



The Pastor's Searchlight—December, 2014

As Christmas approached, Liam drew a picture of the manger scene with all of the traditional characters, PLUS one—a fourth wiseman, and a chubby one at that. "And who is that, Liam?" his teacher asked. Liam proudly replied, "That's Round John Virgin!" (*Ugghhh!—orry, I couldn't pass that one up!*)

Well, this past week held the usual hooplah of "Black Friday," when people stand in line in the wee hours of the morning to buy stuff—maybe you're one of those brave souls. Then there was "Small Business Saturday" and then on Monday (Dec. 1) comes "Cyber Monday," when everyone goes online and buys more stuff. Well, I've decided that **our Church is going to participate in Cyber Monday!** We exist to reach people that do not know Jesus' loving grace and that IS a lasting investment we can contribute to! While you are shopping online on Monday, why not give a gift to God through BVPC? This investment is eternal. It lasts way longer than any i-Phone, toy or winter coat for which you may be shopping online. You can make a one time donation or set up a recurring donation to Belle Valley Church through your bank. Go paperless! It's really simple and fast. And here's my Cyber Monday offer: 100% of your investment will go to reaching people for Jesus Christ!

All kidding aside, let me simply say from the bottom of my heart and the hearts of our staff (Kim, Lynda, Clay & Kristin, and Lois)—May you have the dearest Merry Christmas and the nearest experience of God's Holy Spirit as you move into a Happy New Year!

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

P.S. Don't forget to order your poinsettia plant(s) to honor or memorialize someone dear to you to adorn our chancel area for Christmas! Red, Pink, or white poinsettias are available for \$7.50 each. Simply call or email Stacey Simons (881-1323 or stacey.simons111@gmail.com)!

Don't forget! The Deacons have special gold envelopes in the pew racks for those who wish to donate to their caring & assistance ministry on communion Sunday each month. **Please be aware** that we now have **children's activity bags** for any children who aren't interested in using the nursery or children's church programs during worship. These bags include crayons, coloring pages, & snacks. There are also story books available near the bag display on the landing before entering the sanctuary—please feel free to borrow these for your child(ren) and then return them after worship.



Dec. 7 (Advent II; Kids Choir; Communion) "Let Us Adore Him" Advent series: "We Adore Him Who Is Creator of All" (John 1)

Dec. 14 (Advent III; Kids Choir; Sunday Funday) "Let Us Adore Him" Advent series: "We Adore Him Who Is the Light in the Darkness" (John 1)

Dec. 21 (Deacons' mtg.) "Let Us Adore Him" Advent series: "We Adore Him Who Brought Grace and Truth" (John 1)

Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve Candlelight Service) "Let Us Adore Him" Advent series: "We Adore Him Who Is One of Us" (John 1)

Dec. 28 (Penny Sunday; Christmastide) "Let Us Adore Him" Advent series: "We Adore Him Who Is God's Glory" (John 1)

"God's Not Dead" study series—The **God's Not Dead** study group that had been meeting will conclude its study on **Thursday** (Dec. 4) @ 7pm (refreshments); dive into some deeper discussion about the issues of God's existence, AND to learn how to defend our faith when in everyday conversations!

Praying for: (Please contact us with any changes to or removals from this list) Tom Dougan (*Kim Ragen's brother—heart concerns*), William Sharp, Mae Lichtenberger & son's family, Sandy Kriebel's family, Doris Feeneey, Mike Sokalski, Courtney Shuhart, Brooklyn Respecki, Kirsten & Barb Marzka, Beverly Marzka, Gordie Gibbens, Don Eddy, Brendan Shadle, Kim Ragen, Edie Hudson, James Kuhn's daughters, Dan Horton, Ev Marzka, Bobbi Schlosser, Dave Nedreski. Elaine McAndrew, Edna Cole (*MCH*), Carl Schnauffer, Rich Lewis, Howard Glazier, Fred Marshall (*Hamot*), Ruth Carpinello, Roger Sampson, Beth Wiley Ernst, Bud Kovacs, Camille Cancilla, Linda Clinger, Kari Syed, Dave Fiolek, Mike Nedreski, Mike Mansley, Sam Mattocks, Aubrey Murosky, Rick Grzelak, Laura Marzka, Jennie Agnew, Buzz (*St. V's*) & Mary Ann Stein, Marge Parker, Sandi Bootes (*Health South*), Jean Moorhead, Rusty Kerr, Lisa Crain, Jim Wandling, Leo Marzka, Ken Beebe, George Wellsby, Cindy Murosky, Kim Warzbaugh; Iraqi civil war concerns, Ebola virus victims & a cure, current armed services personnel (*especially Matt Ebert*), Ghana mission partnership (*We pray especially for the Chereponi District: 11 churches, 528 members, and District Pastor Josh Nabuer*), Josh Heikkila (*our PCUSA W. Africa Liaison*)—and Salome Mansa Oye (*female seminary student we are supporting*);
Presbytery prayer list: Rev. Jim Haas, Rev. Rick Cepris, Rev. Jim Moelk, Rev. Rachel Johns.



