
The Pastor's Searchlight—March, 2025: "The Birdman of New York" (*The One Year Book of Amazing Stories*, R. Petterson)



Nikola left his cheap hotel room each morning, repeating the same routine with clockwork predictability—shuffling to the same market, rummaging through the same threadbare pockets, and forking over the same amount of change to buy the same seeds. He would hobble to the same park, sit on the same bench, and feed his pigeons, often sitting among them until sundown. When he wasn't talking to his birds, the old man mumbled to himself in agitation. Passersby dismissed Nikola as the strangest bird of all. If he saw a woman wearing pearls, the birdman would fly into a rage. He abhorred pearls and didn't mind ordering the offending person to go home and put on appropriate jewelry. If someone brushed up against him, he would react violently. He might have been covered with pigeon droppings, but he was deathly afraid of germs. No one would have guessed that ragged Nikola once occupied a lavish suite in the Waldorf Astoria. Back then, political leaders, titans of industry, and the crème de la crème of high society toasted his genius. Rudyard Kipling, John Muir, Mark Twain, and J. P. Morgan had been numbered among his closest friends. Now only pigeons came to pay homage to the crazy old man whose face had once emblazoned the cover of **Time** magazine. People who watched the birdman argue with himself didn't know that he was working out his formula for a death ray that could knock ten thousand enemy airplanes out of the sky. Though British and American authorities had dismissed his idea as the ravings of a mad scientist, the Soviets had promised \$25,000 for his plan. Onlookers would have been shocked to know that the birdman was the genius of the ages. Long before he spent his days feeding pigeons, he had created AC electricity and more than three hundred other inventions. As early as 1901 he had envisioned formulas for smartphone technology and the concepts that would lead to X-rays, particle beams, the Internet, and many other things we take for granted today. Nikola had come to America in the late 1800s with four pennies and a dream. At times he dug ditches to make ends meet. Yet this towering intellect became the father of the electronic age. But Nikola's futuristic visions were so far ahead of his time that he bitterly gave up on a disbelieving world. He tore up his royalties in the Westinghouse company that would have made him a billionaire. In the end, Nikola Tesla, one of the greatest inventors of the twentieth century, preferred pigeons to people. Nikola Tesla died a recluse with large debts and a lifetime of unfulfilled dreams. It has been said that there is a thin line between genius and craziness. Too often the greatest mind cannot comprehend what the simple faith of a child easily grasps. Even if you are a genius, you're crazy to ignore this wisdom:

If you gain everything but lose your soul, you have gained nothing.

What do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? (*Mark 8:36*)

Nikola Tesla, the honored namesake for Elon Musk's company, was also known by Donald Trump's uncle (John G. Trump), who was an electrical engineer and was asked to review all his documents in his apartment after he passed away, to make sure that there wasn't any invention paperwork that could be dangerous for others to get their hands on. Tesla was a genius, but he lost himself in his pursuit of attempting to invent, to create, to envision. Because his intelligence was so far beyond most people, he became frustrated by their inability to see what he saw, to see the future! He ended up losing his soul in many ways in the process, and truly gained nothing. His family line, Elon Musk's family line and Trump's family line have followed in those footsteps...in attempting to gain the whole world (via wealth & power), they have, they are and they will lose everything. In stark contrast to their meaningless lives, we follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, who came to serve ALL of humanity (not judge or condemn) as he sacrificed everything for OUR sake on the cross. And the result has been the most meaningful life ever lived!

