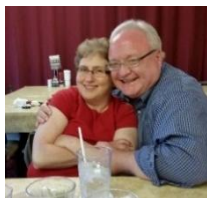

The Pastor's Searchlight—April, 2025: "Lessons from the Concentration Camp" (The One Year Book of Amazing Stories, R. Petterson)



Some were Orthodox, others Hasidic, and still others secular. Among them were the fashionable and the threadbare, the scholar and the blue-collar worker, the socialite and the pauper, the beautiful and the plain. The showers were the great equalizer. Treasures were confiscated, heads shaved, and clothes exchanged for striped pajamas. They were marched lockstep to identical lice-infested bunks in identical barracks. The labor, hunger, and disease would eventually strip them of their last distinguishing features: whether thin or fat, old or young, healthy or sickly—they'd all be reduced to the same skeletal grotesqueness. No one would have known that Victor Frankl was a prominent psychologist and neurologist in Vienna. During his journey through the horrors of Auschwitz and Kaufering concentration camps, he lost everything. When he was liberated, he discovered that his pregnant wife and most of his relatives had perished. Many Holocaust survivors became disillusioned with God or even gave up on the idea, that there was any ultimate meaning. Dr. Victor Frankl was not one of them. In 1959 he channeled his experiences in the death camps into an international bestseller, Man's Search for Meaning. He wrote the book in nine days, but it had been percolating in his mind for decades. Frankl said that the difference between those who survived the camps and those who didn't usually came down to one thing: **meaning**. He remembered a science teacher who said, "Life is nothing more than a combustion process, a process of oxidation." Frankl responded, "Sir, if this is so, what is the meaning of life?" He later noticed that those who saw transcendent meaning, even in the most horrific of circumstances, were the ones who triumphed over the horror. He said that the Nazis could take away all their freedoms but one: the freedom we all have to choose how we will respond to life. Victor Frankl became the most renowned psychologist in the postwar world. We must surely grieve for all the Holocaust took from him, but we can be equally grateful to Dr. Frankl for showing us that we can find sense even in the senseless. He was a prophetic voice when humanism and hedonism slowly stripped spiritual meaning from Western life. Before his death in 1997, he became increasingly concerned about the American search for happiness rather than meaning. He was certain that our narcissistic pursuit of pleasure was producing an epidemic of soul emptiness. Maybe we should dust off Man's Search for Meaning and read it again. The Library of Congress labeled it one of the ten most influential books in the United States. The amazing thing Frankl learned in the Nazi death camps applies to our postmodern "affluenza": those who put their hope in pleasure, power, peace, and prosperity soon died when they lost it. Those who found a transcendent meaning—even seeing God at work in terrible circumstances—found the will to survive and even triumph. Today you might want to think about something Frankl wrote:

Our main motivation for living is our will to find meaning in life.

You guide me with Your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny. Whom have I in heaven but You?
I desire You more than anything on earth. (*Psalm 73:24-25*)

In this nation and this culture currently, there seems to be an air of selfish focus with blinders on... "All I care about is me and mine." We are absolutely journeying through a season of complete chaos and the crisis of a threatened democracy. Victor Frankl would encourage us to remember that we are tasked with sharing a prophetic voice for justice, for "the least of these" and all those without a voice to speak for themselves. It is especially during times of chaos/struggle that God's miraculous presence and power become evident. As we approach Holy Week in 2025 (April 13-20), in the midst of Christ's journey through brokenness and the darkness of the human soul, may we have the courage to love, forgive, serve, and speak up for justice, no matter what it may cost us!! Jesus said, "Pick up your cross and count the cost." (*Luke 14:25-30*)

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 (4/1 @ Bob Evans); 4/8, 15, 22, 29 @ Grandview Manor Apartments in the Activity Room on the ground floor (Davison Avenue) @ 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 prayers): 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: Richard & Budd (Nancy Marzka's friends), Phyllis DiNicola, Andrew Montefiore, Judy Gaadt, Allen Lomax, Thayer & Cadwallader families, Michelle Thayer, Aden Harman, MaryJo Poulson, Dawn Trojanovich, Randy Swonger, Barb Poirier, Cheryl Schultz, Noah Brower, Samantha Pendzich, Ken Bliss, Bliss family, Crystal Gardner, 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, Lois Zollars; **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, ONP Overflow Shelter; The Pope; Ukrainian & Middle Eastern warfare; victims of recent tornado events across the US; 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*); the Wapuli Health Clinic (*Paul Mahama, director*); The President, VP, Senate, House, Supreme Court—wisdom & justice; **Presbytery prayers:** Revs. Robin Cuneo, Rachel Johns, Jim Haas, Jim Rimmer, Mary Kay Crom, Sue & Jay Montgomery, and Jim McCormack.