Any Church Family Needs? ...sickness, hospitalization, funeral reception after the loss of a loved one, financial need, etc. Please contact the Deacons thru Kim Ragen (392-5831), Debi Johnson (825-1750) or Darlene Leasure (746-4899)—confidentiality is maintained! **Are you or anyone you know in any kind of emotional crisis or grief over loss** (loved one, employment, mobility, independence, etc.)? We have access to trained Stephen Ministers: gifted listeners, free, and confidential. Call Pastor Dave (397-1861).



Belle Valley's Recycling Ministry Needs YOU! Unloading the newspaper trailer onto a delivery truck will take place **as needed** (check w/ Charlie Blanchard for dates: 825-3925). **New recycling criteria** please take note: **only aluminum cans**, newspaper (*and old phone books*), cardboard, and magazines. **We recycle printer ink cartridges** from your own personal computer systems and **cell phones**—the collection bin for both is in the foyer by the phone (**we receive funds for this recycling!**).

*****Additional Worship Volunteers Still Needed!** We are still in need of additional volunteers who can be liturgists, ushers, acolytes, and nursery care attendants. We can and will arrange training as needed (for any role), and we promise to work you into the schedule when you are able. For more info or to submit your name, please see Pastor Dave, Stacey Simons (schedule creator, 881-1323), or Gordie Gibbens (Worship Chair, 825-4868).***

Presbyterian Homes "Church to Care Connection" Liaison Still Needed: A volunteer willing to be our church's communication contact for all news from the Presbyterian Homes Board. Contact Pastor Dave if interested (397-1861).



DON'T FORGET: Your 2nd mile giving to our Presbytery's 2014 per capita fund—this is a gift (\$29.50) asked from every member of Presbyterian churches in our presbytery to be used for larger mission efforts sponsored by the PC(USA) in our region!! If you haven't yet contributed, please do so now, making out your checks to "Belle Valley Presbyterian Church" and mark the memo line—"Per Capita gift." **Please keep your giving up to date (& when possible, offer God a 2nd mile gift)!**—so far we have only received \$1,104.50 out of a total commitment of \$3, 481!! **Another important update: Through the first 10 months of 2014, we received \$67,440 in operating revenue, yet had \$87,419 in operating expenses.** We are aware that some of you have arranged with your banks to send your offerings

"online" automatically from your account so that your giving remains in regular patterns on a weekly basis, even if you have to miss worship. We appreciate your commitment to giving regularly and we are exploring that option more to see if we can provide the whole congregation helpful insights about how others can do this also!

OUR MISSION OPPORTUNITIES: November: Thanks to all who participated in the Operation Christmas Child **Shoe-Box Gifts** Global Outreach—we collected 34 shoe-box gifts for OCC! Thanks also to Corey Rice and Jerry Seamans who volunteered w/ Pastor Dave at the OCC collection site moving shipping boxes of shoe-box gifts from a Meadville shipping truck to the large shipping trucks at 1st Covenant Church for shipping. Thanks also to all who donated to the free-will offering effort for the Community Thanksgiving dinner for the less fortunate—we collected \$88 to cover the cost of all the gravy for the dinner that feeds approximately 600-800. Also, thanks to all who attended our joint Thanksgiving Eve service with Community Christian; \$212 was donated to 2nd Harvest Food Bank as a result.