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 (3/4 @ Bob Evans); 3/11, 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 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: Terwilliger family, Andrew Montefiore, Dawn Trojanovich, Randy Swonger, Budd (friend of Nancy Marzka), Barb Poirier, extended Marzka family (loss of Leo's sister, Dotty), Cheryl Schultz, Noah Brower, Samantha Pendzich, Ken Bliss, Crystal Gardner, Jeanette Komorek, 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 Fabrizzi, 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 several recent plane crashes; 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—his position was cut*); the Wapuli Health Clinic (*Paul Mahama, director*); 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 March Birthdays:

- 2nd Mike Campbell, 4105 French St., Erie, PA. 16504
- 4th Maddison Carner, 1521 Linwood Ave. Erie, PA. 16510
- 13th Logan Nicholson, 3328 Saltsman Rd., Erie, PA. 16510 (Teen)
- Jacob Beebe, 4801 Conway St., Erie, PA. 16509
- 18th Ken Filley, 4621 Idyllbrook Village, Erie, PA. 16506
- 20th Mason Glass, 3790 Stone Quarry Road, Waterford, PA. 16441 (Teen)
- 28th Damon Carner, 6160 Appleman Road, Erie, PA. 16509 (Child)



"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 January, 2025: Operating Revenues YTD Received: \$7,752.40; Operating Expenses Paid Out: \$11,809.04; Leaving a shortfall of \$4,056.64. 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.

Confirmation Class Get-Together: Sunday, Mar. 2 @ 12:30 @ BVPC. We will then car-pool to Panera Bread on Buffalo Rd. (near Nagle) for lunch, then over to Eastway Lanes (also on Buffalo Rd.) for 2 games of bowling (\$4.25 per game, \$2.50 for shoe rental).



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 Maundy Thursday (BVPC hosts the communion svc. @ 7pm) and leave the pots in the office so that we can arrange them in the sanctuary for Easter Sunday.

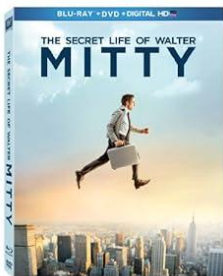
UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Mar. 2nd, Communion** @ 11am worship
- **Mar. 2nd, Confirmation Class Get-together:** meet @ BVPC @ 12:30 and go for lunch & bowling
- **Mar. 5th, Ash Wednesday "Forgiver" (Lent begins)**—7pm Service of Ashes & Communion @ Elmwood Church
- **Mar. 16th,** Volunteers from both BVPC & EPC congs. will be serving the homeless at **Our Neighbor's Place Winter Shelter** (*If you are able to volunteer, please contact Leslie Sickles, 814-504-7976*)
- **Joint Movie Event: Sat., Mar. 29 @ 4:30pm @ Elmwood Church Parlor** (*Bring your favorite snack to share!*)
- **Lenten Sunday Series: "Savior, Servant, Friend":** (*adults' & kids' Lenten devotionals will be available on Mar. 2nd*)
 - **Mar. 9: Healer**
 - **Mar. 16: Listener**
 - **Mar. 23: Encourager**
 - **Mar. 30: Protector**
 - **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**
 - **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



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



Joint Movie Event, Mar. 29 @ 4:30pm @ Elmwood Church (*Bring your favorite snack to share!*)
"The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"—a wonderful movie about the classic story of a daydreamer who escapes his anonymous life by disappearing into a fantasy world filled with heroism, romance and adventure. When his job and that of co-workers is threatened, he takes action in the real world, embarking on a journey more extraordinary than anything he could have imagined. Starring Ben Stiller, Kristen Wiig, and Sean Penn. A comical, romantic adventure that considers questions of life's meaning, calling, empathy, and humanity. Please join us for this wonderful film and discussion.

Presbytery Highlights – February 18, 2025

The Presbytery of Lake Erie met by Zoom on Tuesday, February 18, 2025. The music team of Montgomery Service, Mitchell McVay, and Leslie Weber from First Presbyterian Church of the Covenant lead us in song. Rev. Buddy Ward from North Warren preached a sermon about the marks of Effective Church Leadership based on Philippians 3. We remembered all pastors, elders, and deacons from our Presbytery who died in 2024 with our annual necrology report. There were several items of business such as:

- Adding the McKay Fund to the permanent endowment fund established by the Woodcock Gravel Run Administrative Commission for ongoing ministry in Crawford County.