BVPC April Birthdays:

April 5th Cassandra Kavala, 8822 Horseshoe Drive, Erie, PA. 16510
Corey Kavala, 8822 Horseshoe Drive, Erie, PA. 16510
8th Jared Lorraine, 8300 Morehouse Road, Erie, PA. 16509
Nancy Marzka, 957 East 29th Street, Erie, PA. 16504
13th Chuck Marshall, 3999 Knoyle Road, Erie, PA. 16510
24th Rev. Dave Edmunds, 8874 Ennis Drive, Erie, PA. 16509
25th Marilyn Beebe, 4801 Conway Street, Erie, PA. 16509



"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 February, 2025: Operating Revenues YTD Received: \$21,839.54; Operating Expenses Paid Out: \$23,551.51; Leaving a shortfall of \$1,711.97. 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: Leslie Sickles, 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



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.



Easter Flowers! For our Easter Flower display @ the altar area, we are encouraging all who wish to donate flowers to adorn our sanctuary to either purchase flowers from Walmart (usually cheaper in price than most florists, and very healthy arrgs. as well), or from your own favorite florist, and bring them to church by 4/19 (Sat.) and leave the pots in the foyer so that we can arrange them in the sanctuary for Easter Sunday.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Apr. 6th, Communion** @ 11am worship
- **Lenten Sunday Series: "Savior, Servant, Friend":**
 - **Apr. 6: Comforter**
 - **Apr. 12: Easter Egg Hunt event**, 12-1:30pm (w/Smith's hot dog lunch) & scavenger hunt for plastic eggs w/candy and prizes (*outside in the cemetery, if weather is cooperative*)—**if you would like to donate plastic eggs already filled w/candy or prizes, that would be a great help—sign up in the foyer!!**
 - **Apr. 13 (Palm Sunday): King; Coffee hr.** (*after worship*)
 - **April 14**—deadline for RSVPs for GF Men's Bkft. (*text or call Pastor Dave, 814-397-1861*)
 - **Apr. 17 (Maundy Thursday): Servant** (Joint 7pm Communion Service @ BVPC w/EPC)
 - **Apr. 18 (Good Friday): Savior** (3pm Livestream)—also our Men's Communion Bkft. @ 6:30am, **Prayer Vigil** from 12-3pm in the BVPC sanctuary (*prayer devotional guides will be available*), **GF livestream devotional** @ 3pm (*on Pastor Dave's facebook page*)
 - **Apr. 20 (Easter): Redeemer** (11am Service of the Resurrection)—also our Community "Sonrise" Svc. @ 6:30am @ Wintergreen Gorge Cemetery



Belle Valley Presbyterian Church **Session Meeting, Mar. 10, 2025 @ 6:30pm**

AGENDA

- 6:30 pm Opening prayer
6:40 pm Approval of the Docket
6:42 pm Approval of February Minutes
6:45 pm Correspondence: *Leslie Sickles is sick.*
6:50 pm Pastor's Report: *Vacation Sundays—May 5 & June 1 (have to be away when we have the Presque Isle joint event—watching our granddaughter for 1 week while our daughter & son-in-law travel to a wedding); Mary Louise McCullough preaching on May 5, Chuck Cammarata on June 1—can we move communion to June 8?*
- 6:55 pm Committee Reports
- Stewardship & Finance (*Doug Ebert*) / Building & Grounds (*Dave Sickles*)—*Treasurer's Report (Albert Boorady)—B & G updates: State Farm claim processed (received \$1,700-1,800; estimate of work: \$3,900—pay Bauer \$900 down & balance due upon completion), Elevator issues (repairs in midst of being done; 5 yr. test being planned—still waiting to confirm the testing rep—bill of \$5,600 for 5 yr. test, Dave told them we couldn't afford that).*
 - Christian Education (*Leslie Sickles*)—*Adult study group (Acts) continues; Faith & Film event set up for Mar. 29 (@ Elmwood, 4:30pm—"The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"); Easter Egg Hunt & lunch, 4/12 (12-2pm)—sent request to Millcreek School District for BVES to advertise*
 - Fellowship & Membership (*Sandy McConahy*)—*Mar. 9 & April 13 coffee hrs.*
 - Mission & Outreach (*Different events will be headed by different vols.*)—*Upper Room luncheon, 2/23 after worship, went very well (served over 40)—BVPC vols.: Sickles, Becky Cousins, Pastor Dave; Mar. 16th vols. from both churches serving Overflow Shelter: Dave & Leslie Sickles, Becky Cousins, Dan & Emily Hirsch, Jim & Lisa Buffalari, John Sitler, Grace Zahar, Pastor Dave (served 43).*
 - Nominating (*Chris Tombaugh*)
 - Worship/Music (*Stacey Simons*)—*Lenten worship/devotion series, Ash Wed., Mar. 5 @ EPC (nice turn-out); Palm Sun., April 13; MT svc., April 17, 7pm @ BVPC; 6:30am GF men's communion bkft., 3pm livestream, 12-3pm prayer vigil, April 18 (all @ BVPC); 6:30am Easter Sonrise (Wintergreen Gorge Cemetery)/11am Resurrection svc., April 20*
 - Personnel (*Chris Tombaugh*)—*Interviewed Melinda Wingenbach for Albert's position (w/Pastor Dave, 3/10)*
- 7:45 pm Clerk's Report: *Approval for Ragen family to use BVPC Fellowship Hall, 4/19, 1-6pm for shower event.*
7:50 pm Old Business
7:55 pm New Business:
 - *Next session mtg.—Apr. 7 @ 6:30pm*
 - *Next Presbytery Mtg.—May 20 @ 6:30pm @ Wayside (In-person only)*
- 8:00 pm Adjourn with Prayers of the People / Lord's Prayer