Food Collections: Please keep up all the good work of your ongoing support of canned goods and staples for the Mt. Carmel & City Mission food pantries. There is also a list of suggested food staples that are most welcome at that receptacle (for example: peanut butter, spaghetti sauce, pasta, tuna, chicken, etc.). Both receptacles are in the foyer. **Sunday Suppers for the Homeless:** We continue to feed the homeless & underemployed a meal on Sunday evenings, hosted at 1st Covenant in Knox Hall from 5-7pm. If you want to help in this ministry then please contact Doug Ebert or Pastor Dave **as we will be helping to serve the meal on Dec. 7.** We also have the opportunity to **serve students at PSU-Behrend as we assemble care pkgs.** for a loving expression of support as they head into their finals week. We will gather at Smith Chapel on **Dec. 12** (Friday) @ 1pm (for less than an hour) to do so. Please see Pastor Dave for more info!

Our Mission Partnership with the Upper Northern Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana:

As you pray for this partnership, our church has been partnered with a cluster of LEP churches in prayer for a district of churches in the Upper Northern Presbytery of EPC-Ghana: Seeking to be faithful to God we encourage faithful prayer for each other. While it is good to pray for all churches, your Ghana Mission Team encourages prayer for specific groups of churches. You can certainly pray whenever you desire but you are especially encourage to pray at least once a month for your sister congregations.

Chereponi District

11 churches
126 male members;
183 female members;
219 children

District Pastor:
Rev. Joshua Nabuer

Lake Erie Presbytery

Ripley, NY (95 members)
North East (402
Harborcreek (161
Erie, Eastminster (108 members)
Erie, Emmanuel (170
Erie, Belle Valley (128
Erie, New Hope (146
Erie, First Covenant (737
Erie, Elmwood Avenue

EPC Moderator, Seth Agidi

members)
members)



members)
members)
members)
members)
(377 members)
sanitation, pastoral
projects with Union
from the presbytery to

2014 Holds Promise for the Ghana Partnership!! Project efforts in fresh water & training scholarships, motorbike transportation for pastors and evangelists, equipment City Glasses Campaign, ComputerReach, and Chosen/LECOM. We took a small group travel to Ghana in 2014 to participate in the Ghana Mission Network annual meeting being held in Ho, Ghana this year (EPC-Ghana headquarters; July 8-12: Pastor Dave and Doug Ebert attended with 3 others from our presbytery. Please pray for continuing opportunities for ministry through our partnership—we will be taking a closer look at water and sewer projects, health clinic projects, school projects, small business start-up projects, leadership development projects, etc. We also will be transporting as many computers as possible to Ghana for a Tamale computer training facility for young adults. Each computer costs only \$250 total (includes basic software as well).

Update Your 2014 Membership Directory: Dan Horton: El Patio Motel, 2950 West Lake Rd., rm. #103, 16505 (860-9173, prefers texting—limited minutes). Dan is there while waiting to move from a waiting list for a senior adult apartment bldg. into his own apartment. It is hoped that an opening will become available in February.



Please Minister to those Members with Chronic Health Issues (through cards, letters, calls, visits, and prayer): **Fred Marshall:** 4210 Davison Ave., Grandview Manor Apts., #529, 16504 (572-2587); **Mary Horton** (#10 South): Presque Isle Rehab., 4114 Schaper Ave., 16508 (868-0831); **Bill Bullock:** 2834 Summerville Rd., 16510 (825-6132); **Jennie Wittmaak:** Independence Court, #142, 41 West Gore Rd., 16509 (868-4542); **Buzz & MaryAnn Stein:** now living in Fredonia, NY; **Norma Hitchcock:** Lutheran Home, 149 W. 22nd St., 16502 (452-3271); **Nancy Leube:** St. Mary's-East, #2303, 607 E. 26th St., 16504 (459-0621); **Clarke Leasure:** 370 Snowbury St., 16509 (746-4899); **Janet Crain:** 2047 Enfield Dr., 16509 (315-4075); **Rusty Kerr:** 2507 E. Grandview Blvd., 16510 (825-4929); **Rick Hess:** 4210 Davison Ave.,

Grandview Manor Apts., #128, 16504 (397-7066); **Bobbi Schlosser:** 4210 Davison Ave., Grandview Manor Apts., #309, 16504 (218-6918); **Jean Moorhead:** 1023 Raspberry St., 16502 (459-9077); **Dan Horton:** El Patio Motel, 2950 West Lake Rd., rm. #103, 16505 (860-9173, prefers texting—limited minutes); **Mae Lichtenberger:** 1213 Belleview Dr., 16504 (825-2187); **Marge Parker:** 1707 Kuntz Rd., Erie, 16509 (866-1790).