- Setting session moderators for churches without a pastor, granting Member at Large status to Rev. Robin Sharp and Rev. Tim Solomon and Honorable Retirement status to Rev. Buddy Ward
- Heard about youth events upcoming from a Spring Retreat in April at Camp Mission Meadows, workshops on intergenerational ministry in May, camper scholarships and ministry grants, and national gatherings for Middle School and High School youth.
- Talked again about the Seneca Nation and an apology and actions toward reconciliation by our Presbytery. Rev. Anita Bernhardt asked that the Presbytery make this a focus in 2025.
- Offered prayers for our partners around the world and in particular Josh Heikkila as he transitions away from being our mission partner in West Africa and for the mission in Ghana after a fire at a girl's school in Saboba.
- Heard from the Stated Clerk about Annual Corporation reports that all churches in Pennsylvania must complete online before June
- Approved many Commission reports and moved to dismiss with thanks the Administrative Commission for Woodcock Gravel Run (Rev. Ellie Johns-Kelley, Jay Shimek, Sharron Diley, Ben Haytock, and moderator Rose Hilliard)
- Approved a restructuring of Permanent Committees in the Presbytery, eliminating the Congregational Life Committee and reassigning its tasks (Mission Studies to Committee on Ministry; Energy grants to Trustees, and Bold New Initiative Grants to Mission and Social Witness
- Voted on the final one of the amendments to the Book of Order proposed by 2024's General Assembly as follows: Voted to affirm the changes to reporting of alternative ordination exams
- Sent our collection to relief efforts by the Presbytery of Western North Carolina for help with Hurricane Helene relief
- Celebrated with Rev. Charlie McClung before he moves to Minnesota and celebrated the ministry of Rev. Buddy Ward on his retirement.

We are still looking for a church to host the Presbytery meeting on November 18, 2025. The Next Presbytery meeting will be in person or by Zoom on May 20, 2025 at 6:30pm at Erie-Wayside.

Rev. Dr. Tim Harmon, Stated Clerk

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

AGENDA

- 6:30 pm Opening prayer: *Dawn Trojanovich, John Lute's wife, Dahlkemper family, Linda Jarzynka's mom, Nick Nasibyan, Desiree Davis*
- 6:40 pm Approval of the Docket
- 6:42 pm Approval of January Minutes
- 6:45 pm Correspondence:
- 6:50 pm Pastor's Report:
- 6:55 pm Committee Reports
- Stewardship & Finance (*Doug Ebert*) | Building & Grounds (*Dave Sickles*)—*Treasurer's Report (Albert Boorady)—B & G updates: State Farm claim made, Elevator issues.*
 - Christian Education (*Leslie Sickles*)—*Adult study group (Acts) continues; Easter Egg Hunt & lunch, 4/12 (12-2pm)—sending request for BVES to advertise*
 - Fellowship & Membership (*Sandy McConahy*)—*Feb. coffee hr. very nice (soups)*
 - Mission & Outreach (*Different events will be headed by different vols.*)—*Upper Room luncheon, 2/23 after worship*
 - Nominating (*Chris Tombaugh*)
 - Worship/Music (*Stacey Simons*)—*Lenten worship/devotion series, Ash Wed., Mar. 5; Palm Sun., April 13; MT svc., April 17; GF men's communion bkft., livestream, prayer vigil, April 18; Easter Sunrise/Resurrection svc., April 20*
 - Personnel (*Chris Tombaugh*)
- 7:45 pm Clerk's Report
- 7:50 pm Old Business
- 7:55 pm New Business:
- *Next session mtg.—Mar. 10 @ 6:30pm*
 - *Next Presbytery Mtg.—Feb. 18 @ 6:30pm (Zoom only)*
- 8:00 pm Adjourn with Prayers of the People / Lord's Prayer