very real and profound example of servanthood, of self-sacrifice, of the heart of Jesus Christ. The Church will be tested severely in the next several years by our own twisted desire to grab power for personal ambitions and not for God's will. Will we answer God's call to stand with the minority for justice or for selfishness? I pray we accept God's call!

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 (2/4 @ Bob Evans); 2/11, 18, 25 @ 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!

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).



BVPC PRAYER CONCERNS: Andrew Montefiore, Randy Swonger, Budd (friend of Nancy Marzka), Barb Poirier, Walt Sills, Dotty Hoover (Leo's sister), Cheryl Schultz, Noah Brower, Samantha Pendzich, Ken Bliss, Crystal Gardner, Jeanette Komorek, Dotty Hoover, Sandy McConahy, Jane Clinger, Sandra Sauder, Leonie Degnan, Chelsie Belden, Linda Jarzynka, Jack Donovan, Char & Bob (Jr.) Napierkowski, Becky Fuller, Sarah Richards, Tyco Swick, Sullivan Bruder, Rachel Fabrizio, Patty Smolinsky's nephew (Adam), Andre Boorady, Jackie Roddy, Nohade Boorady, Cassie Shaw & family
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 the New Orleans ramming incident; 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; Our partners in Soboba, who's high school burned down & a student (Theresa) was killed; The President, VP, Senate, House, Supreme Court—wisdom & justice; **Presbytery prayers:** Revs. Robin Cuneo, Rachel Johns, Jim Haas, Jim Rimmer, and Jim McCormack.

BVPC February Birthdays:

- February 6th Mary Jo Poulson 8127 Buffalo Road, Harborcreek, PA. 16421
Victoria Boorady 2101 Saint Andrew Drive, Erie, PA. 16510
- 7th Kailey Royer 940 East 34th Street, Erie, PA. 16504
- 20th Cheryl Kendzior 4415 Magnolia Court Erie, PA. 16504
- 21st Chloe Boorady 2101 Saint Andrew Drive Erie, PA. 16510
- 26th Betty Filley 4621 Idyllbrook Village, Erie, PA. 16506
- 27th Steve Glass 3790 Stone Quarry Road, Waterford, PA. 16441



"Per Capita" Giving: For those who are able to pay their Per Capita for 2025 (**\$35 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!

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 December, 2024: Operating Revenues YTD Received: \$123,828.69; Operating Expenses Paid Out: \$125,842.69; Leaving a shortfall of \$2,014.00.*** 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!*

2025 Slate of Officers:

- Elders:** Chris Tombaugh, Stacey Simons, Sandy McConahy, Leslie Sickles, Doug Ebert, Mary Ann Rice (filling a one-year term for Dave Sickles); **Clerk:** Kim Ragen, **Treasurer:** Albert Boorady
- Deacons:** Kim Ragen, JoAnn Barber, Kathy Simons, Anne Campbell, Becky Cousins, Corey Rice
- Audit Committee:** Chris Tombaugh, Rita Postlewaite, Fred Ebert (3 yr. term)
- Memorial Committee:** Bonnie Marshall, Melody Lewis, Nancy Marzka (3 yr. term)
- At-Large Nominating Committee:** Dave Sickles, JoAnn Barber, Kim Ragen, Doug Ebert

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Feb. 2nd, Communion & Annual Mtg.** (after worship)
- **Feb. 9th, Coffee Hr.** (homemade soups), **"Souper" Bowl Sunday** (offering for 2nd Harvest Food Bank)
- **Feb. 23rd, Serve lunch at The Upper Room Drop-In Center** (If you wish to volunteer, please contact Chris Tombaugh, 814-882-8932; we will also welcome any donations of homemade desserts)
- **Mar. 5th, Ash Wednesday (Lent begins)**—7pm Service of Ashes & Communion @ Elmwood Church



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.

CROP WALK News! Our confirmed total from the 2024 Crop Walk of last September, was an all-time high of **\$88,212.00!** That was \$10,000 higher than 2023. It was truly a team effort. Thanks to all our walkers and sponsors who gave of themselves to be a part of this effort! Our next Erie Walk will be Sept. 28th at the Peninsula! Stau tuned for more information!



Shelter Supplies Needed for the Homeless: We will continue to collect donated items for the overflow shelter (Our Neighbors' Place) during the winter season (collection bin in the foyer, near the elevator, under the window):

- Winter hats, gloves (men's and women's)
- Men's underwear (only boxers—Med, L, XL, XXL)
- Women's underwear (only briefs—sizes 5-12)
- Men's white undershirts (Med, L, XL, XXL)
- Men's & women's white crew socks (all sizes)
- Combs & brushes
- Sample size toothpaste
- Sample size deodorant (men's & women's)
- Disposable razors
- Sample size body lotion
- Chapstick
- Depends for men (Med, L, XL, XXL)
- Feminine pads and tampons

Julia's Bowling for Hope: Sat., March 15 @ Eastway Lanes, 4110 Buffalo Road, Harborcreek. Doors open @ 1pm; Bowling begins @ 1:30pm. Admission: \$25/person (includes 2 games, ball and shoes). Purchase tickets at the door (no presales). Team/lane—4-5 on a team. Families welcome! Individuals will be grouped into a team. Basket Raffle & 50/50 drawing. Kitchen open for food/beverage purchase. **Proceeds will benefit the Julia House** (Erie's first hospice house and palliative care clinic). For more info, contact Karen Adams, 814-315-4245, smada49@verizon.net