Pastor's Report (Feb., 2025):

- 1) Prep 4 Sunday sermons / 4 Sunday live-streaming services; 4 live-streaming Weds. Prayer & Praise svcs. & devotions; 4 worship notes (bulletins)/live streaming; Prep session agenda & pastor's report, visitors' letters, proof session minutes. Prep for and lead worship @ Nightingale Nursing Home (2/12 & 22).
- 2) Mtg. Julie von Volkenburg @ BVPC to prep svc. music on digital piano (2/15). Use Julie to record BVPC svc. music on flash drive (2/2 & 16).
- 3) Prep for and conduct weekly joint Acts study group sessions (3 Tuesdays) @ Grandview Manor Apts. & @ Jake's on the Park, Waterford (2/4).
- 4) Coordinate the monthly Erie area PCUSA clergy lunch gatherings @ Olive Garden (2/20).
- 5) Moderate the BVPC annual mtg. (2/2).
- 6) Continue to serve on the Ghana Mission Partnership sub-committee.
- 7) COM Advocate to New Hope, Emmanuel, and Westminster churches.
- 8) Serving on the LEP Worship Planning Com. & serving on the LEP/WNY clergy retreat planning com. (2/26, zoom). Attend LEP mtg. (2/18, zoom).
- 9) Serving as secretary on the Inter-Church Ministries Board.
- 10) Attended: BVPC "Souper Bowl" coffee hr. (2/9); helped coordinate a combined group for The Upper Room luncheon (2/23); Session mtg. (BVPC: 2/10; EPC: 2/11); deliver food to the OLOMC food pantry w/Sickles (2/11); Bubble-Up Zoom mtg. (2/27).
- 11) Assorted tasks: delivering shelter donations to 1st Covenant (2/2); p/u donuts/coffee kit for EPC food pantry vols. (2/20); p/u Upper Room luncheon supplies (2/21); contact Melinda/Derf re: possibility of BVPC treasurer's position; contact Kristin Woodring re: shared pastoral position @

BVPC/EPC; Set up catering for GF men's bkft. & send out flyers to area PCUSA churches & Kim; prep & send flyers/letter to Kim re: Easter Egg Hunt event (also BVES); send proposal letter & poster/flyer docs to Millcreek SD for permission to advertise Easter Egg Hunt to BVES; contact Larson Text re: Ash Wed. proof & update BVPC prayer list; proof session minutes for both congs.; prep and email newsletters to BVPC; set up zoom mtgs. for all events I have to moderate; Email cong. re: prayer concerns & upcoming programming & recycling efforts; visitor follow-up; calls to set up visits; contacted Deacons re: hospitalized; long-range sermon planning.

12) Visits: 2/4: © Odette Sperry (Manchester Commons), Barry McAndrew (Fairview Manor), Nick Nasibyan (St. V's); © Bert Goring & grandson, Jayden (2/11); © John & Cathy Durst (2/12); Barb Poirier (@ LECOM Senior Living); Linda Jarzynka's mother's viewing (2/12, Schmidt's); Rentschler/Lukens mother's viewing (2/21 @ Brugger's, W. 38th).