Upcoming Events: Sunday schedule: **11am Worship**

***Recycling:** drop-offs anytime (newspaper/aluminum cans)—**newspaper recycling: call Charlie Blanchard first (825-3925) to see if needed from month to month.** ***Communion**, 1st Sun. monthly ***Session**, 12/8, 6:30pm ***Deacons**, 12/21 after worship
***Penny Sunday**, 12/28 ***Adult study group**, 12/4 @ 10:30am @ South Gate Restaurant; 12/11, 18 @ 12pm
***Sunday "Funday" 12/14** (after worship) ***God's Not Dead** study group, Dec. 4 @ 7pm ***Hanging of the Greens**, 12/6 @ 9am
***Bkft. w/Santa**, 12/13 @ 8:30am ***Children's Choir**, 12/7 & 14 rehearsals @ 10am, 12/14 sing @ worship
***Dec. 7**, 5-7pm, Serve Homeless Meal @ 1st Covenant Overflow Shelter ***Christmas Caroling to Our Shut-ins**, 12/20 @ 9:30am
***Christmas Memories Dinner Theatre Fellowship event: 12/7** @ 2:30pm ***Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**, 12/24, 7pm
***Assemble PCM student care pkgs. 12/12**, 1pm @ Smith Chapel, Behrend

Building & Grounds Concerns: We will be accepting bids on two antique seat-hinged church pews and several older wood children's chairs (11 total). If interested please call Charlie Blanchard (825-3925), committee chair, to see them. **The church has an initial offer on the 1.58 acre parcel of land on Bileley Road in Millcreek** (which it owns) **so please pray for a smooth transaction in this process.** We will also need additional recycling vols. & lawn mowing vols. in the new year if we are to continue these very financially helpful efforts (Recycling brings several thousands of dollars to our ministry each year, and mowing our own lawn saves the church hundreds of dollars each summer season!).

Sunday "Funday"

Dec. 4 (after worship): Join us for lunch, followed by a fun opportunity to serve our church's shut-ins by baking and decorating cookies to be delivered to them the following Saturday (12/20) when we go Christmas caroling to many of them as we begin @ 9:30am that Saturday.

Breakfast with Santa: The day is quickly approaching...the arrangements with Santa have been made...and the Breakfast elves have been rallied! Please be our guest on **December 13, from 8:30-10am**, at an extraordinarily fun and festive occasion with The Big Guy in the Red Suit! Enjoy pancakes, sausage and donut holes (w/juice, milk, or coffee)! Kids can get involved with music, crafts, hanging out with friends, and a gift-laden visit from the jolly elf himself! Cost is \$3.00 for ages 10 and up and free for ages 9 and under. Please mark your calendar now and plan to join us for all the fun! Remember your camera so you can capture the moment with Santa! **RSVP via Kim Ragen (392-5831) or sign up in the foyer!**

The Hanging of the Greens: Come and join in decorating our church facility for the on **Saturday, Dec. 6 @ 9am** served—please bring a dish or sweet

Children's Choir (especially Dec. 7 & 14 @ 10am, and share our lively rendition of "Go Tell It On the

Seasonal Events!

the fun and fellowship of Advent/Christmas season (breakfast refreshments will be roll item to share!)

Kindergarten-6th grade: Rehearse with Pastor Dave and Lois on anthem with the congregation during our Dec. 14 worship service. We will do a very Mountain!" on piano & guitar!

"Christmas Memories" Fellowship event: Sign up for a fun musical rendition of "A Christmas Carol" (complete w/scrumptious dinner) on Sunday, Dec. 7 @ 2:30pm @ The Station Dinner Theatre (Peach & W. Gore Rds.). Tickets: \$27 each (may be less!). Sign up in the foyer or by contacting Pastor Dave (397-1861)!

Assemble PCM student care pkgs. 12/12, 1pm @ Smith Chapel, Behrend University—contact Pastor Dave for more details!

Christmas Caroling to our shut-ins! Join in the fun and fellowship of bringing Christmas cheer to our shut-ins (along with some delicious cookies made at our Sunday Funday event). We'll meet at 9:30am and then plan our course of caroling stops!

New Kids' Worship Activity Bags! There are new bags for children to utilize during worship services if they don't wish to go to nursery or children's church. They are welcome to keep these, which contain crayons, a coloring paper and a small snack. There are also several children's bible books available that they may use and return after the service. See the ushers for help!

Presbytery Highlights November 15, 2014

The Presbytery of Lake Erie met at First Presbyterian Oil City in its last meeting of 2014. The weather was a bit snowy, especially for those coming from Erie County. We heard both in the worship service and in an after lunch seminar from Teaching Elder Ray Jones of the national Office of Evangelism. He reminded us that a cultural storm has wreaked havoc on the religious landscape. Our Presbyterian churches are still standing, but our numbers are diminished. How do we reach out to our neighbors? The Evangelism office has developed materials such as Engage. This is available at www.pcusa.org/evangelism. Our General Presbyter reported that Presbyterian Homes of Lake Erie has signed an Affiliation Agreement with Presbyterian SeniorCare based in the Pittsburgh area. This is not a merger but should enable our existing homes to have deeper resources and assistance in fulfilling their mission, currently serving over 400 residents at three locations in Erie, Fairview and Oil City. The Presbytery honored two faithful servants in particular. Rev. Jim Haas has retired after 34 years of ordained ministry, the last 16 at the Wayside church. He was recognized as someone who has faithfully walked in a manner consistent with his commitment to Christ. Aside from Wayside, he was active in ecumenical ministry in the Erie area. We also honored our long-time Administrative Assistant at the Presbytery office, Sheila Kelly, who this fall marks 30 years of service to us. We are grateful for both of them. We had limited business to transact. We amended two existing policies, the first on Principles and Processes When Churches Seek to Separate from the Presbytery. The second was an updated version of Guidelines for the Nominating Committee on how they choose to nominate our commissioners to General Assembly. David Oyler shared with us some gleanings from his recent reading of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together*. The subtitle is *The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community*. As a presbytery, we continue to seek to serve God in community, which is not always easy. Recommended reading for a snowy day this winter. We meet again February 21, 2015 at 10 am at Waterford.

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP! Only a short time remains until the deadline for nominations for the Young Presbyterian Scholarship. Nominations must be submitted by December 1st to be considered for the \$74,000 scholarship (\$18,500 per year). THE YOUNG PRESBYTERIAN SCHOLARSHIP was established in 2002 to encourage and provide an opportunity for outstanding PC(USA) students to apply to Westminster College, one of the nation's best liberal arts colleges. The scholarship of \$74,000 for four years (\$18,500 per year) is for qualified high school seniors entering college the Fall of 2015. **EVERY PC(USA) CONGREGATION CAN NOMINATE TWO STUDENTS ~ EVERY YEAR!!** If you have submitted a nomination, thank you. More than 100 deserving students have been nominated to date. If you have not yet done so, don't miss this opportunity. Contact Pastor Dave to inform him of your student nominee so he can get the ball rolling!

SCHOLARSHIP REQUIREMENTS:

3.5 HSGPA (CUMULATIVE)
PC(USA) MEMBERSHIP
WRITTEN NOMINATION BY PASTOR/CONGREGATION

NOTE PROGRAM DEADLINES !!

NOMINATIONS ~ DECEMBER 1ST
STUDENT APPLICATIONS ~ DECEMBER 15TH
Nominate online @ www.westminster.edu/yps or download the attached nomination form and informational flyer.

For assistance, please contact Rev. Jim Mohr, College Chaplain; mohrjr@westminster.edu; (724) 946-7116; or Bradley P. Tokar, Director of Admissions, tokarp@westminster.edu; (724) 946-7109.



Interested in Exploring Membership? What exactly does it mean to become a member at Belle Valley Presbyterian Church? Why would I want to take that step of commitment? What do I need to know about this congregation (its history, design, and vision) to help me decide? If you'd be interested in further discussion (no strings attached!), please contact Pastor Dave (397-1861).

In Need of a Tree? The Poulsons are in need of giving away a pre-lit 6 ft. "skinny" Christmas tree (only a year or two old) to a good home in need. If you or someone you know fits the bill, please call George and Mary Jo Poulson @ 899-3933, or 431-5489!



Matt Ebert's mailing address: EOCN Ebert, Matthew F.; CBMU 202 DET JAX; PO Box 37, Bldg. 674; NAS Jacksonville, FL 32212.

